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GEORGE DI GIOVANNI

Abbreviations

- A – /B – = Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, cited according to the pagination of the 1781 and 1782 editions (A and B).
- AK = *Immanuel Kant. Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Royal Prussian Academy of the Sciences (Berlin: Reimer, 1902–), cited by volume and page number.
- GA = *J. G. Fichte – Gesamtausgabe der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, ed. R. Lauth and H. Gliwitzky (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1962–2005), cited by series number in Roman numerals, volume number, pagination, and when appropriate line number.
- GW = *G. W. F. Hegel: Gesammelte Werke*, Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (Hamburg: Meiner, 1968–), cited by volume, page, and when appropriate line number.
- Miller = *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. A. V Miller (London: Allen & Unwin, 1969).
- Moni/Cesa = *G. W. F. Hegel: Scienza della Logica*, Vols. I and II, trans. Arturo Moni (1924–25); revised, Claudio Cesa (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2001).
- Guyer/Wood = *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Introduction

PROLOGUE

Writing an introduction to a translation of Hegel's *Logic* is an even more formidable task than the translation itself. There are serious issues that immediately confront the author, and it will not be amiss to indicate them at the start, and also to declare how I have chosen to settle them. First, there is the issue of defining the task that an introduction should perform. An introduction cannot be a step-by-step guide for the neophyte across the intricacies of the *Logic*. Fortunately, it need not be. There are already guides of this kind available, some classic, others more recent, all good in their different ways.¹ An introduction may be a general statement about the project of the *Logic*, its place in Hegel's System, and the key concepts that govern the progression of the categories. But general statements of this kind, while of no use to those already in the know, do little in the way of indicating why the *Logic* is at least an interesting, and as I believe also still significant, philosophical product. It is not clear, in other words, whether such statements do any work at all. They certainly do nothing to motivate a reading of the *Logic* and may even simply reinforce well-established prejudices. For this reason, I have decided in this introduction to focus on the *Logic*'s problematic nature as such. My claim is that the *Logic* is to be read as still in line with Kant's Transcendental Logic, though without being "transcendental" in Kant's sense. But once this determination is made, another issue immediately arises. Of course, however philosophically important the *Logic* might still be, the fact remains that it is a dated document. Why

¹ For instance, in chronological order: G. R. G. Mure, *An Introduction to Hegel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940) and *A Study of Hegel's Logic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950); John Burbidge, *Hegel's Logic: Fragments of a Commentary* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1981); Clark Butler, *Hegel's Logic: Between Dialectic and History* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1996); John Burbidge, *The Logic of Hegel: An Introduction* (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview, 2006); David Gray Carlson, *A Commentary to Hegel's Science of Logic* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

Hegel should ever have wanted to attempt it needs historical explanation. And this I have done with as much detail as space allowed. But the problem is that the moment one departs from a purely historical account and takes a definite stand on the nature of the Logic, one is immediately faced with a host of conflicting interpretations, both classic and recent, and, while one cannot enter in an introduction into an extended polemical debate with them, to ignore them would smack of dogmatism. I have tried to negotiate my way out of this dilemma by bringing out the fault lines in the Logic along which different and even contradictory readings are possible. I neither ignore nor dismiss these readings, even though I perforce refer to them globally. For the classic and more metaphysical of them there was no problem singling out J. M. E. McTaggart as the representative figure. But the state of the recent, in spirit more “hermeneutic” readings is still much too fluid for singling out any representative figure. Hence, although I shall mention the occasional name in footnotes, I shall refer to these more recent developments only in general, without emblematic representation. Between these two extremes, a host of more qualified readings are available in the literature. I hope that, by motivating a study of the Logic, I also motivate a study of all this literature.

Nothing is simple about Hegel’s Logic, not even the history of its production. As we shall see, the text that we have represents a work in progress. Hegel did not live to carry out the revision that he had planned for the whole work but accomplished it only in part. There are good exegetical reasons, therefore, for comparing the revised with the corresponding unrevised parts of the text, and also for asking what changes Hegel might have brought to the parts never revised if he had lived to complete the revision. But considerations of this kind demand an already close acquaintance with the text or at least an immediate close perusal of it, and for this reason, with two exceptions which will come up in due time, I relegate them to an appendix.

THE PUBLICATION OF THE LOGIC

Hegel’s interest in the science of logic dates at least as far back as 1801 when he moved to Jena to assist Schelling, hoping to establish himself in an academic career.² There, starting from the 1801/02 winter term, Hegel offered a course on Logic and Metaphysics every year, with the exception

² Hegel assisted Schelling in producing the *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie*, in which he also published his first essays. These essays are collected in GW 4.

of the 1805/06 winter term, after which time he left the city. We shall return to these lecture courses in due course. Despite Hegel's repeated announcements during this Jena period of a forthcoming book on the subject,³ his published work on logic came considerably later. The first part of what was announced as the first volume of a planned two-volume *Science of Logic*⁴ was published only in 1812, when Hegel was professor and rector at a gymnasium in Nürnberg. The second part of the same volume came the year after, in 1813.⁵ Both parts went under the subtitle of *Objective Logic*, and the second carried the further subtitle "The Doctrine of Essence." The announced second volume was finally published in 1816, still in Nürnberg, in one part and with the subtitle "The Doctrine of the Concept."⁶ Another much-abbreviated *Science of Logic* appeared in 1817, as the first part of an *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline*⁷ which Hegel, who in the meantime (1816) had been appointed as professor at the university in Heidelberg, produced as the textbook for his lecture courses. He published a second, heavily revised edition of this same work in 1827, and yet a third, with minor revisions, in 1830.⁸ These two last editions of the Encyclopedia were still published in Heidelberg, even though by that time Hegel had long since moved to Berlin. In this city he had continued to lecture on the subject of logic.⁹ We know, moreover, that in 1826 he had begun to give some thought to a new edition of the original Nürnberg work,¹⁰ and in fact, in January of 1831, he submitted to the publishers a heavily revised version of Part I of Volume One of that first *Science of Logic*, that is, the part published in 1812. This new version, now entitled "The Doctrine of Being," came out in print the year after,

³ He first promised a textbook on the subject in connection with his announcement of a lecture course on Logic and Metaphysics for the summer term of 1802: "*secundum librum sub eodem titulo proditum*." GW 7, 361. He repeated the promise in the announcement for the winter of 1802.

⁴ *Wissenschaft der Logik*, erster Band, *Die objektive Logik* (Nürnberg, 1812). GW 11. This is the counterpart of Book I in the 1833 edition and also the Lasson edition.

⁵ *Wissenschaft der Logik*, erster Band, *Die objektive Logik*; zweites Buch, "Die Lehre vom Wesen" (Nürnberg, 1813). GW 11. This is Book II in the 1833 edition and also in the Lasson edition.

⁶ *Wissenschaft der Logik oder die Lehre vom Begriff* (Nürnberg, 1816). GW 12. This is Book III in the 1833 edition and also in the Lasson edition.

⁷ *Encyclopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*. Zum Gebrauch seiner Vorlesungen (Heidelberg, 1817). GW 13.

⁸ GW 19 and 20.

⁹ Notes from the 1831 lectures taken by Hegel's son Karl have been published in the series *Vorlesungen, Ausgewählte Nachschriften und Manuskripten, Vorlesungen über die Logik*, Band 10, ed. Udo Rameil and H.-Christian Lucas† (Hamburg: Meiner, 2001). Notes from lectures on logic given at Heidelberg in 1817 and taken by the student F. A. Good have been published in the same series, *Vorlesungen über Logik und Metaphysik*, Band 11, ed. Karen Gloy (Hamburg: Meiner, 1992).

¹⁰ Cf. GW 21, 400.

in 1832¹¹ – posthumously, for in the meantime, on November 14, 1831, Hegel had suddenly died. It was then republished in 1833 by Leopold von Henning, together with Part II of the same Volume One from 1813 and the Volume Two from 1816. In this form the Logic was part of a complete edition of the philosopher's works that his disciples had hastily arranged after his death. It is this text that became the canonical version of Hegel's so-called Greater Logic.¹² It was re-edited by Georg Lasson in 1923,¹³ and more recently again – now equipped with a detailed critical apparatus and with Part I of Volume One in both its 1812 and 1832 versions – as Volumes 11, 12, and 21 of the Academy Edition of Hegel's *Gesammelte Werke*.

It is likely that Hegel, had he lived longer, would have revised the rest of this Greater Logic.¹⁴ But all changes apart, whether actual or possible, one thing is certain. As of 1807 at least, and throughout the long subsequent process of publication of *The Science of Logic*, the place of this science as the first of a three-part System of Philosophy that comprises Logic, Philosophy of Nature, and Philosophy of Spirit was clear and fixed in Hegel's mind. This, however, was not the case at the beginning of his Jena period. In the first sketches of the System, the one extreme of Logic tended at that time to fall into what he called "Logic *and* Metaphysics," and the other extreme of Philosophy of Spirit tended to fall into Ethics and Religion. Historically and conceptually, therefore, of greater interest than any changes later made to the Logic is precisely how Hegel ever came to merge logic and metaphysics, and how this merger both reflected and made a difference to his conception of both Logic and System. For this, we must consider the earlier texts that have come down to us from the Jena years.

THE GENESIS OF THE LOGIC

It is only recently, since the Academy Edition of the works of Hegel, that we have a reliably complete picture of the development of Hegel's thought

¹¹ *Wissenschaft der Logik*, erster Teil, *Die objektive Logik*, erster Band, *Die Lehre vom Sein* (Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1832). GW 21.

¹² *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's Werke*. Vollständige Ausgabe durch einen Verein von Freunden des Verewigten. Bände III–V. *Wissenschaft der Logik*, ed. Leopold von Henning (Berlin, 1833). The 1832 edition of the "Doctrine of Being" was quickly forgotten, so much so that Georg Lasson, in 1932, was not aware of its existence. He thought that Henning had derived the revised version of the 1812 Part One directly from a manuscript of Hegel intended for publication. For this, see GW 21, 399.

¹³ *Sämtliche Werke*, Band III/IV (Leipzig, 1923 and 1932).

¹⁴ But we have no definite indication to that effect. Cf. GW 21, 403. For actual and possible changes, see the Appendix to the translation of the text.

during that formative period. From the beginning, the archaeological problem has been twofold. For one thing, the texts relating to the formation of the Logic and the System have come to us in an unpublished and fragmentary, in some cases extremely fragmentary, form. For another, these texts were badly misdated by Karl Rosenkranz, the one who had direct access to Hegel's literary estate and was the first to report on them.¹⁵ This circumstance interfered with later editions of the surviving texts,¹⁶ even at a time when the editors had already begun to doubt the accuracy of Rosenkranz's dating. Old prejudices die hard. Fortunately these problems have been alleviated lately because of the recovery of hitherto lost manuscripts and the painstaking work of the editors of the *Gesammelte Werke* who have subjected to statistical analysis the progressive changes in Hegel's handwriting during the Jena period. Thus our current dating of texts is as trustworthy as historical methods will allow, and it provides us with a solid basis for a convincing reconstruction of the evolution of Hegel's thought to which the texts themselves give witness.¹⁷ For our purposes, the relevant data are as follows.¹⁸

1801/02. In the Jena course catalogue of this winter term Hegel announced a private seminar in "Logic and Metaphysics" and also, *gratis*, an "Introduction to Philosophy." As described in the announcement, the seminar would expound a "general or transcendental Logic," that is to say, it would treat "the system of the forms of finitude, or a theory of the objective understanding," which is the source of the usual logical constructions of subjective reflection. But it would then let reason "destroy" these finite forms and thereby move on to Metaphysics where the task of philosophy is finally discharged in its various systematic forms and in

¹⁵ Karl Rosenkranz, *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's Leben: Supplement zu Hegel's Werke* (Berlin, 1844; reprinted, Darmstadt, 1967); "Hegels ursprüngliches System 1798–1806. Aus Hegels Nachlass," *Literarhistorisches Taschenbuch*, ed. Robert Prutz, Leipzig, ii (1844). A reprint of the four volumes of this journal is available (psc@periodicals.com).

¹⁶ G. W. F. Hegel: *Hegels erstes System*, ed. H. Eherenberg and H. Link (Heidelberg, 1915); *Jenenser Logik, Metaphysik und Naturphilosophie*, ed. George Lasson (Leipzig, 1923); *Jenenser Realphilosophie I*, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister (Leipzig, 1932).

¹⁷ Hermann Nohl was the first to subject Hegel's handwriting to this analysis in connection with his edition of Hegel's early theological writings. *Theologische Jugendschriften*, ed. Hermann Nohl (Tübingen, 1987; reprinted 1968). For the chronology of the Jena period, see "Die Chronologie der Manuskripten Hegels in den Bänden 4 bis 9 [of GW]," in the editorial apparatus of GW 8.348ff. Also: Heinz Kimmerle, "Dokumente zu Hegels Jenaer Dozententätigkeit (1801–1807)," *Hegel-Studien*, 4 (1967), 21–99; *Das Problem der Abgeschlossenheit des Denkens, Hegel-Studien*, Beiheft 8 (Bonn: Bouvier, 1870). For a detailed, English-language study of the period based on the new chronology, see H. S. Harris, *Hegel's Development: Night Thoughts: Jena 1801–1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

¹⁸ This is a greatly abbreviated list of the documents we actually have. I list only those required for the subsequent discussion.

accordance with human interests.¹⁹ The brief fragments that we have from these years are of notes that Hegel most likely intended for these announced courses.²⁰

We can gather from these fragments that Hegel's "Introduction" would have aimed to make the same point which he was later to repeat in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, namely that philosophy is its own introduction.²¹ But, inasmuch as philosophy is an empirical product of history, it always assumes a subjective shape which, when taken individually, can convey the false impression of being absolute. There is room, therefore, for a critical reflection that would dispel this impression. To perform this clarifying task is precisely the task of an introduction to philosophy. It is simply a matter of bringing to light an absolute content which is already at hand in historically conditioned materials, and which, once brought to light, would stand on its own without the need of historical support. This content is none other than the life of the Absolute, at least as Schelling conceived of the Absolute at the time.²² Just as the absolute substance²³ first gives a sketch of itself in the idea,²⁴ then realizes itself in nature by giving itself an articulated body therein, and in spirit finally sums itself up by recognizing itself in this process of externalization, so philosophy must display the idea of the Absolute in cognition, and must then develop it into a philosophy of nature, an ethical system, and finally into a religion that recaptures the simplicity of the original idea. The assumption is that that idea is originally present to the philosopher in intuition, that is, in a still unarticulated immediate awareness. Here we have Hegel's first outline of a system: Idea (Logic and Metaphysics), Nature, Ethics, Religion. Philosophy must re-enact conceptually the process which is the very life of the absolute substance. As Hegel warns, philosophy's main adversary in this task is a spurious metaphysics, the product of bad reflection, which constantly threatens to introduce rigid conceptual distinctions where there are in fact none, and thus pre-empts the possibility of a truly organic grasp of reality. Philosophy's true intention ought to be none other than that "by it and through it we learn how to live."²⁵

¹⁹ For the text, see GW 5, *Schriften und Entwürfe (1799–1808)*, ed. T. Ebert, M. Baum, and K. R. Meist (Hamburg: Meiner, 1998), p. 654.

²⁰ For the fragments, see GW 5, 259–275.

²¹ *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Bamberg & Würzburg, 1807); GW 5, 59–60.

²² See the second major fragment, GW 5, 262–265. ²³ *das absolute Wesen*.

²⁴ "... in der Idee sein Bild gleichsam entwirft." Just how the Absolute accomplishes this, and what "idea" means in this context, is of course one of the problems of Schelling's pantheism.

²⁵ GW 5, 261.

As for the announced “Logic and Metaphysics,”²⁶ we learn from the same fragments that the Logic would have played precisely the introductory role of displaying the forms of finite (“bad”) reflection. It would show how this reflection, which is the product of the understanding, apes the attempt of reason to generate identity but only ends up with a formalistic counterfeit of it. By overcoming this formalism, logic then makes possible the transition to metaphysics, that is to say, it makes possible “the complete construction of the principle of all philosophy”²⁷ on the basis of which we can then “construct the possible systems of philosophy.”²⁸ It is in this way, in the medium of consciousness or in spirit, that for Hegel the reality of an otherwise shifting world of appearances becomes a harmonious whole.²⁹

1802/03. We have the fair copy of a *System of Ethics* obviously ready for publication but in fact never published. It is complete, though the final pages are sketchy, and there might be two lacunas in the text as it has come down to us.³⁰ It was composed at a time when Hegel was busy with a number of other projects, all dedicated to ethical issues. He was still working on a manuscript concerning the German Constitution, a project on which he had started even before moving to Jena.³¹ He also published an essay on natural law in the *Critical Journal of Philosophy*,³² announced courses on the same subject (summers of 1802 and 1803), and gave two of three announced public lectures on a critique of Fichte’s concept of natural law.³³ All evidence leads one to believe that the text is the reworking of notes prepared by Hegel for his announced lecture courses. The fact that it starts quite abruptly makes it likely that it was intended as only one part of a larger compendium of philosophy, and that it was never published because the compendium itself was not ready. In the 1801/02 outline of Hegel’s planned System, it would constitute the third part.

²⁶ GW 5, 269–275. There is evidence that Hegel interrupted the seminar before its official end. Cf. GW 5, 659.

²⁷ “... das Prinzip aller Philosophie vollständig zu konstruieren.” GW 5, 274.

²⁸ “... wir uns die Möglichen Systeme der Philosophie konstruieren können.” GW 5, 274.

²⁹ “... aber diese sich bewegende Welt ist ohne Bewußtsein der Harmonie; sie ist nur im Geist des Philosophen ein harmonisches.” GW 5, 269.

³⁰ GW 5, 660–661. The text, which is now available in a critical edition in GW 5, was edited and translated by H. Harris and T. M. Knox on the basis of an earlier edition of Georg Lasson (Leipzig, 1913). Cf. *G. W. F. Hegel: System of Ethical Life (1802/3) and First Philosophy of Spirit (1803/4)* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1979). For a description of the historical and conceptual context of the text, and an analysis of it, see H. S. Harris’s introduction to this translation.

³¹ GW 5, 552–553.

³² “Über die Wissenschaftlichen Behandlungsarten des Naturrechts, seine Stelle in der praktischen Philosophie, und sein Verhältnis zu den positiven Rechtswissenschaften.” GW 4, 415–464.

³³ The third was never given because, as an unsalaried instructor (*Privatdozent*), he was not allowed to hold lectures *gratis*, and a complaint was lodged against him to that effect. GW 5, 665–666.

The text is dense and intricate, but would not necessarily have been obscure to those who, like Hegel's prospective students, were familiar with Schelling's Identity Philosophy. For it is clear, even from its abrupt opening, that at the time Hegel still shared his mentor's basic assumptions regarding experience.³⁴ We read in the first lines:

Knowledge of the Idea of the absolute ethical order depends entirely on the establishment of perfect adequacy between intuition and concept, because the Idea is nothing other than the identity of the two. But if this identity is to be actually known, it must be thought as a made adequacy. But because they are then held apart from one another [as its two sides], they are afflicted with a difference.³⁵

The intuition/concept connection is of course Kantian in origin. In Schelling's System, however, it acquires a specialized new meaning. Intuition is no longer restricted to the senses but must be understood rather as the immediate feeling of the totality of reality which is presumably at the origin of consciousness and which conceptualization is then supposed to bring to reflective consciousness. But in fulfilling this function, the concept sets itself up against the intuition, as one particular form of consciousness as against another, and the task thereby arises of regaining the unity of reality as originally intuited. This is a task which is to be discharged in the medium of ideas at different levels of experience. Hegel's essay is an account of how the unity is attained in the particularized context of ethical life. The problem is to think how a people (*Volk*) can regain in the medium of appropriate laws and institutions the natural feeling of self-identity which made it a people originally but which is lost precisely in the attempt to canonize it in reflective laws and institutions. The conclusion of the essay is too sketchy to give any clear idea of how this recovery is finally to be realized. However, if we take Hegel's 1801/02 outline of a System as the norm, the resulting new people (the absolute *Volk*) would be a religious community. This is exactly what Hegel says in a text which we do not have, but which Rosenkranz describes at length and which very likely dates from around this time.³⁶ Moreover, still taking the 1801/02 outline as the norm, it appears that the interplay of intuition and concept which in this essay Hegel documents only by reference to the life of a society would

³⁴ This is in no way to imply that Hegel simply followed Schelling. On the contrary, while using Schelling's language, he subtly, and perhaps even inadvertently, gave it new meaning from the beginning.

³⁵ GW 5, 279.2–6. I am using the Harris and Knox translation, pp. 99–100.

³⁶ Rosenkranz, *Leben*, pp. 132–141. Harris gives a summary of this text in an Appendix to his translation of the *System of Ethics*, pp. 178–186. According to Harris, it was likely the conclusion of the *Philosophie universae delineatio* of 1803; see GW 6, 340, and Harris's translation, p. 202, note 1.

have to be detected by the philosopher in nature itself, inasmuch as nature constitutes the antecedent of communal existence. It would consist in a process by which the more organic forms of existence incorporate in their internal unity the otherwise dispersed elements of the inanimate forms that precede them. This is a process that ultimately leads to the creation of a social organism, and it is the subject matter of the Philosophy of Nature. Logic, for its part, would critically expose and overcome the type of conceptualization that tends to absolutize the opposition of intuition and concept, while Metaphysics would provide the basic ideal schemas of a reconciliation of the two in real existence.

1803/04. Hegel continued to lecture on his projected system. He announced a *Philosophiae universae delineatio* for the 1803 summer term,³⁷ and a lecture course again on the system of speculative philosophy for the subsequent 1803/04 winter term.³⁸ We do not know how extensive a use he made for these courses of prior notes, but we do have two extensive though fragmentary manuscripts that are clearly connected to them. One is a text, in parts left incomplete by Hegel himself, of a Philosophy of Nature and a Philosophy of Spirit.³⁹ The other is the manuscript of a Logic, Metaphysics, and Philosophy of Nature, in fair copy but reworked in places, fragmentary in parts and broken off by Hegel himself somewhere in the Philosophy of Nature, just before the stage of “organic nature” would have begun.⁴⁰ Both texts are important for different but complementary reasons. Regarding the first, its Philosophy of Spirit differs substantially from the earlier *System of Ethics* in two significant respects. For one thing, it starts with consciousness and not with *Volk*, as the earlier text does. The introduction of this extra element provides a smooth transition from the Philosophy of Nature to that of Spirit which would have been lacking in any intended prior complete System. Consciousness is where organic nature acquires its highest point of concentration by reflecting upon itself and where nature as such thus becomes spirit. When this consciousness develops into language, and language becomes in turn the language of a people, the social character of spirit is then revealed. It is only at this point that Hegel returns in his

³⁷ GW 6, 340.

³⁸ “Philosophiae speculativae systema, complectens a) Logicam et Metaphysicam, sive Idealismus transcendentalem, b) philosophiam naturae et c) mentis, ex dictatis exponet.” GW 6, 340.

³⁹ *Jenaer Systementwürfe I*, GW 6.

⁴⁰ *Jenaer Systementwürfe II, Logik, Metaphysik, Naturphilosophie (1804/05)*, GW 7. There is an English translation of the Logic and Metaphysics by the Ontario Hegel Group, *G. W. F. Hegel, The Jena System, 1804–5: Logic and Metaphysics*, translation edited by John W. Burbidge and George di Giovanni, with an Introduction by H. S. Harris (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1986).

manuscript to social existence, the subject matter of the earlier *System of Ethics*. The manuscript breaks off at the point where this existence assumes the form of labor. We do not know whether Hegel would have proceeded to develop it into the social products of Art and Religion, thereby merging the Ethics and Religion of the 1801/02 outline into one unit as is done in the mature Philosophy of Spirit. But of greater consequence is the other respect in which the text differs from the *System of Ethics*. In the latter work, spirit is treated in the same vein as nature would be, that is, from the speculative standpoint of an objective observer contemplating it at a distance – from the outside, so to speak, as one must indeed do when contemplating nature.⁴¹ With the introduction of consciousness, however, Hegel is now in a position to follow up the development of spirit from within the subjective standpoint of spirit itself – to follow it internally as it would appear to the subject matter itself under observation, namely spirit. Here we have the beginning of a phenomenological analysis of spirit, an especially significant innovation to which we shall return in a moment.

Regarding the other text, one can discern in it a parallel development. Logic and Metaphysics still appear as two separate pieces, as they do in the 1801/02 planned System. Presumably Logic is still intended to be the introduction to Metaphysics.⁴² But the distinction between the two tends in fact to disappear. Hegel still seems to think of dialectic in a negative, basically still Kantian sense, as a movement that irrupts from within finite thought revealing the contradictory nature of its determinations when these are held absolutely apart. But this movement, instead of being elicited under the pressure of external critical reflection as one would expect on a purely negative conception of dialectic, now assumes the character of a movement internal to thought as such, and extending to the categories of the Metaphysics as well. It is a movement by which thought develops into ever more complex forms and which can be traced from within thought itself simply by pursuing its internal logic. The net result is that, *de facto*, Logic loses its introductory function. It extends into Metaphysics, thus turning the latter into Logic. The metaphysical constructions that should have given objective expressions (in a kind of conceptual art in the style of Schelling) to the unity of being otherwise only immediately felt in intuition – a unity in which all differentiation is shown to be null – turn instead into reflective conceptual elaborations of forms which the concept itself takes on *as concept*. The concept thus gains in subjective depth, just

⁴¹ This is the standpoint from which ethical matters are dealt with in Chapter 5 of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, as contrasted with the way they are treated in Chapter 6.

⁴² The first pages of the manuscript are missing.

as spirit does in the text of the Philosophy of Spirit. Connecting the two, formal thought and spirit, is the concept of the “infinite” which is now understood as transcending the “finite,” not in the sense that it annuls it, but in the sense that it provides the conceptual space within which the finite can emerge in its multifarious forms and yet also be contained by the infinite. As a concept, the “infinite” provides the abstract schema, already attributed by Hegel to consciousness in 1801/02, for transforming the otherwise shifting world of nature into a harmonious whole.⁴³ What we have, in other words, is a first adumbration of the mature Logic, and, together with the other text, at least the materials for a System divided into Logic, Philosophy of Nature, and Philosophy of Spirit. The fact that Hegel did not complete his long since planned System at this time, even though he had manuscripts for it apparently intended for publication, might well indicate that his idea of System was then undergoing radical modifications.

1805/06/07. Two developments, which are the final ones we shall consider here, occurred in these years. Hegel announced a lecture course on *Realphilosophie* (that is, on nature and spirit) several times, but we have secure evidence that he actually gave it only for the 1806 summer term.⁴⁴ We also have from these years a manuscript which is also on the subject of *Realphilosophie*, in fair copy but heavily reworked.⁴⁵ Of special interest in this text is that in the third and final part of the section on spirit, detailing the structure of a society such as the absolute *Volk* would create, Hegel describes this process of social constitution as one in which nature becomes certain of itself.⁴⁶ In other words, while in 1803/04 Hegel provided a smoother transition from nature to spirit by introducing the factor of consciousness and thus adding to nature, so to speak, a new dimension of depth, he now adds to it yet another dimension by conceiving spirit as the place where nature becomes conscious of its being conscious, that is to say, the place where it becomes deliberate about itself or, again, where it becomes a product of spirit. This is a process which is completed in the media of art, religion, and science, in each of which nature assumes a new existence as the subject matter of spirit’s interests and activities. But now, Logic is the science of the concept. What is therefore provided at the conclusion of the system is a smooth transition, not just from nature to spirit, but from spirit, or the achieved system, back to the concept, that is to say,

⁴³ See note 29 above. ⁴⁴ Cf. GW 8, 318.

⁴⁵ *Jenaer Systementwürfe III*, GW 8. There is an English translation of the part on the Philosophy of Spirit. Leo Rauch, *Hegel and the Human Spirit: A Translation of the Jena Lectures on the Philosophy of Spirit (1805–6) with Commentary* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983).

⁴⁶ GW 8, 258.18–20. English trans., p. 155.

back to the beginning of the System which is also its foundation. Logic thus loses whatever vestige of a role it might still have had as an introduction to the system, and regains instead, if one just ignores the “thing-in-itself” of Kant, a function not unlike that of the latter’s Transcendental Logic. Just as the categories define the concept of an object in general (*ein Gegenstand überhaupt*) which is then to be given content in both theoretical and practical shape, now the Logic defines the structure of an original conceptual space that makes possible both spirit’s interpretation of nature as its pre-history and of itself as forging that same nature into a meaning-generating community. Spirit, in other words, transforms nature into a harmonious whole, and this transformative function is precisely what Hegel had from the beginning declared philosophy’s purpose to be. That space is at the origin of experience – is constitutive of it. But it becomes itself the object of reflective awareness only as the ultimate work of spirit, in the medium of the consciousness typical of the consummate community. The philosopher is the one responsible for this Logic, and Logic itself now turns out to be both the basis *and* the final product of the system.

This is the first development. The second has to do with Hegel’s publication plans in these years. We know that, in connection with his proposed teaching for the summer terms of 1805 and 1806, Hegel announced the publication of a book that would contain the whole science of philosophy.⁴⁷ This promissory note was never honored – at least, not at face value. But then, for the winter term of 1806/07, Hegel announced a course on “logic and metaphysics, or speculative philosophy, premised by a phenomenology of the mind based on the soon to be delivered first part of his book, *The System of Science*.”⁴⁸ And for the summer term of 1807, when Hegel did not in fact lecture, this announced first part was indeed available at the bookstore. We learn from Rosenkranz that Hegel had been developing, in connection with his introduction to logic and metaphysics, the concept of the experience that consciousness makes of itself. It is now this science of experience, the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which was given the role, previously attributed to logic, of introducing speculative philosophy, logic included.

Such are the relevant data. An answer to the question of why this shift of perspectives occurred, how phenomenology replaced logic and how this change made a difference to Hegel’s conception of logic, cannot avoid an

⁴⁷ “... totam philosophiæ scientiam, i.e. philosophiam speculativam (logicam et metaphysicam) naturæ et mentis, ex libro per æstatem prodituro...” GW 9, 427.

⁴⁸ “... logicam et metaphysicam s. philosophiam speculativam, præmissa Phænomenologia mentis ex libri sui, System der Wissenschaft, proxime proditura parte prima.” GW 9, 427.

element of interpretation. But there can be little doubt that the shift was associated with the distance that Hegel gradually assumed with respect to Schelling (who, incidentally, left Jena in 1803), or, perhaps more to the point, with his gradual recognition that the supposed intuition of the Absolute on which Schelling's system was based no longer served any function in his own system as this had developed in his hands. And it is at least not unlikely that Fichte's subjectivity (which Hegel had severely criticized in 1801, though not for its being "subjective" but for being "abstractly" subjective)⁴⁹ is what provided the extra conceptual factor that cemented his developing system – even though, it must immediately be added, in transcending Schelling Hegel was at the same time also transcending Fichte. The point is that in both Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* (or Science of Knowledge, as Fichte named his philosophy), and Hegel's just published *Phenomenology of Spirit*, there are, to use Fichte's early language, two series of representations: (1) those which are the products of a subject of experience who is engaged in the process of conceptualization, and (2) those of a subject (the philosopher) who reflects upon the representations of the other series and explicates what they truly are the representations of.⁵⁰ And for both Fichte and Hegel the upshot of this second reflective series is the same, namely that whatever the experience a subject is engaged in, and whatever the representational medium in which that experience is realized, the theme underlying it or the motivation urging it on is the overarching interest on the part of the subject to construe a world for himself within which he can attain self-identity. This is of course still a play on Kant's transcendental unity of apperception. With reference to Schelling, however, the net result is that truth no longer requires "the establishment of perfect adequacy between intuition and concept," as Hegel himself still thought in the 1802/03 *System of Ethics* – where intuition would entail transcending the realm of conceptualization and thus rejoining the unity of the Absolute. This is a unity in which all distinctions, including that of subject and object that makes consciousness possible, are dissolved.⁵¹

⁴⁹ *Differenz des Fichte'schen und Schelling'schen System der Philosophie*, *Journal of Critical Philosophy* (1801). GW 4, 6.23–7.21; English trans. *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, trans. H. S. Harris and W. Cerf (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977), cf. pp. 81–82.

⁵⁰ GW 9, 60.33–61.27. J. G. Fichte, [*Zweite*] *Einleitung in der Wissenschaftslehre* (1797). GA I.4.200. English trans., Daniel Breazeale, *J. G. Fichte: Introduction to the Wissenschaftslehre and Other Writings* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), pp. 37–38.

⁵¹ G. E. Schulze (the author of *Aenesidemus*, the first skeptical attack on Kant) was very likely an important catalyst in this distancing process. In 1801 Schulze had published a two-volume opus under the title of *Critique of Theoretical Philosophy* in which he again defended the standpoint of

There is no longer any need to invoke such cosmogonic imagery as that of the Absolute giving a sketch of itself in the idea (“in der Idee sein Bild gleichsam entwirft”), as Hegel invoked in 1801/02. Issues of truth are to be resolved within experience itself, on the basis of the adequacy of any given construal of reality for satisfying certain presupposed subjective interests. It is this subjective deepening of experience, clearly reminiscent of Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre*, that made possible for Hegel the transition from logic, as a negative dialectical exercise externally applied to experience, to a phenomenology of experience. This was Fichte’s contribution to Hegel – “*Fichtes Verdienst*,” as Hegel said in an aphorism dating to the Jena period.⁵²

But Hegel had gone beyond Fichte as well. The difference lies in how Hegel conceives the subject on whose series of representations the philosopher applies his reflection. For Fichte, that subject is presumed to be a

common sense and of theoretical skepticism. Hegel reviewed it in 1802, and Schulze responded to his review in the subsequent year with an anonymous essay entitled “Aphorisms Concerning the Absolute.” In the essay Schulze skillfully parodied the Identity Philosophy of Schelling to which Hegel still clearly adhered at the time of the review. He pretended to be a disciple of Schelling and pretended to rely on Schellingian principles to criticize what was in fact his own skepticism. He argued, quite consequentially, that since in intuition there is no distinction between subject and object, and yet consciousness requires this distinction, the aim of the philosopher is to achieve a kind of semi-consciousness, a dreamy state so to speak, in which all distinctions are overcome and all doubts therefore disappear. This is the state of mind which Hegel himself was later to deride in the Preface to his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). Using language strongly reminiscent of Schulze’s, Hegel described it as a “night in which all cows are black” (GW 9, 17.28–29). Among the many factors that contributed to Hegel’s becoming deliberately aware that he was parting company with Schelling, this anonymous publication of Schulze might well have been the most decisive.

For the relevant texts, see the following: G. E. Schulze, *Kritik der theoretischen Philosophie*, 2 vols. (Hamburg, 1801); [G. W. F. Hegel], “Verhältniß des Skepticismus zur Philosophie, Darstellung seiner verschiedenen Modificationen, und Vergleichung des neuesten mit dem alten,” *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie* (1802), GW 4. English trans. in *Between Kant and Hegel: Texts in the Development of Post-Kantian Idealism*, translated with introductory studies by G. di Giovanni and H. S. Harris; revised edition, G. di Giovanni (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 2000); [G. E. Schulze], “Aphorismen über das Absolute, als das alleinige Prinzip der wahren Philosophie, über die einzige mögliche Art es zu erkennen, wie auch über das Verhältniß aller Dinge in der Welt zu demselben,” *Neues Museum der Philosophie und Litteratur*, ed. Friedrich Bouterwek, 1.2 (1803), 110–148. Reproduced in *Transzendentalphilosophie und Spekulation: Der Streit um die Gestalt einer Ersten Philosophie (1799–1807)*, *Quellenband*, ed. Walter Jaeschke (Hamburg: Meiner, 1993).

For a discussion of the episode and further relevant materials, see Kurt Reiner Meist, “‘Sich vollbringende Skeptizismus’: G. E. Schulzes Replik auf Hegel und Schelling,” in *Transzendentalphilosophie und Spekulation: Der Streit um die Gestalt einer Ersten Philosophie (1799–1807)*, ed. Walter Jaeschke (Hamburg: Meiner, 1993), pp. 192–230.

⁵² It is only in the recent past that this aphorism, jotted down by Hegel in a scrapbook which Rosenkranz entitled “Hegel’s Wastebook,” was recovered. It reads in full: “Only after the history of consciousness *does one know* through the concept [*durch den Begriff*] *what one has in these abstractions*: Fichte’s contribution [*Fichtes Verdienst*].” For the aphorism and how it was lost, see Friedhelm Nicolin, “Unbekannte Aphorismen Hegels aus der Jenaer Periode,” *Hegel-Studien*, 4 (1967), 9–19. For a description of the “Wastebook,” see Karl Rosenkranz, *Hegels Leben*, pp. 198–201.

pure “I,” that is to say, a *cogito* whose whole substance consists precisely in a thought thinking itself, and the sole interest motivating it (inasmuch as one can speak of “motivation” at all in this context) is self-expression. It is an act of unlimited freedom. But any such act, no less than Schelling’s Absolute, would escape reflective comprehension. The only evidence for it is the immediate self-awareness that an individual subject presumably gains of himself inasmuch as he agrees to collude with Fichte in the thought experiment which is the *Wissenschaftslehre*. But this self-awareness is unexpressible and therefore ultimately ambiguous. It is an “interest in freedom” alone, therefore, that motivates Fichte’s Science and also ought to motivate the commitment of every moral individual to interpret experience as a manifestation of a pure act of freedom.⁵³ Where Schelling relies on artistic intuition to bring his system to a close, Fichte relies on moral faith. Of course, that supposed freedom never becomes visibly incarnate. Nevertheless, experience is for Fichte not just a matter of *mere* appearance; its objects are not mere semblances of being, as they would have to be in Schelling’s system of identity. In Fichte’s system, the objects gain depth precisely by being failed attempts to attain the intended pure freedom. They are the products of a freedom *manqué*,⁵⁴ and they find their substantiality in precisely this missed goal. It is a negative substantiality, so to speak, but a substantiality just the same, and to this extent the source of a sort of self-satisfaction.

This last is the aspect of Fichte that Hegel could not accept and chided as a form of abstract subjectivism. Hegel’s crucial move beyond Fichte is that he takes the subject on whose representations the philosopher exercises his reflection as a historical entity. The task of phenomenology is not to trace in experience the manifestation of freedom ideologically, that is to say, by virtue of a commitment to it in faith, but to do it historically – where by “freedom” Hegel now means nothing transcendent but, in a more transcendental vein, the power that reason demonstrates over nature by transforming what would otherwise be just something physical into an object, by humanizing it through labor, and ultimately by making it re-exist, as Hegel says in the 1805/06 System, as the object of art, religion, and science. Of course, Fichte too recognized this power of reason, but only in its negative aspect. He did not see that this is a power that bears positive effects, and that it attains its total goal in principle the moment

⁵³ J. G. Fichte, [*Erste*] *Einleitung in der Wissenschaftslehre* (1797). GA I.4.193–195. English trans., [*First*] *Introduction to the WL*, Breazeale, *J. G. Fichte: Introduction to the Wissenschaftslehre and Other Writings*, pp. 17–20.

⁵⁴ I am shifting into French to allude to the obvious similarities between Jean-Paul Sartre and Fichte.

reason comes on the scene. Like an *a priori*, spirit is either present from the beginning *in toto* or not at all. All that is to be added to its presence – but this is precisely the substance of experience – is for the historical subject to become explicitly aware of it, in effect, of recognizing that the social structures that he might have presumed to be the products of nature, and the accounts that he gives of nature, are in fact from the start the creative productions of reason. It might seem that Hegel is thereby totally devaluing nature. In point of fact, the opposite is the case. It is true that by interpreting nature as its pre-history, spirit invests it with a meaning which it would not otherwise have. But spirit's own content, or the determination of its various meaning-constituting activities, is itself determined by what that same nature happens to be before it is thus implicated in the life of spirit. Issues of truth are no longer, therefore, just a matter of telling a tale that satisfies spirit's subjective interests in spite of nature's apparent witness to the contrary, and even because of it – as it would be the case for Fichte. The satisfaction must be consummated in nature itself, albeit transformed by spirit. This means that the tale, while dictated by spirit, must be shown also to map onto nature as what is given.⁵⁵ Hegel's interest in nature was certainly fueled by the examples of Goethe and Schelling. But it acquired in his System a significance specific to him.

History is in Hegel's system the area where spirit and nature overlap. The *Phenomenology* is an account of this history from the standpoint of the historical subject's increasingly explicit consciousness of the work that spirit has already accomplished in nature. This is a progress that culminates with philosophy, as the idea that spirit has of itself. The book that Hegel finally published in 1807 thus answers to Hegel's 1801/02 definition of an introduction to philosophy. Philosophy is its own introduction because reason, which is its subject matter, is self-justifying. But, as an "empirical" (read: historical) product, philosophy is affected by a subjective (read: contingent) element which can obscure its nature to its own eyes and which therefore needs dissipating. The *Phenomenology of Spirit* is an account of philosophy as the latter came to the explicit consciousness of itself within the confines of that historical episode which we call Western Culture.⁵⁶ Its content covers in historical mode the content of the whole system,

⁵⁵ Thus prestige is to be gained at the price of risking death, and death is redeemed, not by denying it as a mere transition to another life, but by humanizing it by means of religious ritual. Cf. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, GW 9, III.18–112.2; 224.14ff.

⁵⁶ The *Phenomenology of Spirit* has, and must have, a historical content. Whether one can map its course on to the actual course of the history of the Western world, or whether one should rather treat the book as historical fiction with a philosophical intent, is of course an issue of critical discussion.

and one can see how Hegel could have used the materials of its first three chapters in connection with his lectures on Logic in 1804, as Rosenkranz tells us.⁵⁷ In this respect, since the work is governed throughout by the idea of spirit, it also constitutes the First Part of the System of Science, as Hegel surnamed it in 1807. This is a title which was dropped in the second edition of 1832, because it no longer corresponded to the subsequent publication history of the then planned System, and because Hegel later incorporated a much abbreviated version of the *Phenomenology* in the Encyclopedia as part of the Philosophy of Spirit.⁵⁸ It is a title nevertheless appropriate to it, because the *Phenomenology of Spirit* does presuppose as its *a priori* the very idea which it is supposed to bring to explicit consciousness. In principle at least, therefore, it is already science. How the work can be both historical in nature and yet be governed *a priori* is a problem that has vexed its interpreters but need not concern us here. What does concern us here is the converse problem, namely how the Logic which the *Phenomenology of Spirit* presupposes can at once be logic and yet, *as logic*, require a history. Or again, restated in terms of the structure of Hegel's System, the question is how the Logic can be both the starting point of the System *and* its result.

THE IDEA OF THE LOGIC

Hegel's Logic has been interpreted in radically different ways. We shall turn to the more typical of these interpretations in the next section. As I have already indicated, I shall suggest here a way of reading it which is not uncontroversial but, precisely for that reason, will serve to highlight where the fault lines in the history of interpretation lie. On the face of it, Hegel's Logic has all the markings of a classical, pre-critical metaphysics. But this is a false impression, and our first task is to understand in what sense it in fact still falls within the compass of Kant's critical project. For this, we must further elaborate on themes already adumbrated.

The context

Kant's critical move was to approach experience from the standpoint of a subject who is engaged in it, and to take the mental space that this subject brings to it as the originaive factor in the whole process of experience.

⁵⁷ *Hegels Leben*, p. 202.

⁵⁸ See the Preface (dated November 1831) to the 1832 edition of "The Logic of Being." GW 21, 9, Hegel's footnote.

It is its *a priori*. “Mental space” is of course only a metaphor, but an apt one. Just as physical space, as we normally picture it, makes possible the orderly juxtaposition of physical things, so the mind’s representational activities, be they imaginative or conceptual, make possible the presence of these same things to the mind as objects. In this extended sense, they constitute a sort of space *sui generis* – a subjective *a priori*, according to Kant. Moreover, the metaphor aptly alludes to a number of other metaphors that Kant himself constantly uses, as for instance “the *realm* of empirical objects,” or “the *kingdom* of ends.” Now Kant distinguished types of this mental space. One is the space generated by the senses, a sort of bodily *a priori* in the medium of which objects are immediately or intuitively present to the subject of experience. Another is of a logical character, the product of a thought-reflection that defines the concept of an object in general. It defines the minimum that one must be able to say of an object (*Gegenstand*) if it is to be recognized sufficiently *as object* when intuitively given to the senses (if ever given) in the space generated by the latter. Kant’s categories are the determinations of this concept.⁵⁹ The test of whether together they adequately define a recognizable object is whether, in deploying them as a means for sorting out and connecting together the otherwise undifferentiated content of sense intuition, a subject can retain in the course of experience a sense of self-identity – or again, whether the subject can retain a clear distinction between itself and what is given to it. This self-identity can be taken both abstractly as that of an “I think” in general, and more concretely as of a singular individual that makes his way across a field of experience and therein differentiates between his self and what is given to him. It can therefore also differentiate between the only apparently or merely *subjectively* given and the truly or *objectively* given. In either case, whether taken abstractly or concretely, the self can also be more than just an observer. It can be a *doer* as well, a generator of values, and its identity, therefore, is also a moral one. Here is where a third kind of space comes into play. This is the space of reason,⁶⁰ where one can think of what might be, or would have to be, and even ought to

⁵⁹ Cf. “Our cognition springs from two fundamental sources of the mind; the first is the receiving of representations (receptivity of impressions), the second is the power to [re]cognize an object through these representations (spontaneity of the concepts); through the first an object is *given* to us, through the second the object is *thought* with reference to that representation (as mere determination of the mind).” A50/B74. “[The categories] are concepts of an object in general” (*Sie sind Begriffe von einem Gegenstande überhaupt*). B128.

⁶⁰ “Space of reason” comes from Wilfrid Sellars’s “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind,” *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science*, ed. Herbert Feigl and Michael Scriven (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), pp. 298–299.

be, as contrasted with what is given in sense experience *de facto*. It is the space where one can project the moral idea of a “kingdom of ends” and also the idea of what is for Kant the unknowable “thing-in-itself.” This last idea is the one which his contemporaries found especially troublesome from the beginning, but which nevertheless played an indispensable role in Kant’s system at all levels. This it did first of all at the theoretical level. The presence of the “thing-in-itself,” as a presumed, empty yet fixed, external point of reference, allowed the experiencing subject to do both: gain the required subjective distance from his own experiences to recognize their subjective character while maintaining a sufficiently robust objective sense of “givenness” for their content by referring to it. The sense of “givenness” is made possible precisely by distinguishing between what are merely subjective impressions and what are, or can at least be interpreted to be, appearances originating in that irreducibly transcendent “other” which is the “thing-in-itself.” Phenomenal objectivity might be limited objectivity, but it is objectivity nonetheless.

This is a minimalist account of Kant’s critical project. But it is sufficient to understand how and why Fichte would feel obliged to reform it, and why Hegel found Kant’s original project as well as Fichte’s reform objectionable. For this, we must return to Fichte’s *cogito*, or more accurately, to the thought experiment that Fichte urged on his auditors in order to gain entrance into his system.⁶¹ The immediate occasion for the experiment was Fichte’s desire to explain why in experience, in determining our objects, we feel constrained to abide by certain rules; in other words, why there is an *a priori* governing our experiences. As he asks, “But what is the basis of the system of those representations accompanied by a feeling of necessity, and what is the basis of this feeling of necessity itself?” And he immediately adds, “Another name for [this system] is ‘experience’ – whether inner or outer.”⁶² Whether one explains this “feeling of necessity” as originating in us because of the external influence of a “thing-in-itself,” or as an internal *a priori* product of the *cogito* itself, marks the difference according to Fichte between those whom he calls “dogmatists” and the “idealists.” To elaborate on this difference is Fichte’s main preoccupation. But whether one follows one line of explanation or the other also makes a difference in how one interprets the sense of “being merely given,” or of mere facticity, that characterizes in experience the first presence of its objects.⁶³ This is a

⁶¹ [First] Introduction to the WL, pp. 7–8; GA I.4.186–187.

⁶² [First] Introduction to the WL, p. 8; GA I.4.186.

⁶³ I am borrowing the term “facticity,” *Faktizität*, from the Fichte of 1810. For instance: “Wenn wir bis zur Erklärung dieser Faktizität selbst uns emporschwingen werden, dann werden wir vollendet

feature which we tend to attribute to these objects in abstraction from the subject experiencing them but which in fact implicates the latter from the start, for it denotes a dissatisfaction on the subject's part regarding their presence. It is as if this presence constituted a check on the subject's attempt at controlling *a priori* the space of experience. It therefore generates for the subject both a sense of irreducible "otherness" with respect to the objects and equally the need to transcend this sense – to explain it away.⁶⁴ This is the point of Fichte's claim that in experience "form and content are not two separate elements."⁶⁵ Now Fichte strenuously wanted to believe that this was also Kant's position.⁶⁶ But he was very well aware that when defining the meaning of "being given" – of phenomenal *data* – Kant had relied on the then universally accepted scholastic model of the mind, connecting it with sense impressions whose character was presumed to be essentially passive. But the model provided at best a psychological rather than a critical explanation of "impressions," and it had the unfortunate side-effect of making Kant's theory vulnerable to dogmatic interpretations. His notorious "thing-in-itself," instead of being understood as an ideal term of reference that generates a universal space of reason and is itself a function of the *cogito*, could be taken instead – as in fact it was by many contemporaries – as a sort of hyper-physical entity that externally inflicts on the subject of experience effects over which the latter has no control. In a critical context, however, any appeal to causality, besides being inconsistent with Kant's critical restriction of it to the realm of phenomena (as Aenesidemus had stridently argued),⁶⁷ would have had to fall on the

haben" ["If we soar upwards to the explanation of this facticity, then we have come to the end"], WL – 1810, GA II.11: 309.19–20. For a fuller discussion of this aspect of Fichte, which becomes even more prominent after 1800, cf. George di Giovanni "Sacramentalizing the World: On Fichte's Wissenschaftslehre of 1810," in *Grund- und Methodenfragen in Fichtes Spätwerk, Fichte-Studien*, 31, ed. Günter Zöller and Hans Georg von Mainz (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007), 219–233.

⁶⁴ Cf.: "Indeed, something becomes contingent for someone precisely insofar as he inquires concerning its basis. To seek a basis or reason for something contingent, one has to look towards something else, something determinate, whose determinacy explains why what is based upon it is determined precisely the way it is . . ." [First] *Introduction to the WL*, p. 9; GA I.4.187, §2.

⁶⁵ [First] *Introduction to the WL*, p. 28; GA I.4.202.

⁶⁶ Cf. [Second] *Introduction to the WL*, p. 71; GA I.4.486. But perhaps in this whole passage Fichte is protesting too much for one who professes to believe in Kant unreservedly.

⁶⁷ Schulze, G. E. [anonymous], *Aenesidemus, oder über der vom Herrn Prof. Reinhold in Jena gelieferten Elementarphilosophie, nebst einer Verteidigung gegen die Anmassungen der Vernunftkritik* (1792), p. 155; English trans. in Giovanni and Harris, *Between Kant and Hegel*, p. 122. Jacobi is generally believed to have been the first to have raised this objection in his Appendix to the dialogue *David Hume* (1787). But in fact his position is much more sophisticated, for Jacobi does not object to the categories being applied to the "thing-in-itself," provided that they remain non-schematized. His point is rather that, because they remain non-schematized, and "thing-in-itself" thus remains a mere idea, Kant cannot

side of a physiological pre-history of experience. It did not explain the phenomenon of brute presence precisely as phenomenon, that is, as an experiential fact of consciousness.

It was to remedy this failure that Fichte undertook his thought experiment, asking his auditors to think simply for the sake of thinking and to reflect on the result. The attempt was intended as an expression of pure freedom. But the result, as reflectively apprehended, had to be a failure – not just because, as a matter of fact, one cannot think without actually thinking *something* in particular, but because the difference between the intended infinite thought and the thought (now an object) *de facto* finitely apprehended is precisely what creates the distance between the subject of experience and his object that makes the experience a conscious one. Without that distance, there is no consciousness. The failure was not, therefore, an unqualified one. For on the assumption that the expression of freedom is the interest motivating all experience, or in more concrete terms, provided that one sees one's own existence in experience as a protracted attempt at self-contained activity, then the fact that in these activities one cannot but take into consideration what at least appears as extraneous circumstances is felt indeed as a constraint, but a constraint which, no less than the formal rules that govern the experience of those circumstances, is itself the product of the original *cogito*. Without the original attempt at purely autonomous activity, there would be no sense of “being constrained.” The net result is that the whole realm of experience becomes colored with a moral tinge, exactly what Fichte had of course intended from the start. Experience is a call to transform the otherwise merely brute facts of experience into products of freedom, a call to re-do nature after the image of the Absolute. And this is a process that requires remembering that the “bruteness” of those facts is itself the first product of freedom.⁶⁸

escape absolute subjectivism. On this point, see Birgit Sandkaulen, “Das ‘leidige Ding an sich’: Kant – Jacobi – Fichte,” in *Kant und der Frühidealismus*, ed. Jürgen Stolzenberg (Hamburg: Meiner, 2007), 175–201. For an English translation of Jacobi's dialogue, see *Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi: The Main Philosophical Writings and the Novel Allwill*, translated with an Introductory Study, Notes, and Bibliography by George di Giovanni (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1994); includes G. di Giovanni, *The Unfinished Philosophy of Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi*, pp. 1–167.

⁶⁸ “Nature must gradually be resolved into a condition in which her regular actions bear a fixed and definite relation to that which is destined to govern it – that of man . . . Thus shall Nature ever become more and more intelligible and transparent . . .” *Die Bestimmung des Menschen, dargestellt von Johann Gottlieb Fichte* (Berlin: Voss, 1800), pp. 182–183. English translation, *The Vocation of Man*, trans., ed. Roderick M. Chisholm (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956), pp. 103–104. For an extended discussion of this work, see George di Giovanni, *Freedom and Religion in Kant and His Immediate Successors: The Vocation of Humankind, 1774–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), Chapter 8.

Fichte accomplishes this work conceptually, in accordance with his vocation as a philosopher. In an important sense, the work still falls within the compass of Kant's Transcendental Logic, namely inasmuch as its intent is still to produce *a priori* the concept of an object in general or of generating *a priori* the conceptual space that makes the recognition of an object possible. But there is also an equally important difference. In Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, Kant's need to validate the categories by demonstrating that they are found realized in sense experience – the need of a Transcendental Deduction, in other words – no longer arises. To make the point in Kant's terms, Fichte had relativized the distinction, which for Kant was absolute, between understanding and reason.⁶⁹ He had extended to the whole realm of experience the claim that for Kant applied unqualifiedly only to the moral realm, namely that conceptualization is essentially a norm-setting function, and that it is therefore wrong to try to validate its products by measuring them against any *given* state of affairs. Or again, Fichte was taking seriously Kant's own theoretical claim that nature is an idea, and that one must approach experience with questions in hand, coercing it to yield already well-rehearsed answers. The idea of construing objects of experience by *applying* categories to a presupposed given content loses all meaning, except perhaps in some artificially restricted context. One must rather *interpret* experience by making sense of its otherwise merely given content in terms of *a priori* conceptual constructs which, though evoking actual situations, draw the only possible content appropriate to them from their place in a system of such constructs, or from experience itself as already idealized. What Kant had said of "respect for the [moral] law," namely that it is the only case of a feeling which is determined *a priori* by reason,⁷⁰ now applies across the whole realm of experience.

Starting from his opening interpretation of the meaning of facticity, Fichte proceeds methodically in his *Wissenschaftslehre* to deduce a whole system of the said constructs, both theoretical and practical. But because of the nature itself of the overall project, the interpretation of experience that they provide at each step must remain to the end *only* interpretation, never totally absorbing the factual content it interprets, that is to say, never quite dissolving its facticity. This is of course the price to be paid for setting as the norm of truth the attainment of a freedom which, if ever

⁶⁹ "For a full-blown idealism, *a priori* and *a posteriori* are not two different things, but are one and the same thing, simply looked at from two different sides, and they can be distinguished from each other only in terms of the different means one employs in order to arrive at each." [*First Introduction to the WL*, p. 32; GA I.4.206.

⁷⁰ AK V.76.16–17.

attained, would transcend consciousness altogether – the price for making the abstractive power of reflection a wider and prior mental space than the physical one of being. The phenomenon of facticity is the net result of precisely this abstractive move. There is, therefore, as we said earlier, a kind of moral satisfaction in the dissatisfaction with any given situation which is felt at the level of individual immediate experience. In a Fichtean moral context, that dissatisfaction is itself an indirect witness to the seriousness of one's moral commitment to absolute freedom.⁷¹ And there is yet another price to be paid for the same abstractive move, also at the individual level of experience. At that level, the gap between interpretation and *de facto* experience is ultimately to be filled by pragmatics. It is done with the needs of the moment as the final determining ground – though with one's professed interest in freedom as the subjective guarantee that one is acting rightly. The consequence for Fichte's project as a whole is that, although the *Wissenschaftslehre* is a work of conceptualization and therefore of logic, even *as logic* it is dependent on a phenomenology of the historical individual responsible for it. To use an expression of Fichte, it is dependent on "pragmatic history": at the beginning, where reflection is the moving force, on the individual's self-expression in a free but abstract "I"; and at the end, where action is the issue, on the freedom-inspired rhetoric that finally fills the gap between interpretation and singular moral judgment. It is not by chance that Fichte repeatedly lapses into sermonizing.⁷² In the end, the logic of his Science naturally gives way to rhetoric.⁷³

We are back to the theme of abstract formalism and subjectivism that preoccupied Hegel in the Jena years. On Hegel's analysis of both Kant and Fichte, the problem is that the "I" that figures so prominently in their theories is too abstract a product of conceptualization. It *means* to say much but in fact *says* nothing. Therefore, according to Hegel, it lets the content of experience for which it is supposed to provide the unifying space, its conceptual *a priori*, escape from it and fall, so to speak, on the side of a beyond from which it is retrievable only by means of such non-conceptual means as intuition. But intuition, whether of the Kantian or the Fichtean type, is ultimately inexpressible and therefore a source of irrationality. This is not to say that Hegel does not recognize that facticity is an irreducible

⁷¹ Kant had said something not dissimilar. "Hence we can see *a priori* that the moral law, as the determining ground of the will, must by thwarting all our inclinations produce a feeling that can be called pain; and here we have the first and perhaps the only case in which we can determine *a priori* from concepts the relation of a cognition (here the cognition of a pure practical reason) to the feeling of pleasure or displeasure." AK 5:73.

⁷² Cf. note 68 above.

⁷³ On this ground, Fichte might indeed deserve indeed the title of being the first post-modernist.

element of experience. This is the lesson that he had indeed learned from Fichte. Hegel's canonical term for it, about which more in just a moment, is "immediacy." But the point is that such a facticity, this immediacy of experience, ought to be absorbed conceptually even *as* facticity. It has to be comprehended positively. To avoid Fichte's inevitable slide from logic into rhetoric, one needs a kind of conceptualization that permeates that facticity. And if Hegel did not want to travel the way of Schelling, which would have taken him to a pre-Kantian Spinozism, then the only avenue still open to him was to comprehend facticity discursively, without intuition or myth-making. How this is to be done is the problem of the beginning of the Logic.

The beginning

Nothing seems as simple, as irrefutable, and yet as unconvincing, as Hegel's opening argument about the concepts of "being" and "nothing" – that they shift into one another, and that their play of mutual replacement is finally resolved into a third concept of "becoming." In the context just defined, however, these moves do make sense. The problem is still that of Kant's Transcendental Logic, namely that of determining the least that must be said of an object (*Gegenstand*) in order to recognize it sufficiently as such. But Kant and Fichte had begun by saying too much – Kant, by introducing a schema of ready-made categories which he had neither derived nor would further develop; and Fichte, by promoting freedom as an avowedly extra-conceptual cause. And for this reason, as we have just seen, they incurred the formalism and the subjectivism that Hegel decried in them. Most of all, they failed to see that the truth of an object (*Gegenstand*) is only to be found in the discourse about it, so that any opaqueness as to what that object is, or whether it is at all, must be resolved from within the original discourse itself by developing it according to rules internal to it.⁷⁴ There is no exit from language. This is the central point of Hegel's position and the meaning of his repeated claim that the content of discourse is generated by its form.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Of course, "discourse" and "saying" are to be understood here in a logical context, that is, as meaning-generating performances in which the *flautus vocis*, though never dissolved, is nevertheless absorbed into the meaningful intentions that language conveys. This is not to say that it is not appropriate to distinguish between verbal sounds and concepts, or between "speaking" and "thinking," or to enquire how the two are interconnected. But these are psychological reflections that belong to logic, if they belong to it at all, only accidentally.

⁷⁵ This is also the meaning of Hegel's repeated claim in the *Phenomenology* that much of the language that we ordinarily believe to be descriptive statements about things is in fact already reflective, that is to say, implicitly contains a judgment about how, and to what extent, we truly apprehend a

Any judgment regarding a subject matter contains a comment on what has already been said or has been left unsaid about it. The subject matter of the Logic is not the “thing-in-itself” or its phenomenal manifestations, whether one conceives its “in-itself” as a substance or as freedom, but is discourse itself. Hegel’s thesis is that, starting from the least that one can say about an object in general while still making sense, one can proceed to identify sets of predicates, namely the categories, each of which defines the limits of a type of discourse suited to a certain subject matter. Each set is arrived at by virtue of a reflection upon the prior, a reflection that makes explicit and formally introduces into a new type of discourse the logical determinacy that was still missing in the one preceding it and therefore made its subject matter still unintelligible (or, more precisely, relatively unintelligible). The Logic itself is a discourse about discourse – the only discourse which, because of its subject matter, can attain perfect completion and which, therefore, defines the norm of intelligibility against which all other types of discourse, all of them more or less open-ended in their own spheres, are to be measured.

I shall say more about how the Logic unfolds. The important point right now is that Hegel’s Logic does not proceed from the formal to the real, where the “real” is the “given” as in Kant’s Transcendental Analytic; nor does it proceed from the theoretical to the practical, where the “practical” arises from the challenge that the facticity of experience, as interpreted in Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre*, poses to freedom. On the contrary, the progression is from the abstract to the concrete, or more graphically, from a first delineation of the intelligible space of reason to a full discourse about it. There is never an exit from either the logically formal or the theoretical. Accordingly, the notes of “givenness” and “facticity” lose in Hegel’s Logic the systematic significance that they respectively had for Kant and Fichte (though they may well still retain limited applicability in limited contexts). “Immediacy” is the note that replaces them. Immediacy is a feature that affects logical discourse at every stage of its development. It is a measure of the indeterminacy that that discourse still harbors at any particular stage because of the limitations of the specific set of categories that define it at that stage; it is “*das Rest*” of those categories, their still unintelligible residue that the next set will have to absorb by reintroducing it as a moment of the form governing the following type of discourse. These, such distinctions as those between “abstract” and “concrete,” “immediate”

supposed thing. For instance: “It is clear that the dialectic of sense-certainty is nothing else but the simple history of its movement or of its experience, and sense-certainty itself is nothing else but just this history.” GW 9, 68.34–36.

and “reflective,” “material” and “formal,” are the factors that govern the movement of Hegel’s Logic essentially. And they are all implicated in a further distinction that Hegel introduces unobtrusively, and one that tends to be lost in English translation, but which in fact controls the development of the Logic from beginning to end. This is the distinction between *Gegenstand* and *Objekt*, and between their derived abstract nouns *Gegenständlichkeit* and *Objektivität* – a translator’s nightmare, since the dictionary translation of both terms and the derived abstract nouns are the same: “object” and “objectivity.” The distinction between *Gegenstand* and *Objekt* coincides roughly with the scholastic distinction between “material” and “formal” object or, in an ordinary epistemological context, between a “subject matter” as merely intended or merely representable⁷⁶ and as actually made present in representation. As actually made present, the “subject matter” is of course made intelligible (that is, it is made to exist *for* an intellect),⁷⁷ and it is so made intelligible by being represented from the special formal standpoint of some discourse or other (as when we speak, for instance, of the subject matter specific to a science).⁷⁸ In the language of Hegel’s *Phenomenology*, the *Objektivität* of a *Gegenstand* is its truth, its intelligible content. In the Logic, the *Gegenstand* or the subject matter is the *Objektivität* itself of any *Gegenstand*, or the possibility of intelligibility in general. Yet a distinction still emerges between the two because of the immediacy just noted that affects the logical discourse at its various stages and still constitutes an area of the “unsaid” within what is actually “said.” It is only at the end, when the logical process turns upon itself and its various stages are explicitly determined as constituting the particularized content of the “idea,” that “subject matter” and “object,” *Gegenstand* and *Objekt*, formally coincide.

We are getting ahead of ourselves, since it is with the beginning of the Logic that we are concerned here. Yet another general point is also to be made. As Hegel takes us systematically across the content of his Logic, he tacitly assumes and makes use of a psychological model which he borrows from Kant and Fichte and which these had borrowed in turn from a long-standing scholastic tradition. The transition from the first to

⁷⁶ *Vorstellbar*. Here “representation” must be taken in its wide sense and not as opposed to “concept.” See the discussion of the term below under “Issues of translation.”

⁷⁷ In the late scholastic language of Cajetan and John of St. Thomas, the object would be the *ratio quod* of the subject matter. Cf. Johannes a sancto Thoma, *Cursus Philosophicus*, ed. B. Reiser (Turin: Marietti, 1930), *Quaestio* 27, *art.* 1. English trans.: *The Material Logic of John of St. Thomas*, trans. Y. Simon, J. J. Glanville, and G. D. Hollenhorst (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1955), especially p. 555.

⁷⁸ This standpoint is the object’s *ratio formalis sub qua* of late scholasticism.

the second and third part of the Logic is a progression from the things of the senses to those of the understanding, and finally to those of reason. These are distinctions on which Hegel openly relies. However, as used in the Logic, such terms as “senses,” “understanding,” and “reason,” must be understood in a wide sense to mean degrees of intelligibility, or as denoting types of objectivity possible in a subject matter. Any psychological or even phenomenological connotations that they may carry are strictly accidental. Also to be understood is that each forward move in the progression of the Logic is just as much a regression – in the sense that what is being determinedly explicated at any stage are the conditions of intelligibility that were already implicitly at work at a prior stage and that *de facto* made its specific type of objectivity possible. It follows that at the end, when all these conditions are fully explicated in the “idea of the idea,” what is being logically comprehended is the mental attitude, the rationality, that must be at work in experience from the beginning. It has to be at work if even as simple a judgment as Hegel subjects to critical reflection at the beginning of the *Phenomenology*, if even as simple as a “There it is!,” is to make any sense. Either rationality is present from the beginning *in toto*, or it is not present at all. And this is another way of repeating that for Hegel there is no exiting from discursiveness.⁷⁹

One can understand, therefore, Hegel’s opening moves in the Logic. They are simple and yet profoundly programmatic. They are simple moves because in the two concepts that are expressed by saying “being” and “nothing,” Hegel says all that we could possibly say of whatever we would apprehend in intuition, whether the intuition is of the senses or (if there is one) of a pure thought,⁸⁰ namely that it is nothing determinate. Whether we interpret that “whatever” as “being” in the positive spirit of a Spinoza or a Schelling, or as “nothing” in the negative spirit of a Fichte who required that we step outside “being” in order to begin science, the result amounts to the same: “being” empty of content and therefore determined as “nothing,” and “nothing” determined as “being” (empty being) in order to have meaning even as “nothing.” The two shift into one another. And the moves are also profoundly programmatic because it is not with a mere void that they leave us, as we would be left by any intuition, a void for which we would then be required to import a conceptual content from outside. The resulting indeterminacy is contained within “being” and “nothing”; it is *their* determinacy, or the first determination of the subject

⁷⁹ Except in death, of course, whether of an individual or of a community.

⁸⁰ Perhaps we do have “intellectual intuition,” though I do not believe that we do. But the point is that it has no purchase unless it is put into words.

matter of the Logic as originatively adumbrated in these first moves. Since we are dealing here with the simplest of all possible expressions, it is of course difficult to avoid overt metaphors in order to speak about them, and Hegel's own advice is, accordingly, not to say much at all. An apt metaphor nevertheless, especially if we remember that *Bestimmung* means in German both "determination" and "vocation," is to say that "being" and "nothing" are a call for determination: *that* call is their determinacy. Or to revert to the image of a space of reason, "being" and "nothing" define together a space of discovery. There is nothing irrational about the immediacy of their content, or better of their "non-content"; nothing in principle refractory to conceptualization but the first delineation, rather, of how to set in motion the process of conceptualization that will fill in their indeterminacy.

For yet another reason, therefore, these first moves are profoundly programmatic. The first and simplest expression of this determinacy which the indeterminacy of both "being" and "nothing" together constitute is "becoming." Hegel introduces this category at this point. But in thus advancing to it, he is at the same time also taking a first step backward in recovering a more concrete delineation of the eventual full logical discourse of which "being" and "nothing" are but ephemeral moments. "Becoming" is the first self-contained category, of which "being" and "nothing" are only abstractive moments. In assuming this position, Hegel is in fact taking a stand against the whole tradition of Western metaphysics, a tradition that dates at least as far back as Parmenides, and of which Spinoza was at the time the latest, most obvious representative. Hegel privileges "becoming" over "being." It is not "becoming" which is the source of irrationality, but the attempt rather to treat "being" by itself, in abstraction from "nothing" and from the "becoming" which is the matrix of both. It is only inasmuch as "being" is conceived as being whatever it is by *becoming it* that it retains identity, while at the same time remaining open to a number of possible determinations which it nonetheless contains within according to a rule internal to it. But this is the formula for rationality. And indeed, the best instance of "becoming," the one against which we in fact measure the internal adequacy of other processes of becoming and from which all our language of becoming is drawn, is precisely the discursiveness of our discourse – as when a theme, though perhaps declared abstractly at the beginning of a story, finds its content only in the details of that same story which it controls, and it truly develops by returning at the end to its beginning in the form of a full story. But the perfect discourse, according to Hegel, is that of the Logic. Hegel is orienting himself to this conclusion

even with his first moves. We must now consider some of the details on the way to that conclusion.

The development

(1) I have been deliberately using “discourse” and “discursiveness” instead of “dialectic” (a term, incidentally, that Hegel uses sparsely in the *Logic*) in an attempt to demystify the latter term. But it should be clear that the meaning is the same.⁸¹ Now, taken precisely “in becoming,” being can first be determined as what it is rhapsodically, that is, qualitatively, in one “what,” then in another, and so on, each “what” never constituting anything definitive. The logical problem is to hold these “whats” together, to make a discourse of them – in effect, to give a first, better delineated definition of the unity which is possible in becoming. Here is where Hegel makes several conceptual moves, introducing among others the concepts of “finitude,” “limitation,” and “infinity.” With this last, with “infinity,” a turning point is reached. As conceived by Hegel, the “infinite” is being inasmuch as, in being whatever it is (and this could be an indefinite series of “whats” – a “bad infinite,” as Hegel calls it), it remains by itself, or is now definable, in Hegel’s terminology, as “being-for-itself.” The turn consists in the fact that, from now on, the conceptual stress is no longer on “what” a being happens to be but on its retaining unity (in its abiding with itself) regardless of what it might otherwise be as a “what.” This “abiding with itself” can of course acquire both the meaning of “continuity” and “discreteness.” The further move from the categories of “quality” to those of “quantity” is thereby secured. Even though our most elementary talk about things is unreflectively carried out in qualitative terms, the truth of that discourse, or the more determinate concept of the being which is its subject matter, is defined by the categories of “quantity.”

(2) These categories divide into “quantity” as such, “quantum,” and “measure.” As quantified, being is said to be constituted of parts that can be taken as both continuous and discrete, and there is in principle no end to how many such parts can be generated by reflection. These parts are “quanta.” Now, something analogous was also already said of being as qualitatively determined, except that instead of “*quanta*” one had to speak of “*qualia*,” of “whats.” The play between quantitative parts which, as such, can both run into one another and yet also fall apart, was also

⁸¹ Etymologically, “discourse” does not derive from διᾱλεξις, which has the more specific meaning of “dialogue” or of *disputatio*. But “dialogue” is a type of “discourse.”

already played out in terms of the “some” and the “some other,” the “one” and the “many,” their reciprocal connection ultimately one of “attraction” and “repulsion.” It was precisely this qualitative play that made possible the transition to “quantity.” But the difference is that what counts most in “quantity” for the determination of a being is the *rule* by which this play is carried out. True: the “quanta” that make up that being, inasmuch as they are taken as single terms subject to external calculation, still have to be qualitatively determined in order to be individually picked out for the calculation. That is to say, they must be immediately presupposed. As thus presupposed, however, they are from the start already in principle relegated – to anticipate now a category that comes into its own only as a result of the dialectic of “quantity” – to the “unessential.” Only as implicated in a referential play of terms carried out according to a rule, and deriving their magnitude from this play, do they denote the new unity of formal determination that “being” has now acquired. Progress in the development of quantity is measured precisely by the extent that the rules determining the play, rather than just presupposing its terms globally and/or singly, also determine the range within which they can enter into that play, to the point that the play itself generates the terms that enter into it. Such are the mathematical ratios. Hegel takes them in order: direct ratio, $y/x = k$; inverse ratio, $xy = k$; and the ratio of powers, x^2 or $x^x = k$.

Here is where Hegel introduces the new category of “measure” which explicitly expresses the *de facto* situation that has just developed and is fully realized in the ratio of powers. Reflected in his treatment of this category, and in the terminology that he uses for this purpose, is the discussion on the nature of calculus, and its place in the study of the sciences of nature, that had gripped the attention of the learned world in the eighteenth century and which was also the object of Hegel’s own reflection throughout his intellectual development. Hegel’s point, in brief, is this. In a ratio, the terms that enter into it are measured against each other. As single terms, they do indeed still carry immediate qualitative determination – and to this extent, therefore, they are still open as objects to external determination. But the important point is that, whatever the qualitative determination of such single terms, their stipulated measure persists, internally resistant to any external manipulation. Because of this resistance, their objectivity (originatively defined as “being”) acquires yet another level of formal self-containment, another “for-itselfness.” Hegel can say, accordingly, that with “measure” there is a return to “quality.” But the return is with a crucial difference, for the net result of the internal resistance

posed by “measure” is that the qualitative differentiation of the terms that enter into it – an immediate differentiation that belongs to “quality” in general as a first immediate determination of “being” – becomes to it a matter of *indifference*. In the form of “measure,” in other words, “quantity” has absorbed the indeterminateness that was the determinateness of “being” as “quality,” and “being” itself, therefore, has acquired a depth that it did not have before. “Quality,” as it now comes into play again, signifies this new depth – this enhanced self-containment – that the logical object has achieved. It has begun explicitly to contain the immediacy of its becoming, and with this the forward transition to “essence” has in principle already been made.

(3) This is the place to consider two additions made to the 1832 edition of the *Logic*. They are the exceptions to which we alluded in the Prologue. The first is the much longer discussion (now in three Remarks as contrasted to the earlier one) which immediately follows upon the treatment of “quantum,” and which anticipates the point that Hegel will then formally develop in the sections on “ratio” and “measure.” These Remarks also contain Hegel’s criticism of how mathematicians and philosophers, past as well as current, and including even those who had contributed to the creation of this new form of calculation, had in fact misunderstood the nature of their own creation. For this reason, they had been unable to explain the peculiar advantage that it offered over other forms of calculation, namely that on the basis of admittedly indefinite quantities it can achieve very definite results. What they had failed to notice was precisely the extra qualitative character that “quantity” assumes in the course of its internal conceptual development and of which calculus, as Hegel now argues, gives a perfect illustration. Central to his argument is a repeated reflection on the nature of the “true infinite” already defined in connection with the category of the “for-itself.”

In brief, this is his argument.⁸² There are actual infinities, that is, magnitudes that cannot be numerically exhausted but of which we nevertheless have clear and distinct concepts. Spinoza, to whom Hegel duly refers, had

⁸² GW 21.236ff. I must acknowledge in this connection a number of studies on Hegel’s reflections on mathematics and calculus that I have found especially instructive: David Gray Carlson, “Hegel’s Theory of Quantity,” *Cardozo Law Review*, 23.6 (2002), 2027–2155; “Hegel’s Theory of Measure,” *Cardozo Law Review*, 25.1 (2003), 129–213; Antonio Moretto, *Hegel e la “Matematica dell’infinito”* (Trento: Verifiche, 1984); *Questioni di filosofia della matematica nella “Scienza della Logica” di Hegel* (Trento: Verifiche, 1988); *Filosofia della matematica e della meccanica nel sistema hegeliano* (Padua: il Poligrafo, 2004). A deflationary view of Hegel’s Remarks on calculus is that of Clark Butler who suspects “Hegel of wishing in part to demonstrate his mastery of mathematics and science to contemporaries and colleagues.” *Between Dialectic and History*, pp. 110–111.

already made this point.⁸³ Take two unequal circles, the smaller contained within the larger without touching it and the two non-concentric. Of the segments generated by the two circumferences intercepting the lines drawn from the center of the smaller circle to the outer circumference of the larger circle (and contained in the space between the smaller and larger circle), there is a longest and a shortest (where the two centers lie on the same diameter). For each segment lying between these two limits, however, there is another next to it unequal to it by an infinitesimally ever smaller or greater magnitude, though never exceeding in the direction of either smaller or greater the difference between the two set limits, and there is no number that can express *all* the inequalities thus generated. We are confronted here with an “all” for which the usual concept of quantifiability by means of number no longer applies, but which is clearly and distinctly definable. The “all” is the actual infinitude of the inequalities of the segments contained between the two stated limits within the space generated by the two circumferences – an “all” which, as so defined, though infinite is nonetheless actual and perfectly identifiable. This a perfect figurative illustration of what Hegel means by a true infinite as contrasted with a “bad” or indefinite infinite.

In Spinoza’s illustration, this infinite is represented figuratively, still in the manner of classic Euclidean geometry. But suppose that we try to represent it analytically as it is done in calculus, visually charting on a graph the course of the increments or decrements of the segments one by one, granted the stipulated limits. The infinitesimal change in magnitude between increments or decrements is neither a null nor a definite quantum: “ dx ” and “ dy ” cannot be named. But this does not mean that the course of the graph cannot be accurately charted or any point within it not precisely calculated, for although “ dx ” and “ dy ” cannot be named, “ dx/dy ” can. That is to say, although the infinitude of the terms charted by the graph cannot be exhaustively enumerated (and would give rise to a bad infinite if one tried), given any of them as chosen at random on the basis of external considerations, any other can be exactly determined as measured against it according to the rule governing the graph. The numerical, quantitative indeterminateness is determinedly contained by that rule. This is exactly the point that Hegel develops in connection with “ratio” and “measure,” which he introduces following the three Remarks, and sums up by claiming that “measure” marks a return to “quality” (though a

⁸³ Cf. GW 21, 247.24ff., and Spinoza, *Epistole*, Nr XXXIX, Nr XII in the Gebhardt numeration: Benedictus de Spinoza, *Opera*, ed. Carl Gebhardt, 4 vols. (Heidelberg: Winter, 1925).

return with a difference). Now, using the still figurative language that Newton and Leibniz had put into circulation, the mathematicians of Hegel's day referred to the infinitesimal difference between term and term on the graph as an "evanescent moment," and they took it to be a quantum so minute that, in the course of calculation, it can at some point be left out of consideration without adverse consequences. But they were then left in the embarrassing situation, with which Hegel confronts them, of having to explain how accurate results (and their calculations were indisputably exact) could be obtained on the basis of avowed approximations,⁸⁴ or, as some of them argued, how rigor of demonstration could be maintained by the accidental balancing out of contrary errors.⁸⁵ What they failed to see is that when duly developed "quantum" transcends the limits of "quantity." Calculus, according to Hegel, was a clear instantiation of this overreaching of "quantity."

This is the first addition. The second is much shorter, but arguably more subtle and certainly more surprising, and consists of a long passage introduced in the prefatory comments to the section on "measure."⁸⁶ It comes as a surprise and it is generally considered by commentators to be out of place because it deals with the categories of modality, whereas modality formally falls within the purview of "essence."⁸⁷ It is directed at Kant, whom Hegel criticizes for assigning to the modal categories an especially subjective status. All of Kant's categories are of course subjective. They define an object which is mere appearance by assumption. In the case of "contingency," "possibility," "actuality," and "necessity," however, Kant adds the further qualification that they say nothing at all about the content of the object (even as phenomenal) but define rather the relative distance that obtains in experience between the concept and the intuition of it. As categories, they are the exclusive function of our subjective (discursive)

⁸⁴ Hegel singles out for his disapproval the explanation of Christian Wolff who compared the ignoring of higher order infinitesimals to the procedure of a surveyor who, in measuring a mountain, is not any less accurate just because the wind has in the meantime blown a speck of sand off from the top. GW 21, 256.

⁸⁵ GW 21, 263–264.

⁸⁶ GW 21, 323–326. For a detailed discussion of the changes between 1812 and 1832 in Hegel's treatment of the double transition from "quality" to "quantity" and from "quantity" back to "quality" and of his appreciation of the meaning of this double transition, and also of the possible disparity that these developments cause between the conclusion of the 1832 Doctrine of Being and the beginning of the 1816 Doctrine of Essence, see Cinzia Ferrini, "Logica e filosofia della natura nella dottrina dell'essere hegeliana I," *Rivista di storia della filosofia*, 4 (1991), 701–735; "Logica e filosofia della natura nella dottrina dell'essere hegeliana II," *Rivista di storia della filosofia*, 1 (1992), 104–124; "On the Relation between 'Mode' and 'Measure' in Hegel's *Science of Logic*: Some Introductory Remarks," *The Owl of Minerva*, 20.1 (1988), 21–49.

⁸⁷ Cf. Ferrini, "Logica e filosofia della natura nella dottrina dell'essere hegeliana I," pp. 722–723.

way of apprehending objects. If, *per impossibile*, we had an intellectual intuition of these objects, the modal categories would lose all meaning.⁸⁸ In this respect Kant is not unlike Spinoza, to whom Hegel also refers. Also for Spinoza they are ultimately the product of ignorance. Now, in his additions, Hegel is taking issue with precisely this position. “Quantity,” especially when understood as “measure,” entails a distinction that explicitly obtains within the structure of the being which it determines – namely the distinction between this being as consisting, on the one hand, of a “bad” infinity of determinations, and as providing, on the other, an internal rule by which it contains such determinations and governs (as need be) the progress of their enumeration. It is this distinction, and the distance that it creates within being between outer indefinite determination and inner determining rule, that, as Hegel now implies, is the first adumbration of the modal categories later to be officially discussed in the context of the “Doctrine of Essence.” In connecting them with his present treatment of “measure,” Hegel is proleptically shedding these categories of the purely subjective meaning that they had for both Spinoza and Kant. We have already noted how the philosophy of nature is never far away from Hegel’s mind. Hegel is certainly not committing himself here to any particular theory of nature. Nor, for that matter, is he renouncing his belief that the things of nature ultimately lack the internal stability that would make them intelligible on their own terms – his belief that, in order that they become objects of scientific knowledge, the concept must step in and provide by means of theoretical constructs the stability that they otherwise lack *per se*. This being said, it is nonetheless clear that Hegel is supplying here the logic of a scientific language that would allow physical things to have at least an inchoate internal principle and, therefore, at least a relative control over their process of determination. Hegel, in other words, is still pursuing his Jena agenda of allowing for the things of nature to have the depth that the phenomena lack in the idealism of both Kant and Fichte. All this is on the assumption, of course, that such things as Hegel logically envisages are in fact empirically discovered (cf. GW 12.30–201.2). The problem with Kant was that, by declaring the modal categories to be purely subjective on

⁸⁸ *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, §76, AK V.401–404. It is also significant that in the 1812 Division of Being, with reference to “measure,” Hegel says that this category can also be considered a “modality,” for it does not constitute a determination of content but concerns rather its connection to thought, to a subject. This is indeed Kant’s definition of a modal category, and Hegel here seems to endorse it (GW 12, 42.3–5). In the 1832 edition, in the same place, while repeating that “measure” can also be considered a “modality,” he explicitly attributes to Kant the view that “modalities” are not content-determinations, with no indication that he personally endorses the view. GW 21, 67.11–17.

transcendental logical grounds alone, he had simply pre-judged the issue of discovery.

We have said that commentators have normally regarded these 1832 additions as out of place. In fact, the additions are witness to the extra lucidity that Hegel had gained regarding his own Logic by the time he set out to revise it. He was still pursuing the double agenda, developed in the Jena years at least starting from 1805/06, of according to nature a depth that it does not have in transcendental idealism, while at the same time maintaining the idealistic thesis that it is only in the medium of the concept that nature, indeed reality as a whole, attains (not just manifests) its intelligibility. The presence in experience of “facticity” now reinterpreted as the “immediacy of becoming,” its generation and containment, is the issue that underlies the Logic from beginning to end. As we move from “being” to “essence” and then to “the concept,” we move (as we can reflectively say at the end of the process) from “immediacy” conceived, respectively, as “contingency,” “necessity,” and “freedom.”

(4) The categories of “essence” explicitly state and develop what is already said, but only *de facto*, by “measure.” They define “being” as internally differentiated – on the one hand, as containing a principle by virtue of which it is intelligible *as* what it is; on the other hand, as equally containing a number of determinations that are peripheral to it but that acquire a status as determinations only by being referred to what defines the object as such in the first instance. This is quite generally the distinction between the “essential” and the “unessential.” It is a differentiation *internal* to the subject matter of discourse because the “essential” proves to be such only to the extent that it manifests itself to be what the “unessential” would otherwise seem to be on its own account. And the “unessential,” for its part, is such only to the extent that it demonstrates itself to be a nothing in itself – that its true being is the “essential.” Each thus refers to the other, and the resulting double reference constitutes the internal structure of the subject matter in question. The development of the latter in the logic of “essence” is the process by which this reference, whether it proceeds in one direction or the other, reverses itself, in both instances exhibiting in ever more complex yet apparent forms the “being oneself in the other” which is the basic reflective schema of “becoming.”

The categories of “essence” are those of classical metaphysics: ground, existence, appearance, force, actuality, absolute, relation – just to mention the ones that make up the main headings. The discourse which they govern is neither the disconnected one of “quality” nor the one of “measure,” which is already expressly rule-governed but is still lacking in expressly reflective

containment. It is a discourse about large things, so to speak, those that we take for granted in ordinary experience and which are at the basis of classical metaphysics. Yet its intelligibility is still subject to external constraint, for the reciprocal reference of contrasting terms which its categories express is still dependent on the immediate assumption of precisely these terms. The presence of the thing they define, whether assumed starting from one term or the other, is therefore affected by an element of opaqueness – an immediacy still understood in the sense of contingency, for it requires for each term an explanation by reference to the other, and consequently a necessitation external to it. The realm of “essence” is one of necessitation. Progress in the actualization of the intelligibility (the *Objektivierung*) of the subject matter (the *Gegenstand*) proceeds *pari passu* with the elimination of precisely this immediacy of the presupposed terms. In effect, this means their absorption into the very referential process that defines the structure of essential being, to the point that the latter would have to be conceived, if still operating within the framework of the categories of “essence,” in the manner of Spinoza’s *causa sui*, as a pure self-reference generating its own content.

How Hegel retrieves, while at the same time transcending, the metaphysics of Spinoza at this final stage of the logic of “essence” constitutes a complex and delicate transition, upon which much depends for the interpretation of Hegel. Three considerations are relevant here. The first is that, although “contradiction” is a pervasive theme in the Logic, it is only in the course of the dialectic of the categories of “essence” that the risk of *formally* (not just *de facto*) incurring it repeatedly arises. This is because of the structure of the subject matter under consideration. “Essential being” would explicitly be both at once: made up of materially independent terms, *and* a whole in which each term is itself formally the whole. It is this pull in opposite directions that causes contradiction repeatedly to erupt, according as the subject matter is successively defined on the basis of presumed originating terms. The truth of the categories of “being” was the distinction between “principle of determination” and “determination” itself, and this truth was finally made explicit in “essence.” The truth of the categories of “essence” is now the overcoming of precisely this distinction. “Essence” must be shown to exist only *in* its determinations. “Essence” *is* the movement of these determinations, and this movement is propelled forward precisely by the occurrence of contradiction as caused by the assumption of determinations independent of it.

This result, however, should not be construed as betraying a deficiency on the part of the categories *as categories*. This is the second consideration. To

make the point in a phenomenological mode, the deficiency is rather on the part of the things of experience for which the categories of “essence” define the logic of discourse. These are things of nature. Hence, although Hegel refuses to reduce them to mere phenomena, they still lack the interiority, the full self-reflectivity, that would make each a world unto itself and which would satisfy reason’s quest for intelligibility. Such an interiority, according to Hegel’s idealistic thesis, is to be found only in the products of reason itself, that is, in the social entities, the works of art and religion, for which spirit is responsible. But the special merit of the categories of “essence” is that their dialectic reproduces in the schematic form proper to a work in logic what Hegel calls “the arduous labour of the understanding,”⁸⁹ that is to say, the labor that the concept performs in actual experience by permeating its whole content discursively. What the concept does is to introduce within the latter, in the representational medium most suited to its current purposes, ever new distinctions and ever new principles of explanation, all for the sake of collecting into a single coherent world free of internal contradiction the many things that otherwise fall scattered in experience. This is stating the case, of course, in a manner more suited to the *Phenomenology*. But the fact is that the categories of “essence” define the logic of the sciences of precisely this experiential process.

The further fact is that a complete world of nature cannot be had on natural terms alone. And were we to try to have it so – metaphysically, that is, quite apart from the scientific theoretical constructs that one can always introduce for explanatory purposes but which remain external to the things themselves and are always reformable – were we to try it, we would run up against the figure of Spinoza, the philosopher who famously construed a monistic ontology based on the self-identity of “substance” alone, itself a category of “essence.” The price for this attempt is to reduce all the things of nature to mere surface-like events, the truth of which would consist (just as in Fichte’s system) in their disappearing, in their nothingness – precisely what Hegel refused to do by insisting on the objectivity of the modal categories. This is the third consideration. Hegel resists any Spinoza-like reduction of the modes of substance to nothingness, and thus succeeds in retaining even in the possible things of nature the internal distinction already adumbrated by “measure,” precisely by transcending the whole realm of “essence” and revealing as its truth, as subtending it and containing it all along, a yet more reflective level of discourse. This is

⁸⁹ E.g. GW 9, 27.18–19. See also the discussion of the work of the understanding in the Addition to §80 of the *Encyclopedia*.

the discourse, specific to the life of spirit, that has the concept itself and its products as its subject matter. Its logic is that of subjectivity. Only in its medium is the quest for complete intelligibility that motivates the dialectic of “essence” (the identification of *Objektivität* and *Gegenständlichkeit*) satisfied. But it must be clear that, just as “essence” reflectively made good the differentiation implicit in “measure” by reinterpreting it as a differentiation of concrete “things” (the “large things” of experience), so the logic of the “concept as concept” completes the work of sorting out these things which is the proper function of the categories of “essence” by reinterpreting them as the means for generating the things of the spirit. We are moving from the logic of a discourse about products of nature to that of a discourse about the products of spirit.

One can understand, therefore, Hegel’s ambiguity with respect to Spinoza. It is an ambiguity that he shared with Jacobi. Like Jacobi, he saw in Spinoza the metaphysician who had brought to a logical conclusion the project of classical metaphysics of founding all things in the Absolute. He had done it without compromises or prevarications, and for this lucidity of intent he deserved respect. But, in keeping with the pre-Kantian assumptions of that same metaphysics, Spinoza had defined the Absolute in categories which are suited to finite objects only. Therefore, he had achieved the sought for completeness of explanation at the price of absolute abstraction. This is the point that Hegel was making in the second of his additions to the 1832 edition in connection with measure. By reducing the modal categories to merely subjective expressions, Spinoza had in fact emptied things of their inner measure, even of such as can be had quantitatively. He had pre-empted the possibility of their ever being assumed within the works of spirit, that is to say, of being made the subject matter of judgment. “The Spinozistic mode, just like the Indian principle of alteration, is the measureless,”⁹⁰ as Hegel then put it. But already in 1813, in connection with “actuality,” Hegel had made it clear, echoing Jacobi, that Spinoza’s Absolute is the abyss, *der Abgrund*, in which all determinations are made to disappear.⁹¹ Their truth is their nothingness. “*Determinatio negatio est*,” was Spinoza’s motto. And for Hegel (though not necessarily for Jacobi), there was a truth in this. The truth of the “modes” of substance is the absoluteness of substance. But what Hegel found lacking in Spinoza’s system was the contrary positive manifestation of the power of the Absolute in the appearance of the “modes,” the positive presence of spirit in them.

⁹⁰ GW 21, 325.27–28.

⁹¹ Cf. GW 11, 372.28–37. Spinoza is not named, but the criticism is obviously directed at him.

For that, according to Hegel, the extra dimension of subjectivity had to be added to that of objective substantiality. This was a need, of course, that Fichte and the pre-Romantics had already recognized long before the composition of Hegel's Logic. But, so far as Hegel was concerned, the move to subjectivity was not a matter of adding a thinking head, so to speak, to Spinoza's monistic substance. That would have been indeed making a mockery of Spinoza's otherwise perfectly self-consistent system. Nor was it a matter of escaping conceptualization, taking refuge either in the darkness of Romantic intuition or in Spinoza's perfect brightness of vision – in either case, letting all distinctions go lost. Hegel never leaves discursiveness behind. On the contrary, the transition to subjectivity is one of recovering conceptually precisely the source of discursiveness, the concept as concept.

(5) With the categories of the “concept” one can say indeed that we have stepped into the mind of God before the creation of the world⁹² – though by “world” we must now understand nothing physical but a universe of meaning instead, and by “creation” the constitution of the conceptual medium that will make any reality, such as already exists or might exist, re-exist as intelligible. But of this universe it can also be said that it is a “realm of shadows,” for it is made up of reflective abstractions only. Hegel speaks of the “impotence of subjective reason”⁹³ just as he speaks of the “impotence of nature” (*die Ohnmacht der Natur*).⁹⁴ Reason manifests its power only in the effect that it has by investing nature with a new meaning, and for that it needs the work of the finite concept that provides for it the required *de facto* material. In a way, Hegel's point is still a Kantian one. It is only ideally that full intelligibility is attained, the kind of intelligibility, to put it in more phenomenological terms, that would satisfy reason. But Kant was still beholden to the “thing-in-itself,” to the metaphysics of “essence.” Kant still believed that, if we just had intellectual intuition, the vision of a Spinoza, or a Leibniz, would be vindicated. Therefore he had declared the products of ideal conceptualization to be merely subjective – “subjective” in the pejorative sense of lacking objective truth – and their content ultimately self-contradictory. For Hegel, on the contrary, it is only when the concept has itself as its object that a perfect determination is achieved by virtue of which the particular and the singular, *as* particular and singular, and *as* distinct from the universal, coincide nonetheless with the universal and with each other, so that, regardless of where one starts, one already has in principle the whole object. The immediacy of the starting point, which was irreducible in the categories of “essence,” is totally relativized by

⁹² Cf. GW 21, 34.9–11.

⁹³ GW 12, 42.19.

⁹⁴ GW 19, 187.11, §250.

is an issue to which we shall briefly return later. The point now is that, once Hegel has worked out through the classical theory of predication and syllogism all the mutations and permutations that are possible in the reciprocal relation of these three first determinations of the concept, what we have is a fully determined concept of the concept, a self-standing and self-justifying discourse – therefore, also a first realization of objectivity understood as self-contained intelligibility (*Objekt*). This realization, and nothing else, constitutes the transition from subjectivity to objectivity.

The distinction between “subjective” and “objective” is for Hegel first and foremost a logical one, a distinction between types of discourse. It is not dependent, as it is for both Kant and Fichte, on any psychological or even phenomenological model of the mind – a model which would depend for Hegel, on the contrary, on the logical distinction. Hegel’s distinction is more in line with, but not quite the same as, that of Descartes between “clear and distinct” and “unclear and indistinct” – not quite the same because the categories of the Logic, and the discourse associated with each, are all clear and distinct on their own respective terms. The distinction, to repeat a point already stressed, is rather between the “abstract” and the “concrete,” between the less and the more developed form of objectivity. Another puzzling feature of the Logic is therefore also dispelled. It might seem strange indeed that in a formal logic, under the heading of “objectivity,” Hegel would consider such earthly sounding categories as “mechanism,” “chemism,” and “teleology,” as he does in the second section of Book Three. To be sure, these are concepts obviously derived from, and referring to, the Philosophy of Nature.⁹⁶ But, inasmuch as they enter into the Logic, what they signify are forms of objectivity – more precisely, such types and degrees of intelligibility as we might expect in different experiential contexts.⁹⁷ In this segment, the Logic reflects upon the kind of self-sustaining objectivity that the categories of “being” and “essence” were in fact able to deliver within the artificial context of its ideal reconstruction

⁹⁶ Erdmann rightly points out that these concepts are treated in the Logic precisely as logical categories, and that “mechanism” therefore defines a sphere of objectivity that exceeds the subject matter of the physical sciences alone. “Mechanism” can apply, for instance, to the things of the spirit as well. “Since mechanism is a logical category, one correctly speaks of it even in the sphere of the mind. There is mechanical memory; there are mechanical arrangements in the State, just as much as, where various sensible objects form an aggregate, there are mechanical combinations of them.” Johann Eduard Erdmann, *Outlines of Logic and Metaphysics*, trans. B. C. Burt (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1896), p. 210, §192, note 2.

⁹⁷ For a discussion of how Hegel progressively came to realize that the categories of quantity as developed in a philosophy of mathematics are not sufficient for a comprehension of nature, that the latter requires more concrete categories than are developed in this part of the Logic, see Cinzia Ferrini, *Dai primi hegeliani a Hegel* (Napoli: Città del Sole), pp. 227ff.

of discourse in general. It judges the extent to which that objectivity is indeed self-sustaining or requires instead the support of discourse itself, as itself the source of intelligibility and as now explicitly considered (in this final part of the *Logic*) in precisely this role.

The *Logic* concludes, therefore, with a final segment on the “idea.” Here we find the categories of freedom that are at work in the *Philosophy of Spirit*. They are the categories of a discourse that explicitly has itself as object – knows itself to be the source of the norm of what constitutes the true and the good. Most of all – to make this point in a phenomenological mode first – it recognizes its pre-conceptual or natural past. It recognizes it, however, as already implicated in the realm of the conceptual in the form of immediacy, as that which needs explaining. Hegel’s move in this respect is the same as Fichte’s, but with the essential difference to which we have already adverted. Fichte’s *Science* begins with an abstractive act that would have its self-expression as its only product but finds itself generating instead an “other” which, on its original intention, has to appear to it as but a scandal. The truth, in a Fichtean context, lies necessary in an unattainable beyond. For Hegel, the conceptual reflection which is at the source of the *Logic* also dissolves, as for Fichte, any otherwise merely presupposed natural ties in order to re-establish them on its own terms in a universe of meaning. But such ties come to (*werden zu*) their truth in this universe positively, in the forms of human institutions in which, *and in which alone*, the concept finds its satisfaction. And their being turned into contingent facts is the first step in their attaining this truth. In a Hegelian context, therefore, the point just made phenomenologically, namely that discourse recognizes its pre-conceptual past, is open to strict conceptual formulation, with no residue of mythical imagery. What is recognized at the end of this long reflective discourse which is the *Logic* is that reflection is responsible for the immediacy which is first expressed in the category of “being” and is then methodically contained in various forms of “becoming,” all of them culminating in that perfect “coming to be oneself” which is the concept of the concept. At the end, the *Logic* rejoins its beginning. We are ready, therefore, for the transition (which is in fact no transition because it never leaves thought behind) by which we begin the existentially more concrete work of retrieving the immediacy of nature bit by bit, first of all by simply discovering it.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ I say “discovering” rather than “observing” in order to avoid the empiricist connotations of this last term. Had not the empirical sciences made the word their own by associating it with their artificial methodology, “observing” would be perfectly acceptable. One must begin by simply looking at nature, though *intelligently*.

Therefore “method” is the category which brings the Logic to an end. Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* also concluded with a chapter on the methodology of pure reason. But, in that context, method is an order which reason seeks indeed to discover in experience out of a need which is typically its own, but which remains nonetheless external to the content of experience. It is a subjective product, where “subjective” is understood in a privative sense. For Hegel, on the contrary, “method” is the rhythm (*Lebenspuls*) of experience itself. It is an ordering which is internal to it and the consequence of the fact that experience is an idealizing process from beginning to end. As a work of conceptual art, the Logic stands of course at the end of that process. The “logical order” (*das Logische*) that it makes explicit, however, stands with respect to the same process as its *a priori*. It is in this sense, again, that the Logic stands in Hegel’s system as both the final and first part.

ISSUES OF INTERPRETATION

The Logic *does* make an ontological commitment, namely that being is in becoming. But it makes it transcendently, one might say, by demonstrating that, unless so conceived – unless “being” holds an internal difference by virtue of which a discursive account of what it is can be construed – it could not be the object of intelligent apprehension. The categories are the forms of precisely this discourse in the medium of which “being” is made intelligible and the process of discovering what it is in actual fact can begin. But this discovery is realized only in the sciences of nature and spirit. In other words, to the extent that Hegel’s Logic is identical with metaphysics, it is so only in a sense which is definitely post-Kantian. The meaning of “metaphysics” is modified by being identical with “logic” just as much as the meaning of the latter is modified by being identical with the former.⁹⁹ There is no question of the categories of thought being *tout court* “the most general and fundamental forms of being.”¹⁰⁰ One can also say

⁹⁹ GW 20, 67, §24.

¹⁰⁰ S. Houlgate, “Logic and Nature in Hegel’s Philosophy: A Response to John Burbidge,” *Owl of Minerva*, 34.1 (2002–2003), 107–125, p. 109; also, *The Opening of Hegel’s Logic*, p. 436. Houlgate’s position is developed explicitly in opposition to that of Robert Pippin, according to whom the project of Hegel’s Logic is the transcendental one of determining “the conditions under which any subject must think in order to think objectively at all.” For Pippin, see *Hegel’s Idealism: The Satisfaction of Self-Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 246. I have also interpreted Hegel’s Logic in a transcendental spirit. But one must remember that, for one thing, Hegel presents the Logic as itself a form of life, the perfect instance of self-becoming in which nature finds intelligent completion; and, for another, that there is no question of *applying* the categories to a material external to them, as is the case for Kant’s categories. Just as a grammar

that the Logic is a renewed ontological argument, but again, only in a sense consistent with Kant's critique of that otherwise traditional argument. The Logic only demonstrates that the perfect conceptual determination of an object is achieved when the subject matter is the concept itself – that only by virtue of the self-contained, reflective movement of conceptualization (which is itself the perfect instance of “becoming” and thus precludes any Kantian opposition between “thought” and “being”) is the mental space generated within which “being” is manifested, or becomes reconstituted *for us* as what it happens to be in itself. The move in discourse is necessarily from concept to existence. The Logic also has phenomenological implications, for it follows that, whatever the pre-conscious or purely physiological pre-history of experience, once the latter comes on the scene, it comes fully dressed, so to speak – already rich in distinctions and commitments. Even as simple a gesture as the pointing at this or that, provided the gesture is intelligent at all, already contains a judgment. We may call it a judgment of the senses, to use the language of scholastic psychology. But the point is that such a judgment is the precursor of the abstract, artful judgment which is performed in the Logic. For Hegel, we are logicians from the beginning.

This is not, however, the only way in which Hegel's Logic has been read or is still read, and to ferret out all the various strands of this interpretation is a complicated affair indeed. For one thing, the Logic has been from early on an easy object of ridicule. The judgment of Trendelenburg, an author whom Kierkegaard had occasion to quote,¹⁰¹ is typical in this respect. As he says, “it does not make much difference that [Hegel's dialectic, unlike Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*] begins with the concept of Being, for this concept is the empty image of Being. If it nevertheless comes to the concept of reality and to concrete forms, we do not perceive whence it gets to them. For pure thought will not accept them, and then permeates them, but endeavours to make them. Thought, expressed in this way, is born blind and centers no eyes towards the outside.”¹⁰² Yet, despite ridicule, the Logic has undeniably exercised a mighty influence, in all lands and in the most disparate of fields. In the political arena, it has been repeatedly “reformed” to serve the cause of both left- and right-wing movements, and

distills in a medium typically its own the structure of a language, so too the Logic distills in the medium of pure reflection the rationality of any and every discourse.

¹⁰¹ Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Vol. I, ed. trans. H. V. Hong and E. H. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 110–111.

¹⁰² F. A. Trendelenburg, *Logische Untersuchungen*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1862), Vol. I, p. 92 (my translation).

of liberalism as well.¹⁰³ In America, it was spread by the St. Louis Hegelians. It eventually found a lively expression in the pragmatism of Charles S. Peirce and, in more recent times, of Wilfrid Sellars. Interpreted in the spirit of this pragmatism, Hegel's Logic is still very much alive today.¹⁰⁴ However, typical of these movements and traditions (the St. Louis Hegelians perhaps excepted) is that they were Hegel-inspired, yet independent philosophical positions rather than schools of textual exegesis. And there is, so far as the Logic itself is concerned, also a long-standing tradition of textual exegesis. It can be traced at least as far back as Johann Eduard Erdmann's commentary on the Logic,¹⁰⁵ and, in English, to J. Hutchison Stirling's exciting *The Secret of Hegel*.¹⁰⁶ It is a variegated tradition, not seldom motivated by religious interests. In the case of Stirling, the religious inspiration of Hegel is beyond doubt. We read: "Kant and Hegel . . . have no object but to restore Faith – Faith in God – Faith in the immortality of the Soul and the Freedom of the Will – nay, Faith in Christianity as the Revealed Religion – and that, too, in perfect harmony with the Right of Private Judgement, and the Rights, or Lights, or Might of Intelligence in general" (xxii). This religious motivation raises of course the issue of whether Hegel's Logic ought to be interpreted as buttressing Christian faith or, on the contrary, as demythologizing it. It also raises the broader issue of hermeneutic strategy – whether one should take the Logic as the norm for interpreting other parts of Hegel's system or, on the contrary, read some of the religious imagery that Hegel uses elsewhere back into the Logic.

But if we abstract from these broader considerations and concentrate instead on the more logical/metaphysical issues that the Logic raises, two lines of interpretation can be identified that roughly correspond to its two aspects, namely, on the one hand, the interpretation that the Logic makes an ontological commitment and to that extent advances a dogma, and, on the other hand, the interpretation that the Logic still operates within the general framework of Kant's and Fichte's idealism and to that extent

¹⁰³ Karl Marx famously used Hegel's Logic for his leftist political agenda, Benedetto Croce used it in his defense of Italian political liberalism, and Giovanni Gentile drew upon it in defense of Italian fascism.

¹⁰⁴ Robert Brandom is at the moment perhaps the best-known example of one who still reads Hegel pragmatically in the spirit of Wilfrid Sellars. Although he relies mostly on the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, he methodically reads the text in accordance with the linguistic turn. See, for instance, Robert Brandom, *Tales of the Mighty Dead* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), pp. 31–32, 44–57; "The Structure of Desire and Recognition: Self-Consciousness and Self-Constitution," *Von der Logik zur Sprache, Stuttgarter Hegel-Kongress 2005*, ed. R. Bubner and G. Hindrichs (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2007), 426–449.

¹⁰⁵ J. E. Erdmann, *Grundriß der Logik und Metaphysik* (Halle: Schmid, 1864, 4th edn).

¹⁰⁶ J. Hutchison Stirling, *The Secret of Hegel* (Edinburgh and New York, 1865; 2nd revised edn, 1898).

never abandons the realm of discursive thought. John M. E. McTaggart – personally an atheist and by no means an orthodox Hegelian – may be taken as a reliable representative of the first line of interpretation. It is the ambiguity of his position, itself characteristic of that tradition, that makes his studies on the *Logic* particularly interesting. McTaggart leaves no doubt that this work of Hegel must be read as a work *in logic*. That is to say, the *Logic* deals from beginning to end with categories and their dialectical development. The Idea with which it culminates is exclusively the product of reason. But McTaggart then balks at Hegel's claim that "method" is the exclusive content of the Idea of the Idea but insists that it has a content of its own over and above the categories that have led up to it.¹⁰⁷ What this content might be is not clear, but I presume that it would have to be an abstract schema of the harmony that obtains in the real universe between individual and individual, and between individual and universe. Accordingly, McTaggart has no problem advancing a Hegel-inspired cosmology, where by "cosmology" he means "the application, to subject-matter empirically known, of *a priori* conclusions derived from the investigation of the nature of pure thought."¹⁰⁸ This is not to say that McTaggart believes that it is possible or that Hegel himself ever tried to derive particular laws of nature *a priori*. But he does apparently believe that the categories have an *explanatory* role to play even in the empirical sciences, or that in the Idea we already have, but *sub specie aeternitatis*, that which, *sub specie temporis*, is the goal towards which all reality is moving. "But such an idea is, *sub specie aeternitatis*, far too implicit, and, *sub specie temporis*, far too distant, to allow us to use it in deciding on any definite course of action in the present."¹⁰⁹ In principle, however, the two opposites ought to be joined. Or again, although McTaggart obviously does not believe that it would be possible *in fact*, or even desirable, to deduce the pen of Herr Krug from the Idea, he has difficulties accepting the category of "contingency" as truly objective, and he does leave open the possibility of that deduction at least in principle. As he says in connection with "contingency",

the nature of each individual is to be taken as determined by his place in a whole, which we must conceive on the analogy of an organism – a unity manifesting itself in multiplicity. The individual has his entire nature in the manifestation of this

¹⁰⁷ Cf. J. M. E. McTaggart, *A Commentary on Hegel's Logic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931), pp. 305ff.

¹⁰⁸ J. M. E. McTaggart, *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918), p. 1.

¹⁰⁹ J. M. E. McTaggart, *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic*, 2nd edn (New York: Russell & Russell, 1910), p. 232.

whole, as the whole, in turn, is nothing else but its manifestation in individuals. Through this unity the parts will mutually determine one another, so that from any one all the rest could, with sufficient insight, be deduced, and so that no change could be made in any without affecting all.¹¹⁰

And McTaggart is also puzzled by the notion of an "*Ohnmacht der Natur*," apparently unaware that for Hegel, just as it was also the case for Fichte, nature or the things of experience acquire *for us* the character of irreducible contingency as measured against the norms of an intelligibility that reason alone brings to them.¹¹¹ It is reason that makes nature contingent. It transpires, in other words, that despite all protestations that the Logic must be read *as logic*, McTaggart has in fact invested it from the beginning with pre-Kantian Spinozist overtones. While taking the Logic to lay out the blueprint of a universe of meaning that makes the discovery of an actual cosmos possible, he assumes that it thereby also lays out the blueprint of that cosmos. It is from the start an exercise in cosmogony. This is the source of the ambiguity that pervades his position throughout, as well as the tradition that he represents.

This reading of Hegel is in some quarters still accepted today.¹¹² The slide back into Spinoza's metaphysics of substance is avowedly avoided because

¹¹⁰ McTaggart, *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic*, p. 209. For McTaggart's claim that Hegel's philosophy does not try to trace the rationality of the universe in all its details, see pp. 204–205. Wilhelm Traugott Krug (1770–1842) is notorious for the challenge that he issued to the "new idealism" of Fichte and Schelling to "deduce his pen" from their first principles. Hegel must have found the challenge particularly irritating, for he waxed ironic against it in one of his earliest published essay and repeatedly returns to it. According to Hegel's mature position, the notion that it is possible to determine anything in nature absolutely makes no sense, for the simple reason that things of nature do not perfectly control their own becoming and are therefore susceptible to a potentially infinite number of external influences. Perfect determination is possible only in the ideal realm of the concept. So far as nature is concerned, determination will always be relative and reformable, according to limits which are to be determined by the physical sciences. This, I take it, is what Hegel means by the *Ohnmacht der Natur*, "the impotence of nature," in §250 of the *Encyclopedia* where he again waxes ironically against Herr Krug. For Hegel's essay, "Wie der gemeine Menschenverstand die Philosophie nehme – dargestellt an den Werken des Herrn Krug," *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie*, 1.1 (1802), see GW 4.174ff. English trans. "How the Ordinary Human Understanding Takes Philosophy (as displayed in the works of Mr. Krug)," in di Giovanni and Harris, *Between Kant and Hegel*, pp. 292ff.

¹¹¹ McTaggart's interpretation is the exact opposite. "The cause of the imperfection [of things] is nothing but the fact that we do not see everything at once. Seen as we see things now, reality must be imperfect. But if we can attain to the point of looking at the whole universe *sub specie aeternitatis*, we shall see just the same subject-matter as in time; but it will appear perfect, because seen as a single concrete whole, and not as a succession of separated abstractions." *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic*, p. 175.

¹¹² It is in effect that of Charles Taylor in *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), cf. pp. 97–98; and more recently of Frederick Beiser in *Hegel* (New York: Routledge, 2005), cf. pp. 71ff.

of the principle of subjectivity that Hegel had added to his predecessor's view of the universe. But it is precisely on this issue, namely whether a principle of subjectivity can be added to Spinoza's pantheism, that a host of difficulties arise. On the one hand, there is the question of how radical Hegel's break was from Schelling and his Romantic Spinozism in the Jena years, and how serious was "*Fichtes Verdienst*" – the debt he owed to Fichte. The more radical the break, and the more serious the debt that Hegel owed, the more his Logic ought to be read as issuing, not indeed in any metaphysical theory, but, as Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* does, ultimately in social theory – or more accurately, into what the Germans call the *Geisteswissenschaften*, the disciplines that have the historical works of spirit for their subject matter. On the other hand, if one insists on maintaining a strong continuity between Hegel's Logic and Schelling's Identity Philosophy, then the question is how seriously one should take Hegel's comments regarding modality added in the 1832 edition of the Logic. The point is that one cannot add a subjective dimension to Spinoza's "substance" without turning it into a mind, that is to say, either into what would no longer be "substance" but only a mode of it on Spinoza's own principles or, on Hegel's, into an individual that needs a community of other individuals in order himself to be one. In either case, we do not have anything that would amount to McTaggart's Absolute Idea from which, allegedly, every minute detail of reality can in principle be deduced. This is a position that Hegel unequivocally rejected and even found infuriating. The alternative is to consider the same Idea as another version of the scholastic *ens realissimum* – but, as Kant well knew, that idea is inherently contradictory unless taken as an empty abstraction where all determinations, rather than being grounded, are in fact made to disappear. The strength of Spinoza's position lies precisely in the fact that it bypasses the need to derive anything from "substance" directly. The latter contains all its attributes, as well as both its infinite and finite modes, in the way in which a differential equation contains within it a definite infinity of differing terms. When it is a matter of calculating the value of any single term, one must start arbitrarily by assuming some other given term – the choice of the latter being dependent on factors which, so far as the equation is concerned, are purely "subjective" in a privative sense of the word. In Spinoza's language, that means assuming a finite standpoint, the presence of which in the system remains an irreducible surd. As for Hegel, the strength of his Logic lies in the fact that it finds a ground for this contingency in the indeterminacy necessarily inherent in the structure of things which are in becoming. And this is an indeterminacy which is either contained by such theoretical

constructs or such cosmogonic theories as the sciences provide or, as one might say in the spirit of Hegel, is redeemed by the works of spirit.

The second line of interpretation is more recent and more diffused, and also never unequivocally presented as an actual reading of Hegel's Logic or as a position inspired by it. In brief, the claim is that "the truth is worked out by telling a story. It is not just that the story attempts to tell the truth that is already there. Rather, in telling the story, we partly create the truth we are attempting to articulate."¹¹³ Any non-story residue in a story for which the "partly" in the quote makes allowance would have to be absorbed into some other story. And indeed, for Hegel we cannot ever step outside the boundaries of discourse. But what is missing in this hermeneutic reading of Hegel is the Schellingian moment which, however much Hegel might have learned from Fichte, is never lost in his Logic; missing is the fact that it is nature which in the abstract medium of logical discourse attains the self-comprehension, and the efficacy, which we attribute to spirit. Nature is for Hegel, just as it was for Schelling, the "pre-self" of the "self," not just the "other-than-self" of Fichte. It is true that human birth is never simply a biological event but always a birth into a community. Genes and chromosomes work their magic only as personally named within a system of family relations. And neither is human death simply a biological event but is always either peaceful or violent, surprising or expected, cowardly or heroic, or what have you. But it is the irrevocability, the utter finality, of both birth and death as biological events that makes for the seriousness of the experiences mediated by language built around them. As Hegel makes clear in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in connection with the battle of prestige which is his dramatic account of the origin of human history, that battle would not be serious, nor would the prestige or the claims to rightful possession which are at stake in it be more than empty words, if the battle were not a life-and-death struggle.¹¹⁴ In other words, it is only from the detached standpoint of a badly abstractive reflection that the distinction between story-telling and history gets blurred. To the one caught up existentially in the event that the story-teller might romance about, the difference between story and history is undoubted. It is precisely

¹¹³ I am borrowing this description from Christopher J. Insole's sympathetic but also sharply critical review of Charles Taylor's book, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), "Informed Tolerance," *The Times Literary Supplement*, 5470 (February 1, 2008), 5. It is not clear how far Charles Taylor personally espouses this position. But to the extent that he does and in thus espousing it ascribes it also to Hegel, then if one takes into consideration his 1975 book (see note 112), he would stand on both sides of the dogmatic/hermeneutic spectrum in the interpretation of Hegel.

¹¹⁴ GW 9, III.25–III.2.2.

the function of logical discourse to produce clarity about it, the very clarity which has traditionally gone under the name of wisdom.

Nature is important. I have remarked more than once that its presence is never far from Hegel's mind. Nor is it far from the Logic. But precisely this presence poses problems for his System in general, and for the Philosophy of Spirit in particular, on any reading of the Logic. There is, in the first place, the issue of the relation of the Logic to the Philosophy of Nature. One can understand how that Logic should provide the basis for a reflection upon, and often destructive critique of, current mathematical and scientific theories. This has always been one task of philosophy. Hegel performs it admirably in his many Remarks, especially those added in 1832. But there is more. Granted that the Logic brings to explicit, formal expression the logicity of experience, one should expect that this reflective work would be continued in what we may call a phenomenology of the body – above all of the human body – showing how the body generates indeed by virtue of its attitudes and activities an organic space typically its own, and how a hierarchy of such spaces might together constitute a world of experience. One should expect, in the words of a recent commentator,¹¹⁵ a “system of natural kinds,” each exhibiting an internal and more or less complex structure of its own, and all of them the physical analogs (but not the applications, as they would be in Kant) of the logical schemas that Hegel has developed in the Logic. One might even take this phenomenology of nature as the more reflective expression of the natural attitudes that we instinctively assume towards nature in lived experience and which, existentially but not systematically, in fact underpin the work of the empirical sciences and make them possible. These are scenarios all perfectly consistent with Hegel's idea of the Logic on this post-Kantian reading. But is this all that Hegel is doing in his Philosophy of Nature? Is he not rather trying to establish, as if *a priori*, the originating categories of nature that would systematically provide the basis of all physical science? And would not such an attempt, although perhaps still conceivable in Hegel's times granted the state of the physical sciences in his day, still be of any value for the modern sciences? Most of all, is it consistent with Hegel's idea of the Logic?

Then there is the issue of the relation of the Logic to the Philosophy of Spirit. The latter, and especially the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, is the part of Hegel's legacy which is still very much alive today. Hegel's apparent attitude towards history, however, harbours a serious ambiguity. There is

¹¹⁵ Brigitte Falkenburg, “How to Save the Phenomena,” in *Hegel and the Philosophy of Nature*, ed. Stephen Houlgate (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), p. 129.

no doubt teleology in history, at least in the sense that historical events are the product of rational (or irrational) decisions, and such decisions have a logic of their own which may or may not work to the natural and spiritual advantage of the agents responsible for them and their inheritors. Barring natural accidents or changes of heart, they bring in train consequences which are like a self-fulfilling prophecy. In this sense reason realizes itself. A humanity that decides to arm itself with nuclear weapons should not be surprised (it would be only rational!) if it finds itself immolating itself for the sake of self-defense. Historians and philosophers would do well to detect such rational (irrational) intentions working themselves out in history. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel himself gave splendid analyses of cultures being born and dying on the basis of specific attitudes assumed with respect to nature. But this does not mean that there is a single end guiding the whole of history underhandedly, so to speak – as if, seen in the context of the broader picture, everything would appear to be exactly as it ought to be. This was the view of the Enlightenment. Kant himself still held on to it in his critically modified fashion. It is obviously a secularized form of the Christian belief in the Parousia and there is evidence that it also governs, at least at the rhetorical level, Hegel's view of the development of spirit in history. But is this view consistent with the logic of his *Logic*? Would it not force us into a reading of the *Logic* quite like that proposed by McTaggart? This is an important issue, all the more important because it also implicates the other issue, already mentioned, of how much Hegel's thought is substantially dependent (not just historically) on Christian religious belief.

There is finally the issue that the *Logic* itself raises. It purports to be the product of pure reason – the most abstract conceptualization of the concept precisely as concept. But the fact is that, as Hegel himself indicates in his *Remarks*, it closely reflects the historical progress of classical Western metaphysics. It would seem that, although Hegel might have freed the *Logic* from the mythology of reason on which Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* depended – and Kant's critical system also, in its own way – he did not free it from its historical past. And it would have been peculiar indeed if he had, seeing that the *Logic* is the logic of a thought that has for its object "being in becoming" and is itself the instance of a perfectly self-contained process of precisely such a becoming. But then, how dependent is this *Logic* on what happens to be the lexical structure of the language of the metaphysics which it reflects historically? How dependent is it on Aristotle's logic of predication? While the *Logic* is admittedly still a work in progress, in what sense can it claim to be, in principle at least, the

absolutely accomplished science without appearing to be an instance of intellectual imperialism? One way perhaps of disarming this criticism is to say that the Logic is absolute science only in the sense that it is capable of recognizing itself (and thus containing its limitation even as logic) as an analog of rationality as such – a rationality of which there can be other analogs, all of them capable of communicating across cultures and across times precisely because they are the analogs of one rationality – but at a distance as it were, with something always being lost in translation. I would like to take the claim in this sense, but it is not at all clear that this was Hegel's intent.

These and many others are the issues raised by any reading of Hegel's Logic. What they have in common is that they are all uniformly philosophically significant issues. And this is sufficient motivation for a renewed study of this now classic *Wissenschaft der Logik*.

Translator's note

THE HISTORY OF TRANSLATION

Hegel's *Logic* has a long tradition of translation into English. In the *Secret of Hegel* (1898), Stirling included a translation of the section on "quality," as well as loose renditions of substantial excerpts from "quantity," notably Remark I on calculus.¹ On the American side, there already was the translation of a brief excerpt taken from the concluding chapter of the Subjective Logic (GW 12.236.3–20; 25.10–13) in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* (1869). It came as the Appendix to what appears to be a précis of the Encyclopedia Logic intended for a course of instruction.² We also know from the testimony of William T. Harris that the St. Louis Hegelian Henry C. Brockmeyer, to whom the same Harris dedicated his *Hegel's Logic*, had translated the whole Logic in 1859 and 1860. Apparently this translation was Harris's first exposure to Hegel. Harris had copied it out and, as he says, it "still exists, but has never been printed, any portion of it."³ Back in Great Britain, a translation of the Subjective Logic was published in two volumes at Oxford by H. S. Macran, in 1912 and 1929.⁴ And it was also

¹ *The Secret of Hegel* (Edinburgh and New York, 1865), pp. 218–321; 510ff.; 557ff.

² *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 33 (1869), 257–281; 34 (1869), 369–371.

³ William T. Harris, *Hegel's Logic, a Book on the Genesis of the Categories of the Mind* (Chicago, 1890), pp. xi, xii. But Brockmeyer's translation must have been printed at least in parts, perhaps privately. The Harvard collection includes a volume that contains a translation of Hegel's "Doctrine of Essence," with no name of author or place and no date of publication (pp. iv–214). Inserted between the pages are notes written on the stationery of W. T. Harris. This is very likely a portion of Brockmeyer's translation. (I am grateful to my McGill colleague Andrew Reisner for having physically examined the book for me.) The editor of the Muirhead Library of Philosophy, which included the 1929 translation of the Logic (see note 5 below), relates in a prefatory note that he had been approached some years before "by the surviving friends of Henry Brockmeyer with a view to the publication in that series of the translation that he had left. It was to be accompanied with a short biography of the translator, and to partake of the character of a tribute to his memory both as philosopher and as Governor of the State of Missouri." This request was declined because the tribute seemed inappropriate to the aims of the series. (Vol. 1, pp. 17–18.)

⁴ *Hegel's Doctrine of Formal Logic, Being a Translation of the First Section of the Subjective Logic*, trans. H. S. Macran (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912); *Hegel's Logic of World and Idea, Being a Translation*

in 1929 that a first complete translation finally became available, produced by W. H. Johnston and L. G. Struthers. It was published in both London and New York.⁵ This text remained the standard English translation of the *Logic* until it was replaced in 1969 by that of Arthur V. Miller.⁶ As for the *Encyclopedia Logic*, a translation was published at Oxford in 1873 by William Wallace. It was republished in revised form in 1892⁷ and again, but with only minor variations and with an Introduction by J. N. Findlay, in 1975.⁸ A completely new translation by T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and W. H. Harris was published in 1991.⁹ Finally, Stephen Houlgate has included a portion of the German text of Book One of the *Greater Logic* (up to the end of Section 1, Chapter 2), together with an edited version of the Miller translation of the same text, in his 2006 commentary.¹⁰

In preparing the present text, I have of course consulted and profited from the results of all previous efforts. Throughout I have also used as control the excellent Italian translation of Arturo Moni, first published in 1924–1925 and revised in 1968 by Claudio Cesa.¹¹ The present translation is, however, completely new, and, since I have departed from standing conventions on several key terms, a few words of explanation are now in order.

ISSUES OF TRANSLATION

The *Logic's* range of vocabulary is extremely narrow, as one would expect of any logic. The few terms which are key to it present, however, considerable difficulty. In this translation, I have taken as my starting point the Glossary

of the Second and Third Parts of the Subjective Logic, trans. H. S. Macran (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929).

⁵ *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. W. H. Johnston and L. G. Struthers, 2 vols. (London: Allen & Unwin; New York: Macmillan, 1929).

⁶ *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (London: Allen & Unwin; New York: Humanities Press, 1969). A list of corrections which Miller circulated among friends and colleagues was never included in the subsequent reprints or in the paperback edition.

⁷ *The Logic of Hegel, Translated from the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, by William Wallace (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1873, 1892).

⁸ *Hegel's Logic, Being Part One of the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830)*, trans. William Wallace, with a Foreword by J. N. Findlay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

⁹ *G. W. Hegel: The Encyclopedia Logic*, trans. T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris (Indianapolis/Cambridge, MA: Hackett, 1991). The Introduction (pp. xxxii–xlvi) includes a minority report by the late Suchting which takes issue with many of the majority decisions regarding the translation of key terms.

¹⁰ S. Houlgate, *The Opening of Hegel's Logic: From Being to Infinity* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue, 2006).

¹¹ *G. W. F. Hegel: Scienza della Logica*, Vols. I and II, trans. Arturo Moni (1924–1925), revised by Claudio Cesa (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2001).

of the Geraets/Suchting/Harris translation of the Encyclopedia Logic, but I have taken to heart, and have often agreed with, the Suchting minority report.¹² I have steadfastly refused to resort to mechanical devices in cases where different words in German need to be kept distinct but are normally translated by the same word in English. Artificial constructs (unless they are in the original languages) are not translations but rather open admissions of failure in translation. Below is a list of terms that presented special difficulty, along with a brief explanation of my decisions on how to handle them.

an (in) sich, an (in) sich selbst, an (in) ihm (ihr), an (in) ihm (ihr) selbst, für sich, für sich selbst, für ihm (ihr) selbst. These are simple expressions, but difficult to translate and all the more challenging because there are important conceptual distinctions riding on them, as I now must explain.

There are two syntactic distinctions at work in them. One is between pronouns in indirect objective form (*ihm, ihr*) and in subjective or reflective form (*sich*). The difference between *an (in) sich* and *an (in) ihm (ihr)*, and between *für sich selbst* and *für ihm (ihr) selbst*, is, therefore, syntactic in origin (*sich* refers to the subject of a sentence; *ihm (ihr)* to a third term). But Hegel uses the contrast between *an (in) sich* and *an (in) ihm (ihr)* also to convey a conceptual difference. A determination is present in a concept *an ihm* when it accrues to it because of its external context (cf. GW 21, 112.9–11: “In so far as that which something is *in itself* (*an sich*) is also *in it* (*an ihm*), the something is affected with being-for-other”; also, GW 21, 108.10–11). It may well be that the determination already *implicitly* belongs to the internal logic of the concept (that is, is present in the concept *an sich*), and that a logician would already be able to recognize it as thus belonging to it on the basis of its external usage and its genesis as concept. (Cf. 21, 219.13–31.) As yet, however, the determination is not *said* by the concept itself – that is to say, the concept has not as yet expressly appropriated it. It remains, therefore, still external to it. When the concept explicitly expresses the determination, then the latter is present in it *für ihm*, or, conversely, the concept possesses it *für sich*.

The other distinction is between *sich* understood as subjective/reflective pronoun and *selbst* (“self”) understood demonstratively. It is in this demonstrative sense, that is, in order to reinforce the *sich* and the *ihm (ihr)* rhetorically, that Hegel uses the *selbst* in *an (in) sich selbst, an (in) ihm (ihr) selbst*, etc. To further complicate things, *selbst* can be used in German, just as it

¹² See note 9 above.

can in English, both in this just cited meaning of demonstrative pronoun or as a noun.

Now a problem of translation arises because English does not *verbally* distinguish between objective and subjective pronouns but, when necessary, adds “-self” to a pronoun in order to make it subjective/reflective. Nor does English verbally distinguish between this subjective/reflective form and the same form but used in demonstrative function. (Cf.: “He did it to himself”; “He did it himself.”) The net result is that, if we were to translate the German expressions literally, we would come up with the awkward “in it itself,” “in itself itself,” “for it itself,” “for itself itself,” or with variations thereof. The problem is how to avoid this awkwardness and at the same time make sure that, in using “self,” we do not surreptitiously introduce in English the word’s meaning as noun whereas in German the corresponding *selbst* is purely demonstrative. The problem is especially acute in rendering the distinction between *an ihm selbst* and *an sich selbst*.

I concede that there is no single way of dealing with this problem, and that each carries its own difficulties. I have opted for simply dropping the demonstrative *selbst*. In English we only need to say “in it,” “in itself,” “for it,” “for itself.” I have rejected the current widespread convention of translating *an ihm selbst* as “in its own self,” for two reasons. For one thing, the formula is more of a gloss than a translation. The German phrase that it translates would be *an seinem eigenen Selbst*, an expression that carries the connotations of “on its own account,” exactly the formula sometimes used to translate Hegel’s *für sich sein*. Mind you, no German is likely to say *an seinem eigenen Selbst*; but neither would an English person say “in its own self.” Another reason is that here more than anywhere else the use of “self” as noun can be misleading because it suggests a subjectivity which is not in the German text. Regarding *für sich selbst*, I have avoided as a general rule the currently often used “on its own account” – not because the formula is necessarily wrong (I have occasionally used it myself) but because it is unduly verbose and not necessary; the simpler “for itself” suffices.

I admit that the use of “in it” as a translation of *an ihm selbst* was often problematic. It failed in context to identify its referent unambiguously. I have often replaced it, therefore, with “within it” or adverbially simply with “within,” and occasionally with “internally” – in all cases hoping to retain the contrast with the “out,” the “without,” or the “external other,” which is in Hegel’s mind. Despite these difficulties, one advantage is that the English text has been rid of otherwise innumerable instances of the “self” used as noun whereas its counterpart in German is only demonstrative.

I have often replaced “in itself” with “within itself.” *An sich* and *für sich* can often be translated conveniently as simply “implicitly” and “explicitly” respectively. I saw no way of rendering in English the distinction between *an* and *in* consistently. Besides, I am not sure that there is a clear difference in German.

Finally, *in sich (selbst)*, used in connection with *Reflexion* (for instance, as in *Reflexion-in-sich-selbst*) contrasts in meaning – though not always explicitly so – with *mit sich (selbst)*, this last used in connection with such term as “equality” or “unity” to express a state of immediacy (for instance, as in *Gleichheit mit sich*). I have translated the *in sich (selbst)* with “immanent” (cf. GW 12, 35.1–2, where Hegel uses *immanente Reflexion*) and the *mit sich (selbst)* with “self-” as, for instance, in “self-equality.”

Ansichsein. “Being-in-itself” is the normal translation, especially when contrasted with *Fürsichsein*, “being-for-itself.” But I have also rendered *Ansichsein* as “the in-itself” and “the in-itselfness.”

aufheben, Aufhebung. The commonly accepted translations of these terms are “to sublate” and “sublation.” These are terms of art which were originally coined by Stirling precisely for the purpose of translating the corresponding German words but have now made their way into the *OED*. Much as I have tried to replace them with words that are just as common in English as the German equivalents are in German, and having even experimented for a while with Suchting’s suggestion of “to suspend” and “suspension,” I finally had to give up and return to the traditional translations of “to sublate” and “sublation.” The fact is that the only common English word which would somewhat adequately render the double meaning of the German *aufheben* is the lowly “to take up” (which, incidentally, is the translation of the Latin *tollere* from which “to sublate” was coined). “To take something up” means “to take it away” while at the same time to “appropriate it.” But “to take” is in English an all too widely used word, and with too many shades of different meanings, to allow the technical narrowing that Hegel has in mind.

Begriff. Following Geraets/Suchting/Harris, I have departed from long-standing usage and have translated *Begriff* as “concept” rather than as “notion.” B. C. Burt also used “concept” in his 1896 translation of Erdmann’s *Outlines of Logic and Metaphysics*, for the very good reason that “notion” carries the connotation of being a subjective representation.¹³ Its meaning is also much too vague. It should be reserved for precisely such contexts as require a term without too precise a meaning. “Concept”

¹³ J. E. Erdmann, *Outlines of Logic and Metaphysics*, trans. B. C. Burt (New York, 1896), pp. xiv–xv.

has the further advantage of being patently connected with "to conceive," just as *Begriff* is connected with *greifen*, and can easily be expanded into "conceptual" and "conceptually grasped" or replaced, if need be, with "comprehension" and "conceptually comprehended."

Beziehung and *Verhältnis* and the related verbs *sich beziehen* and *sich verhalten*. This distinction is conceptually very important and crucial to the development of the Logic. Quite generally, *Beziehung* affects the terms that enter into it externally or reflectively, whereas *Verhältnis* affects them substantially. To differentiate the two terms by translating them as "relation" and "relationship" respectively is not wrong. "Relationship," moreover, might also well convey the right nuance of "family [as contrasted with 'external'] relation." But all this is much too vague. I have followed, therefore, the convention already adopted in *The Jena System, 1804–5: Logic and Metaphysics* (1985) by reserving "relation" ("relating," "relating oneself") for *Verhältnis* and "connection" for *Beziehung*. To "connection," however, I have also added "reference" and "connecting reference." In this I follow Stirling who renders *Beziehung* as "reference," and then glosses the term in his usual rich language with "be-drawing" or "drawing together" or "connection" (*The Secret of Hegel*, p. 479). It is instructive to note that as the Logic progresses from the immediacy of the categories of "being" to the reflectivity of those of "essence," *Beziehung* naturally shifts in nuance of meaning from plain "connection" to reflective "reference" or "connecting reference." *Verhältnis* comes into its own only in connection with "concept" and "idea." It must be added that *Verhältnis* also connotes "behavior" or "comportment" (*sich verhalten* means "to behave" or "to comport oneself"), and that there are passages in which this nuance of meaning needs to be brought out. For a passage in which *Beziehung* and *Verhältnis* are used in contrast to each other, cf. GW II, 353.32–354.6. In mathematical contexts, especially in connection with Hegel's discussion of calculus, *Verhältnis* is to be translated as "ratio."

Dasein and *Existenz*. The widely accepted translation of *Dasein* is "determinate being." This is not incorrect, but it is not sufficiently precise. All *Dasein* is "determinate being," but not all "determinate being" is merely *Dasein*. Moreover, using "determinate being" makes the task of translating such derivatives as *seiend*, *Seiendes*, and *Daseiendes*, practically impossible or at least very cumbersome. One must fall back on long circumlocutions. The "thereness" and "there-being" in Geraets/Suchting/Harris (to which Suchting, however, objects, pp. xxxvi–xxxviii) were also used by Stirling and Burt. They are not wrong, but the problem with them, besides their unusualness and the difficulties that they too create in translating

opposite of what one would expect. In that one case, I have translated it as "differentiation" (GW 21, 144.8–9).

Einzel and ***Individuum***. *Einzel* is normally translated as "individual," but I have regularly used "singular" instead in order to reserve "individual" for *Individuum*. The latter signifies in Hegel's usage a special kind of individuality, one which is best realized in a person but for which we can see at least a first delineation in any internally organized object such as a living being. (Cf. GW 12, 144.3–11, where Hegel gives a broad definition of *Individuum*; also 12, 31ff., where the term is applied to living things, and 12, 189.21–25, where it is used in contrast to *Einzelheit*.) I recognize that "singular" and "singularity" sometimes tend to denote "peculiar" and "peculiarity," but they do not have to, and in context do not.

erkennen and ***wissen***, and related nouns ***Erkenntnis*** and ***Wissen***. The difference in German between the two verbs is basically idiomatic. Both verbs can be used transitively and intransitively, but in different contexts. It is helpful to think of *erkennen* as a kind of "recognition"; for *wissen*, the English of the King James Bible can help: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49). The idiomatic difference points to a difference in meaning nuance that can be lost if one translates both with "to know," and, since Hegel bases a conceptual difference on this nuance, it must be protected. *Wissen* carries the connotation of "being aware of"; *erkennen*, of "being acquainted with." Accordingly, Hegel uses *Erkenntnis* in the specialized meaning of ratiocinative knowledge. By contrast, *Wissen*, like both "wisdom" and "faith," connotes direct apprehension. It signifies the product or the origin, rather than the process, of reason. I have therefore followed the now common practice of translating *erkennen* and *Erkenntnis* with "cognize" and "cognition" respectively, though I do it reluctantly because "cognize" and "cognition" tend to make the already ponderous prose of the *Logic* even more ponderous. In places, where meaning is not at stake, I have not hesitated to replace inflected verbal forms such as "cognizing" with the plain "knowing."

Gegenstand and ***Objekt***. I have already indicated in the body of the Introduction the difference between these two terms. The clue for how to differentiate them in English can be obtained from what amounts basically to an idiomatic difference. In English, we say "the subject matter of a science"; the Germans say "the object (*Gegenstand*) of a science." "Subject matter" renders quite well the meaning of *Gegenstand* precisely as "material object," *objectum quod*. This is how I have translated it, reserving "object" for *Objekt*. In a few cases, where the context is clearly phenomenological, I have used "intended object" for *Gegenstand*, and in yet others, where

Hegel refers to mathematical entities or where he cites other philosophers (notably Kant), I have used "object." There is no other way of referring to a "triangle," for instance, than as a "mathematical object." And as for the other philosophers whom Hegel cites and often criticizes, the difficulty is precisely that in the context of their philosophy it is impossible to draw the precise distinction between *Gegenstand* and *Objekt* that Hegel has in mind. Regarding *Objektivität*, which I translate as "objectivity," two important texts can be found in GW 11, 324.19–22 and 12, 126ff. For the adjectival form, *gegenständlich*, I had no choice but to use "objective."

das Ideelle. Miller translates the term as "the ideal," but enters the German in square brackets; Geraets/Suchting/Harris also translate it as "the ideal," but enter an explanatory note in the Glossary. I have tried to get away from "ideal" because the common meaning of this English word, just like that of its German counterpart (*das Ideal*), is misleading. *Ideell* has nothing to do, except in a derivative sense, with an ideal state or situation which is archetypical or "perfect in its kind" (*OED*, *sub voce*; see also GW 21, 137 and Hegel's note). An *Ideelles* is rather an object which, in being *in itself* and even *for itself*, at the same time refers to an *other* that transcends it – an "other" with respect to which it is both identical yet differentiated. Hegel's typical example of an *Ideelles* is "the finite." Something finite is a reality whose whole truth lies in the "infinite" that transcends it – a transcendent "infinite" which is nevertheless present in it, inherent in its very structure as "finite." However, that such is the truth of anything finite is made explicit only in the conceptual medium of spirit's reflection. The *Ideelles* is an *Objekt*, the product or achievement of spiritual activity (GW 21, 142–150). I have translated it with "idealization" for several reasons: (1) because the word, just like *Ideelles*, denotes an achievement rather than just a physical state of being; (2) because an "idealization" stands to the idealized in the relation just defined, that is, as bringing to light what is essential to the latter; (3) because the word retains the connection with "representation" which Hegel also has in mind (cf. GW 21, 143.5); (4) and because, just like its German counterpart, the word also carries the pejorative meaning of "mere idealization" from which Hegel wants to rescue it.

Sache. In non-technical contexts, the term can and should be translated in a variety of ways, such as "substance," or even "thing." As a category, however, "fact" seems to be the best rendering. *Sache*, like "fact," denotes a thing or a situation which we understand to implicitly contain all the factors required for an explanation of its existence. Its presence cannot therefore be doubted even when those factors have yet to be made explicit. The related word, *Tatsache*, was first coined by the theologian Johann

Joachim Spalding precisely in order to translate the English term "matter of fact" as used by Joseph Butler in *The Analogy of Religion* (1736).¹⁴

Schein. Hegel says: "Der Schein is dasselbe, was die *Reflexion* ist; aber er ist die Reflexion als *unmittelbar*" (GW II, 249.21–22). *Schein* is generated by reflection inasmuch as the movement of the latter, in arriving at a would-be term, immediately turns back from it (*kehrt zurück*), annuls it as its end-term, and thereby returns to that from which it had begun – only, however, in order to perform there the same move of turning back and returning. "Die Reflexion . . . , die Bewegung des Nichts durch Nichts zu sich selbst zurück, ist das Scheinen *seiner* in einem *andern*" (GW II, 292.11–12). It is a movement which, on the face of it, offers no fixed point of reference. Just like a play of lights, it might be taken as an illusion. But there is nothing illusionary about it because, on the contrary, its reality is totally exhausted by what it is *simply on the face of it* – that is, it is movement simply *as* movement, self-referring *as* referring to an other. Anyone as sensitive to literature as Hegel was would have associated the term with the quip from an early play of Lessing that Mendelssohn cited to Jacobi as an example of the kind of doubt that common sense cannot countenance. "Oh yes! Ghosts have their fun! That's no real flame there. It only looks like a flame! It's not burning; it only seems to burn! It's not shining; it only seems to shine. [*Das scheint nicht, das scheint nur zu scheinen.*] There is no lighting a real light from such a ghostly one!" (*Die Matrone von Ephesus*, Act I, Scene 2). *Schein* can be, however, the source of delusions, notably of the mistake of thinking that there must be for it some stabilizing factor outside it. Hegel's subsequent logical moves consist precisely in demonstrating that any stabilizing determination must be sought within the very movement of reflection of which *Schein* is the immediate presentation. There is no simple or single way of translating the term in English. In German, *Schein* and *scheinen* can mean "shine" and "to shine," but "semblance" and "to seem" just as well. I have chosen "shine," both as noun and intransitive verb, in an effort to retain the metaphor of "light" which is at least partly behind Hegel's choice of *Schein*. (Cf. GW II, 391.38–392; II, 393.13–15: "Just as the *light* of nature is not a something, nor is it a thing, but its being is rather only its shining, so manifestation is self-identical absolute actuality.") Admittedly, "shine" and "to shine" do not sit well in a procession of logical categories. For this reason, I have normally accompanied the terms with "reflective" and "reflectively"

¹⁴ See Reinhart Staats, "Der theologischgeschichtliche Hintergrund des Begriffs 'Tatsache,'" in *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 70 (1973), 316–345.

respectively – except in contexts where Hegel himself explicitly uses the terms in connection with “reflection” – in order to signal the fact that the terms are used technically, in a specifically contrived sense. In very few instances, as required by context, I have also used “semblance” and “to seem” (for instance, in GW II, 251.31; II, 133.14; II, 177.16).

selbstständig. I have translated this term with “self-subsistent,” except in mathematical contexts, and also in connection with “relation,” where I have used “independent.”

Unterschied and ***Verschiedenheit***. The problem with this pair of terms is that the area of meaning that they cover is the same as is covered in English by the three terms “difference,” “distinction,” and “diversity.” It is difficult to correlate the two German terms with the three English ones. I agree with Suchting (versus Harris/Geraets, p. xlv) that the natural way of translating *Unterschied* is “difference.” We say “specific difference” where the Germans say *spezifischer Unterschied*. *Verschiedenheit*, for its part, is naturally translated as “diversity.” However, although this distinction is easy to pin down in principle, it does not always hold in fact. In different contexts, *Unterschied* also calls for “distinction,” and *Verschiedenheit* for “difference.” In English, “distinction” tends to be a difference *in dictu*; “difference,” one *in re*. I have used this rough rule as a guide when translating *Unterschied* as “distinction,” though I must admit that on occasions I had to rely simply on my intuitive sense of the text. It was more difficult to come up with even a rough rule for *Verschiedenheit*. “Diversity” tends to stress the plurality and variety of the things (or the moments of one single object) that are different, their “being versed in different directions,” so to speak, and therefore standing apart, each reflected into itself (cf. GW II, 267.5–6); “difference” tends to stress what makes them different. This is the image that I have kept in mind when translating *Verschiedenheit* with “difference” rather than with the more canonical “diversity.” But here, more so than in the case of *Unterschied*, I often had to rely on intuition.

Vorstellung. The normal translation of this term is “representation.” But Hegel uses it in different contexts in two quite distinct senses – in a generic sense that would include the specific type of representation which is the concept; and in a narrower sense which is normally associated with “imagination” and is opposed to “concept.” In this last sense, it can be translated in a variety of ways – for instance, as “ordinary representation,” “figurative representation,” or “representation of the imagination.”

zu Grunde gehen. This is a common German expression normally translated as “to perish.” But Hegel often plays on the word *Grund* (“ground” or “foundation”) in order to make a conceptual point. In an effort at saving

the image behind the German expression, I have translated it as “to founder”; “to founder to the ground”; and “to founder, thus sinking to the ground.”

THE TEXT OF THE PRESENT TRANSLATION

In producing this translation, I have consulted the critical edition of the text in Volumes 21, 11, and 12 of the *Gesammelte Werke*. I have also learned immensely from the critical apparatus of these volumes. I have consulted all past English translations and have used the excellent Moni/Cesa Italian translation as a control. The translation itself, however, is original, and it is made from the Georg Lasson text (1923/1932). This text rarely diverges from that of the critical edition, and, when it diverges, never does so significantly. The pagination in margins refers to the text of the *Gesammelte Werke*, by volume and page number. Footnotes numbered in Arabic are Hegel's own.

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The Science of Logic

by

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

VOLUME ONE

The Objective Logic

Book One

The Doctrine of Being

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The complete transformation that the ways of philosophical thought have undergone among us in the past twenty-five odd years, the higher standpoint in self-awareness that spirit has attained in this period of time, has so far had little influence on the shape of the *logic*.

What was hitherto called “metaphysics” has been, so to speak, extirpated root and branch, and has vanished from the ranks of the sciences. Where are the voices still to be heard of the ontology of former times, of the rational psychology, the cosmology, or indeed, even of the natural theology of the past, or where are they allowed to be heard? Inquiries, for instance, into the immateriality of the soul, into mechanical and final causes – where is interest in them still to be found? Even the former proofs of God’s existence are cited only out of historical interest, or for the purpose of edification and the uplifting of the mind. The fact is that interest, whether in the content or in the form of the former metaphysics, or in both together, has been lost. Remarkable as it is if a people has become indifferent, for instance, to its constitutional law, to its convictions, its moral customs and virtues, just as remarkable it is when a people loses its metaphysics – when the spirit engaged with its pure essence no longer has any real presence in its life.

The exoteric teaching of the Kantian philosophy – that the *understanding ought not to be allowed to soar above experience*, lest the cognitive faculty become a *theoretical reason* that by itself would beget nothing but *mental fancies* – this was the justification coming from the scientific camp for

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renouncing speculative thought. In support of this popular doctrine there was added the cry of alarm of modern pedagogy, that the pressing situation of the time called for attention to immediate needs – that just as in the ways of knowledge experience is first, so for skill in public and private life, exercise and practical education are the essential, they alone what is required, while theoretical insight is even harmful. – With science and common sense thus working hand in hand to cause the downfall of metaphysics, the singular spectacle came into view of *a cultivated people without metaphysics* – like a temple richly ornamented in other respects but without a holy of holies. – Theology, which in former times was the custodian of the speculative mysteries and of the albeit subordinate metaphysics, had relinquished this last science in exchange for feelings, popular practicality, and erudite historiography. And it was in keeping with this change that, for their part, those solitary individuals, whom their people had exiled from the world and dedicated to the contemplation of the eternal, also disappeared. Theirs was a life devoted exclusively to the service of contemplation, without practical gain but only for the sake of blessedness, and their disappearance can be regarded as essentially the same phenomenon, though in a different context, as the one just mentioned. – And so this darkness, this colorless self-preoccupation of spirit bent upon itself, having been dispelled, existence shone transformed into the bright world of flowers – of which, as is well known, none is *black*.

Logic did not fare quite as badly as metaphysics. That from logic one *learns how to think*, which for lack of anything else was considered its usefulness and therefore its purpose – just as if one were to learn how to digest or to move first from the study of anatomy and physiology – this is a prejudice that has long been put to rest, and in this respect the spirit of practicality certainly did not intend any better fate for logic than it did for its sister science. Nevertheless, probably for the sake of a certain formal utility, a place was still allowed for it among the sciences; it was even retained as a subject of public instruction. However, this better lot concerns only the outer fate of logic, for its shape and content have remained the same throughout a long inherited tradition, though progressively more diluted and emaciated in the course of the transmission; no trace is so far to be detected in it of the new spirit that has awakened in the sciences no less than in the world of actuality. However, once the substantial form of the spirit has reconstituted itself, it is of no avail to want to retain the forms of an earlier culture. These are like withered leaves pushed aside by the new buds already being generated at their roots.

Also in the scientific realm this *ignoring* of the universal change is gradually beginning to lose ground. The new ideas have imperceptibly become the accepted currency even to those opposed to them. And if these continue to fuss about their sources and principles and to dispute them, they have nevertheless surrendered to their consequences, unable to fend off their influence. They have no other way of giving a positive importance, and some content, to their increasingly irrelevant negative attitude, except by falling in with the new ways of thinking.

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However, the period of fermentation that goes with the beginning of every new creation seems to be past. In its first manifestation, a new creation usually behaves towards the entrenched systematization of the earlier principle with fanatical hostility; in fear of losing itself in the expansion of the particular, it also shuns the labor that goes with scientific cultivation and, nevertheless in need of it, it grasps at first at an empty formalism. The demand for the elaboration and cultivation of the material becomes at that point all the more pressing. There is a period in the formation of an epoch in which, just as in the formation of the individual, the foremost concern is the acquisition and reinforcement of the principle in its undeveloped intensity. But the higher demand is that such a principle should be made into science.

Now, whatever might already have happened to the substance and form of science in other respects, the science of logic that makes up metaphysics proper or pure speculative philosophy has to date been much neglected. What I more precisely understand by this science and its standpoint, I have provisorily stated in the *Introduction*. The fact that it was necessary to make a completely fresh start with this science, the nature itself of its subject matter, and the lack of any previous work that could have been used for the undertaken reform of it, may be taken into account by the fair-minded critic if even a labor of many years was unable to give this effort a greater perfection. – The essential point to be kept in mind is that an altogether new concept of scientific procedure is at work here. As I have remarked elsewhere,^a inasmuch as philosophy is to be science, it cannot borrow its method from a subordinate science, such as mathematics, any more than it can remain satisfied with categorical assurances of inner intuition, or can make use of argumentation based on external reflection. On the contrary, it can only be *the nature of the content* which is responsible for *movement*

^a *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Preface to the first edition. [GW 9, pp. 31, 33–36] – The actual demonstration is the cognition of the method, such as has its place in the logic itself.

21.8 in scientific knowledge, for it is the content's *own reflection* that first posits and *generates what that content is*.

The *understanding determines*, and holds the determination fixed. *Reason* is negative and *dialectical*, since it dissolves the determinations of the understanding into nothing; it is *positive*, since it generates the *universal*, and comprehends the particular therein. Just as the understanding is usually taken as something separate from reason in general, so also dialectical reason is taken as something separate from positive reason. In its truth reason is however *spirit*, which is higher than both reason bound to the understanding and understanding bound to reason. It is the negative, that which constitutes the quality of both the dialectical reason and the understanding: it negates the simple, thereby posits the determinate difference of the understanding; but it equally dissolves this difference, and so it is dialectical. But spirit does not stay at the nothing of this result but is in it rather equally positive, and thereby restores the first simplicity, but as universal, such as it is concrete in itself; a given particular is not subsumed under this universal but, on the contrary, it has already been determined together with the determining of the difference and the dissolution of this determining. This spiritual movement, which in its simplicity gives itself its determinateness, and in this determinateness gives itself its self-equality – this movement, which is thus the immanent development of the concept, is the absolute method of the concept, the absolute method of cognition and at the same time the immanent soul of the content. – On this self-constructing path alone, I say, is philosophy capable of being objective, demonstrative science. – In this fashion have I tried to portray *consciousness* in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Consciousness is spirit as concrete, self-aware knowledge – to be sure, a knowledge bound to externality, but the progression of this subject matter, like the development of all natural and spiritual life, rests exclusively on the nature of the *pure essentialities* that constitute the content of the logic. Consciousness, as spirit which on the way of manifesting itself frees itself from its immediacy and external concretion, attains to the pure knowledge that takes these same pure essentialities for its subject matter as they are in and for themselves. They are pure thoughts, spirit that thinks its essence. Their self-movement is their spiritual life and is that through which science constitutes itself, and of which it is the exposition.

The connection of the science that I call *Phenomenology of Spirit* to the Logic is thereby stated. – As regards the way it stands to it externally, a second part was intended to follow the first part of the *System*

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of Science^b that contains the Phenomenology. This second part would have contained the Logic and both the two real sciences of philosophy, the Philosophy of Nature and the Philosophy of Spirit, and would have brought the system of science to completion. However, the necessary expansion which the Logic demanded by itself has led me to have this particular part published separately. It therefore constitutes the first sequel to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in an expanded plan of the system of science. I shall later follow up with a treatment of both the two mentioned real sciences of philosophy. – This first volume of the Logic contains the Doctrine of Being, as Book One; Book Two, the second section of the same volume which contains the Doctrine of Essence is already in the presses; finally, the second volume will contain the Subjective Logic, or the Doctrine of the Concept.

Nürnberg, March 22, 1812 **21.10**

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

I undertook this revision of the Science of Logic, of which the first volume is hereby being published, in full consciousness not only of the difficulty of its subject matter and of its exposition besides, but equally of the imperfection from which its treatment in the first edition suffers. As earnestly as I have striven after many years of further occupation with this science to remedy this imperfection, I still feel that I have cause enough to appeal to the reader's indulgence. One title to such appeal in the first instance may well be based on the circumstance that for the most part only external material was available for its content in the earlier metaphysics and logic. Although the practice of these disciplines had been universal and customary, in the case of logic down to our own time, its interest in their speculative side has been just as universally and customarily restricted. It is the same material which is repeated over and over again, whether it is thinned out to the point of trivial superficiality, or whether the ancient ballast is freshly trotted out and dragged to new lengths, so that, through these habitually only mechanical efforts, no gain could be had for the philosophical content. To display

^b (Bamberg and Würzburg: at Göbbard's, 1807). This title [i.e. "First Part of the System of Science"] will no longer be added to the second edition to be published this coming Easter. – In place of the intended second part here mentioned, which was to contain the complement of the other philosophical sciences, I have since brought out the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, in its third edition last year. [1832]

the realm of thought philosophically, that is, in its own immanent activity or, what is the same, in its necessary development, had to be, therefore, a new undertaking, one that had to be started right from the beginning. Nevertheless, the received material, the known thought-forms, must be regarded as an extremely important fund, even a necessary condition, a presupposition to be gratefully acknowledged even though what it offers here and there is only a bare thread, the dead bones of a skeleton thrown together in a disorderly heap.

The forms of thought are first set out and stored in human *language*, and one can hardly be reminded often enough nowadays that thought is what differentiates the human being from the beast. In everything that the human being has interiorized, in everything that in some way or other has become for him a representation, in whatever he has made his own, there has language penetrated, and everything that he transforms into language and expresses in it contains a category, whether concealed, mixed, or well defined. So much is logic natural to the human being, is indeed his very *nature*. If we however contrast nature as such, as the realm of the physical, with the realm of the spiritual, then we must say that logic is the supernatural element that permeates all his natural behavior, his ways of sensing, intuiting, desiring, his needs and impulses; and it thereby makes them into something truly human, even though only formally human – makes them into representations and purposes. It is to the advantage of a language when it possesses a wealth of logical expressions, that is, distinctive expressions specifically set aside for thought determinations. Many of the prepositions and articles already pertain to relations based on thought (in this the Chinese language has apparently not advanced that far culturally, or at least not far enough), but such particles play a totally subordinate role, only slightly more independent than that of prefixes and suffixes, inflections, and the like. Much more important is that in a language the categories should be expressed as substantives and verbs, and thus be stamped into objective form. In this respect, the German language has many advantages over other modern languages, for many of its words also have the further peculiarity of carrying, not just different meanings, but opposite ones, and in this one cannot fail to recognize the language's speculative spirit. It can delight thought to come across such words, and to discover in naïve form, already in the lexicon as one word of opposite meanings, that union of opposites which is the result of speculation but to the understanding is nonsensical. Philosophy, therefore, stands in no need of special terminology; true, some words are to be taken from foreign languages; yet, through use these have already acquired citizenship in it and

an affected purism would be all the more out of place where everything depends on meaning the most. – The advance of culture in general and of the sciences in particular, even the empirical sciences which are bound to the senses and generally operate in the medium of the most common categories (e.g. whole and parts, a thing and its properties, and the like), gradually fosters the rise of thought-relations that are also more advanced, or it at least raises them to wider universality and consequently brings them to greater notice. In Physics, for instance, where the predominant category previously was that of *force*, it is the category of *polarity* that now plays the most significant role – a category which, incidentally, is randomly being imposed all too often on everything, even on light. It defines a difference in which the different terms are *inseparably* bound together, and it is indeed of infinite importance that an advance has thereby been made beyond the abstractive form of identity, by which a determinateness such as for example that of force acquires independent status, and the determining form of difference, the difference that at the same time remains an inseparable moment of identity, is instead brought to the forefront and is given general acceptance. The study of nature, because of the stable reality of its objects, is inevitably led to fix categories that can no longer be ignored in it, even if with complete disregard for consistency towards other categories which are *also* allowed to stand; it is not given room for abstracting from opposition and moving on to generalities, as so easily happens when spirit is the object.

21.12

But even when logical matters and their expressions are common coin in a culture, still, as I have said elsewhere,¹ *what is familiar* is for that reason *not known*, and it can even be a source of irritation to have to occupy oneself with the familiar – and what could be more familiar than just those determinations of thought which we employ everywhere, and are on our lips in every sentence that we utter? To indicate the general features of the course that cognition goes through as it leaves familiar acquaintance behind, the essential moments in the relationship of scientific thought to this natural thought, this is the purpose of the present preface. Together with the earlier *Introduction*, it will suffice for a general idea of what is meant by logical cognition – the kind of general idea which is demanded of a science prior to the science itself.

First of all, it must be regarded as an infinite step forward that the forms of thought have been freed from the material in which they are submerged in self-conscious intuition, in representation, as well as in our desires and volitions or, more accurately, in ideational desiring and willing (and there

¹ In the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, GW 9, 26.21.

is no human desire or volition without ideation); a step forward that these universalities have been brought to light and made the subject of study on their own, as was done by Plato, and after him by Aristotle especially; this step marks the beginning of our knowledge of them. “Only after almost everything which is necessary to life, and pertains to its comfort and sociability, was made available,” says Aristotle, “did man begin to trouble himself with philosophical knowledge.”² “In Egypt,” he had previously remarked, “there was an early development of the mathematical sciences because there the priestly caste were brought early to a state of leisure.”³ – Indeed, the need to occupy oneself with pure thoughts presupposes a long road that the human spirit must have traversed; it is the need, one may say, of having already attained the satisfaction of necessary need, the need of freedom from need, of abstraction from the material of intuition, imagination, and so forth; from the material of the concrete interests of desire, impulse, will, in which the determinations of thought hide as if behind a veil. In the silent regions of thought that has come to itself and communes only with itself, the interests that move the life of peoples and individuals are hushed. “In so many respects,” says Aristotle in the same context, “is human nature in bondage; but this science, which is not pursued for any utility, is alone free in and for itself, and for this reason it appears not to be a human possession.”⁴ Philosophical thinking in general still deals with concrete subject matters, with God, Nature, Spirit; but logic occupies itself exclusively with these thoughts as thought, in complete abstraction by themselves. For this reason it is customary to reserve it for the instruction of youth, for youth is not yet involved in the practical affairs of concrete life but lives a life of leisure so far as these are concerned, and it is only for its own subjective ends that it has to busy itself acquiring – at the level of theory at least – the means that will eventually enable it to become actively engaged in the objects of those practical interests. Contrary to Aristotle’s view just mentioned, the science of logic is counted among these *means*; the study of it is a preliminary labor and its place is the school, while the seriousness of life and the active pursuit of substantial ends are left for later. In real life, it is then a matter of *making use* of the thought determinations. From the honor of being contemplated for their own sake, such determinations are debased to the position of *serving* in the creation and exchange of ideas required for the hustle and bustle of social life. They are in part used as *abbreviations*, because of their universality. Indeed, what an infinite host of particulars relating to external existence and to action

21.13

² Aristotle, *Metaph.*, 982b.³ Aristotle, *Metaph.*, 981b.⁴ Aristotle, *Metaph.*, 982b.

are summed up in a representation, for instance, of battle, war, nation, or of sea and animal, etc.! And also, what an infinite host of images, actions, situations, etc. are epitomized in the representation of God, or of love, etc., epitomized in the *simplicity* of this way of representing! In part they are also used for the closer specification and discovery of *objective relations*, but in this role the content and the purpose of the thought involved, its correctness and truth, are made to depend entirely on the given data, and the thought determinations are not themselves credited with any active function in the determination of content. The use of thought determinations that we earlier called “natural logic” is unconscious; and when in science this role of serving as means is reflectively attributed to them, then thinking as such is made subordinate in the life of spirit to the other spiritual activities. We do not indeed say of our feelings, impulses, interests, that they serve us; on the contrary, they count as independent forces and powers, so that to have this particular feeling, to desire and to will this particular thing, to make this our interest – just this, is what we are. And it is more likely that we become conscious of obeying our feelings, impulses, passions, interests, not to mention our habits, than of having them in our possession, still less, in view of our intimate union with them, of their being means at our disposal. Such determinations of mind and spirit, when contrasted with the *universality* which we are conscious of being and in which we have our freedom, quickly show themselves to be *particulars*, and we rather regard ourselves to be caught up in their particularities and to be dominated by them. It is all the less possible, therefore, to believe that the thought determinations that pervade all our representations – whether these are purely theoretical or hold a material belonging to sensation, impulse, will – that such thought determinations are at our service; that it is we who have them in our possession and not they who have us in theirs.⁵ What is there of more in *us* as against them? How would *we*, how would *I*, set myself up as the superior universal *over* them – they that are the universal as such? When we give ourselves up to a sensation, a purpose, an interest, and feel restricted therein, feel unfree, then the place where we can withdraw from

21.14

⁵ There seems to be an allusion here to the question that Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi raised in Supplement VII of the second edition of F. H. Jacobi, *Über die Lehre des Spinoza in Briefen an den Herrn Moses Mendelssohn* (Breslau, 1789): “Is man in possession of reason, or reason in possession of man?,” p. 422. *Werke*: Gesamtausgabe, Series 1, Vol. 1, pp. 247–265. For an English translation, *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza in Letters to Herr Moses Mendelssohn*, see F. H. Jacobi, *The Main Philosophical Works and the Novel Allwill*, trans. and ed. George di Giovanni (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994), p. 375. Jacobi returned to the question in Supplement II to *Jacobi an Fichte* (Hamburg, 1799) pp. 65ff., *Jacobi to Fichte*, pp. 528ff. of the English translation.

it back into freedom is this area of self-certainty, of pure abstraction, of thought. Or again, when we speak of *things*, we call their *nature* or *essence* their *concept*, and this concept is only for thought; but still less shall we say of the concepts of things that we dominate them, or that the thought determinations of which they are the complex are at our service. On the contrary, our thought must accord with them, and our choice or freedom ought not to want to fit them to its purposes. Thus, inasmuch as subjective thought is our own most intimately inner doing, and the objective concept of things constitutes what is essential to them, we cannot step away from this doing, cannot stand above it, and even less can we step beyond the nature of things. We can, however, dispense with this last claim; inasmuch as it is symmetrical with the one preceding it, it says that our thoughts have a reference to the essence of things; but this is an empty claim, for the essence of things would then be set up as the rule for our concepts whereas, for us, that essence can only be the concepts that we have of the things. The way in which critical philosophy understands the relation of these *three termini* is that we place *thoughts* as a medium between *us* and the *things*, in the sense that this medium, instead of joining us with such things, would rather cut us off from them. But this view can be countered by the simple remark that these same things that are supposed to stand at the opposite extreme beyond us and beyond the self-referring thoughts, are themselves things of thought⁶ which, taken as entirely indeterminate, are only one thing (the so called thing-in-itself), the thought product of pure abstraction.

Enough said to dispel any notion that thought determinations are only for use, are only a means; more important is the related further notion that they are external forms. – The activity of thought at work in us across all representations, interests, and actions is, as we have said, unconsciously busy (the natural logic); explicit consciousness is of the content, the subject matters of representations, all the things that interest us; taken in this relation, thought determinations are generally taken to be *forms* that only attach to *the content* without however being this content itself. But if the truth of the matter is as was already stated and is otherwise generally admitted, that the *nature*, the specific *essence*, that which is truly *permanent* and *substantial* in the manifold and accidentality of appearance and fleeting externalization, is the *concept* of the thing, *the universal which is present in it* just as there is present in each human being, although universally unique, a specific *principle* that makes him human (or in each individual animal

21.15

⁶ *Gedankendinge*, i.e. the scholastic *entia rationis*.

a specific *principle* that makes it animal): if this is true, then there is no saying what such an individual could still be if this foundation were removed from him, no matter how many the predicates with which he would still be otherwise adorned – if, that is, such a foundation can be called a predicate like the rest. The indispensable foundation, the concept, the universal which is thought itself (provided that with the word “thought” one can abstract from figurative representation), cannot be regarded as *just* an indifferent form that attaches *to* a content. But these thoughts of all things natural and spiritual, even the substantial *content*, still contain a variety of determinacies and are still affected by the distinction of soul and body, of concept and reality relative to it; the profounder foundation is the soul standing on its own, the pure concept which is the innermost moment of the objects, their simple life pulse, just as it is of the subjective thinking of them. To bring to consciousness this *logical* nature that animates the spirit, that moves and works within it, this is the task. The broad distinction between instinctive act and act which is intelligent and free is that the latter is performed consciously; when the content that motivates a subject to action is drawn out of its immediate unity with the subject and is made to stand before it as an object, then it is that the freedom of spirit begins, the same spirit who, when thought is an instinctive activity, is caught up in the web of its categories and is splintered into a material of infinite variety. Here and there on this web there are knots, more firmly tied than others, which give stability and direction to the life and consciousness of spirit; they owe their firmness and power simply to the fact that, having been brought before consciousness, they stand as independent concepts of its essential nature. The most important point for the nature of spirit is the relation, not only of what it implicitly is *in itself* to what it *actually* is, but of what it *knows itself* to be to what it *actually* is; because spirit is essentially consciousness, this self-knowledge is a fundamental determination of its actuality. As impulses the categories do their work only instinctively; they are brought to consciousness one by one and so are variable and mutually confusing, thus affording to spirit only fragmentary and uncertain actuality. To purify these categories and in them to elevate spirit to truth and freedom, this is therefore the loftier business of logic.

21.16

What we indicated as constituting the beginning of science and have just now recognized to be of great value both on its own account and as the condition of true knowledge – namely, the treatment of concepts and of the moments of the concept in general, of the thought determinations as forms that are at first different from the material and are only attached to it – this is a work that quickly gives itself away as being inherently

inadequate for the attainment of truth which is the object and purpose of logic. For as mere forms, as distinct from the content, such concepts and their moments are taken in a determination that stamps them as finite and makes them unfit to hold the truth which is in itself infinite. In whatever respect the true may otherwise be again associated with restriction and finitude, this aspect is the side of its negation, of its untruth and lack of actuality, even of its cessation, and not of the affirmation which, as the true, it is. Confronted by the barrenness of the merely formal categories, healthy common sense instinctively felt that it had the upper hand after all, and it contemptuously relinquished acquaintanceship with them to the domain of school logic and school metaphysics. In this, however, it underestimated the value that the consciousness of these threads already possesses by itself; it also did not perceive that when given over to the instinctive practices of natural logic, especially when all acquaintance and cognition of the thought determinations themselves have deliberately been rejected, it is in bondage to unclarified and therefore unfree thought. The simple basic determination or common form of the collection of such forms is *identity* which, in the logic of this collection, is asserted as the law of identity, as $A = A$, and as the principle of contradiction. So much has healthy common sense lost respect for the school which still holds on to such laws of truth and still busies itself with them, that it ridicules the school and regards as insufferable anyone who believes that in following such laws one actually says anything at all: the plant is a – plant; science is – science; *and so on in infinitum*. Regarding the formulas that define the rules of inference which in fact is a principal function of the understanding, however mistaken healthy common sense might be in ignoring that they have their place in cognition where they must be obeyed, and also that they are essential material for rational thought, it has nonetheless come to the equally correct realization that such formulas are indifferently at the service just as much of error as of sophistry, and that, however truth may be defined, so far as higher truth is concerned, for instance religious truth, they are useless – that in general they have to do only with the correctness of knowledge, not its truth.

21.17

The inadequacy of this way of regarding thought which leaves truth on one side can only be remedied by including in our consideration of thought, not merely what is customarily credited to external form, but the content as well. It is soon evident that what in ordinary reflection is, as content, at first separated from the form cannot in fact be in itself formless, devoid of determination (in that case it would be a vacuity, the abstraction of the thing-in-itself); that it rather possesses form in it; indeed that it

receives soul and substance from the form alone and that it is this form itself which is transformed into only the semblance of a content, hence also into the semblance of something external to this semblance. By thus introducing content into logical consideration, it is not the *things*, but what is rather *the fact* [*Sache*], the *concept* of the things, that becomes the subject matter. In this connection, however, one must also be reminded that *there is* a multitude of concepts, a multitude of facts. One way in which limits are imposed on this multitude has already been said, that the concept as thought in general, as universal, as against the particularity of the things vaguely parading their multitudinousness before indeterminate intuition and representation, is their immeasurable abbreviation. But a concept is also, first of all, in itself *the concept*, and this concept is only one concept, the substantial foundation; it is of course also a *determinate* concept, and it is this *determinateness* that appears in it as content even though, in fact, it is a form determination of the substantial unity of the concept, a moment of the form as totality, *of the concept itself* which is the foundation of the determinate concepts. This concept is not intuited by the senses, is not represented in imagination; it is only subject matter, the product and content of *thought*, the fact that exists in and for itself, the logos, the reason of that which is, the truth of what we call things; it is least of all the logos that should be kept outside the science of logic. It cannot therefore be a matter of choice whether to include it within the science or leave it out. When the thought determinations which are only external forms are seriously considered in themselves, the result can only be the demonstration of their finitude and of the untruth of their supposed being-for-itself, and that the concept is their truth. Therefore, inasmuch as the science of logic deals with the thought determinations that instinctively and unconsciously pervade our spirit everywhere – and remain non-objectified and unnoticed even when they enter language – it will also be a reconstruction of those determinations which reflection has already abstracted and fixed as subjective forms external to a material content.

21.18

The presentation of no subject matter can be in and for itself as strictly and immanently plastic as is that of thought in its necessary development; nor would any subject matter require such a presentation; in this respect, the science of logic must surpass even mathematics, for no subject matter intrinsically possesses this freedom and independence. The presentation would demand that at no stage of the development should any thought determination or reflection occur that does not directly emerge at that specific stage and does not proceed in it from the preceding

determinations – a demand which is also to be found after a fashion in the process of mathematical inference. But I must admit that such an abstract perfection of presentation must generally be renounced; the very fact that the logic must begin with the purely simple, and therefore the most general and empty, restricts it to expressions of this simple that are themselves absolutely simple, without the further addition of a single word; only allowed, as the matter at hand requires, would be negative reflections intended to ward off and keep at bay whatever the imagination or an undisciplined thinking might otherwise adventitiously bring in. However, such intrusive elements in the otherwise simple immanent course of the development are essentially accidental, and the effort to ward them off would, therefore, be itself tainted with this accidentality; and besides, it would be futile to try to deal with them *all*, precisely because they lie outside the essence of the subject matter, and incompleteness is at best what would have to do to satisfy systematic expectations. Yet the restlessness and the distraction characteristic of our modern consciousness leave us no choice but to also take into account the more current of these reflections and these adventitious notions. A plastic discourse requires a plasticity of sense also in hearing and understanding; but youths and men of such a temper who would calmly suppress *their own* reflections and opinions in which *original thought* is so impatient to manifest itself, such listeners attentive to the facts as Plato portrayed them, could hardly be imagined in a modern dialogue; and even less could one count on readers of similar disposition. On the contrary, all too often and all too vehemently have I been confronted by opponents incapable of the simple consideration that their opinions and objections imply categories which are presuppositions and themselves in need of being criticized first before they are put to use. Lack of self-awareness in this matter is incredibly profound; it is responsible for the misunderstanding which is the cause of all others, the nasty and uneducated practice of taking for a category under consideration *something other* than this category itself. This lack of self-awareness is all the less justifiable when this *something other* consists of determinate thoughts and concepts, and these other categories also would have to have a place in a system of logic and be subjected there to examination on their own. This is most conspicuously the case in the vast majority of the objections and attacks on the first concepts or propositions of the logic, on *being* and *nothing*, and on *becoming* which, itself a simple determination, contains (indisputably indeed, as the simplest analysis shows) the other two determinations as moments. Thoroughness seems to require that the beginning, as the foundation upon which everything else is built, should be examined before all

else, in fact that we should not proceed further until its solidity has been demonstrated, and if the contrary should be the case, that we reject all that follows. This thoroughness has the added advantage of guaranteeing that the labor of thinking is reduced to a minimum; for it has before it, enclosed in this germ, the entire development and reckons that it has settled the whole business when it has disposed of the beginning, the easiest matter to dispatch because it is the simplest, the simple itself; it is the trifling labor required for this that really recommends this “thoroughness” which is so satisfied with itself. This restriction to the simple allows free play to the arbitrariness of thought which will not itself remain simple but brings in its own reflections on the subject. Having good right to occupy itself at first *only* with the principle and therefore not to let itself be involved in *anything else*, this industrious thoroughness in fact does the very opposite, for it *does* bring in the “else,” that is, other categories besides just the principle, extra presuppositions and prejudices. Such presuppositions as that infinity is different from finitude, content something else than form, the inner something else than the outer, likewise that mediation is not immediacy (as if anyone did not know these things), are didactically presented, narrated and affirmed, rather than demonstrated. There is something stupid – I have no other word for it – about this didactic mannerism; at a deeper level, there is the illegitimacy of simply presupposing and straight away accepting such propositions; still more, there is the failure to recognize that the requirement and the business of logical thinking is to investigate precisely this, whether apart from infinity a finite would be by itself something true; likewise, whether such an abstracted infinity, or whether a content without form or a form without content, an inner by itself without further externalization, an externality without inwardness, whether any of this would be *something true* or *something actual*. – But this culture and discipline of thought by which the latter acquires plasticity and overcomes the impatience of incidental reflection is procured solely by pressing onward, by study, and by carrying out to its conclusion the entire development.

21.20

Anyone who in our times labors at erecting anew an independent edifice of philosophical sciences may be reminded, thinking of how Plato expounded his, of the story that he reworked his *Republic* seven times over. The reminder of this, any comparison, such as may seem implied in it, should only serve to incite ever stronger the wish that for a work which, as belonging to the modern world, is confronted by a profounder principle, a more difficult subject matter and a material of greater compass, the unfettered leisure had been afforded of reworking it seven and seventy times over. But the author, in face of the magnitude of the task, had to

content himself with what could be made of it in circumstances of external necessity, of the inevitable distraction caused by the magnitude and multitude of contemporary interests, all the while in doubt whether the noisy clamor of the day and the deafening chatter of a conceit that takes pride in confining itself to just these interests, might still leave room for partaking in the dispassionate calm of a knowledge dedicated to thought alone.

Berlin, November 7, 1831

GENERAL CONCEPT OF LOGIC

In no science is the need to begin with the fact [*Sache*] itself, without preliminary reflections, felt more strongly than in the science of logic. In every other science, the matter that it treats, and the scientific method, are distinguished from each other; the content, moreover, does not make an absolute beginning but is dependent on other concepts and is connected on all sides with other material. It is therefore permitted to these sciences to speak of their ground and its context, as well of their method, in the form of lemmas;⁷ to apply presupposed forms of definitions and the like without further ado, as known and accepted; and to make use of customary ways of argumentation in order to establish their general concepts and fundamental determinations.

Logic, on the contrary, cannot presuppose any of these forms of reflection, these rules and laws of thinking, for they are part of its content and they first have to be established within it. And it is not just the declaration of scientific method but the *concept* itself of *science* as such that belongs to its content and even makes up its final result. Logic, therefore, cannot say what it is in advance, rather does this knowledge of itself only emerge as the final result and completion of its whole treatment. Likewise its subject matter, *thinking* or more specifically *conceptual* thinking, is essentially elaborated within it; its concept is generated in the course of this elaboration and cannot therefore be given in advance. What is anticipated in this Introduction, therefore, is not intended to ground as it were the concept of logic, or to justify in advance its content and method scientifically, but rather to make more intuitible, by means of some explanations and reflections of an argumentative and historical nature, the standpoint from which this science ought to be considered.

⁷ i.e. premises taken for granted.

Whenever logic is taken as the science of thinking in general, it is thereby understood that this “thinking” constitutes *the mere form* of a cognition; that logic abstracts from all *content*, and the so-called second *constitutive piece* that belongs to the cognition, namely the *matter*, must be given from elsewhere; hence that logic, since this matter does not in the least depend on it, can give only the formal conditions of genuine knowledge, but does not itself contain real truth; or again, that logic is only the *pathway* to real knowledge, for the essential component of truth, the content, lies outside it.

But, first, to say that logic abstracts from all *content*, that it only teaches the rule of thinking without being able to engage in what is being thought or to take its composition into consideration, this alone is already inadequate. For, since thinking and the rules of thinking are supposed to be its subject matter, in these logic already has a content specifically its own; in them it has that second constituent of knowledge, namely a matter whose composition is its concern.

But, second, the notions on which the concept of logic has generally rested so far have in part already passed away, and for the rest, it is time that they disappear altogether, that the standpoint of this science were grasped at a higher level, and that the science gained a completely altered shape.

The concept of logic has hitherto rested on a separation, presupposed once and for all in ordinary consciousness, of the *content* of knowledge and its *form*, or of *truth* and *certainty*. Presupposed *from the start* is that the material of knowledge is present in and for itself as a ready-made world outside thinking; that thinking is by itself empty, that it comes to this material as a form from outside, fills itself with it, and only then gains a content, thereby becoming real knowledge.

Further, these two component parts (for they are supposed to be related to each other as component parts, and cognition is compounded from them in a mechanical, or at best chemical, manner) are said to stand to each other in this order: the object is complete and finished all by itself and, for its actuality, can fully dispense with thought; thought, for its part, is something deficient and in need of a material in order to complete itself, and also, as a pliable indeterminate form, must adapt itself to its matter. Truth is the agreement of thought with the subject matter, and in order to produce this agreement – for it is not there on its own account – thought is expected to be subservient and responsive to the subject matter.

Third, when the difference of matter and form, of subject matter and thought, is not left in this nebulous indeterminacy but is more specifically defined, each turns out to be a sphere divorced from the other.

Consequently, as thought receives and informs the material, it does not transcend itself but its reception of this material and its responsiveness to it remain modifications of itself; thus thought does not become its other; the self-conscious determining, at any rate, belongs only to it; even as it refers to the subject matter, therefore, it does not reach out to it outside itself; the subject matter remains a thing in itself, utterly a “beyond” of thought.

These views on the relation of subject and object to each other express the determinations that constitute the nature of our ordinary, phenomenal consciousness. However, when these prejudices are carried over to reason, as if in reason the same relation obtained, as if this relation had any truth in and for itself, then they are errors, and the refutation of them in every part of the spiritual and natural universe is what philosophy is; or rather, since they block the entrance to philosophy, they are the errors that must be removed before one can enter it.

The older metaphysics had in this respect a higher concept of thinking than now passes as the accepted opinion. For it presupposed as its principle that only what is known of things and in things by thought is really true in them, that is, what is known in them not in their immediacy but as first elevated to the form of thinking, as things of thought. This metaphysics thus held that thinking and the determination of thinking are not something alien to the subject matters, but are rather their essence, or that the *things* and the *thinking* of them agree in and for themselves (also our language expresses a kinship between them); that thinking in its immanent determinations, and the true nature of things, are one and the same content.

But the *reflection* of the understanding seized hold of philosophy. We must know exactly what is meant by this saying which is otherwise often used as a slogan. It refers in general to an understanding that abstracts and therefore separates, that remains fixed in its separations. Turned against reason, this understanding behaves in the manner of *ordinary common sense*, giving credence to the latter's view that truth rests on sensuous reality, that thoughts are *only* thoughts, that is, that only sense perception gives filling and reality to them; that reason, in so far as it abides in and for itself, generates only mental figments. In this self-renunciation of reason, the concept of truth is lost, is restricted to the knowledge of mere subjective truth, of mere appearances, of only something to which the nature of the fact does not correspond; *knowledge* has lapsed into *opinion*.

21.30

Yet there is something deeper lying at the foundation of this turn which knowledge takes, and appears as a loss and a retrograde step, something on which the elevation of reason to the loftier spirit of modern philosophy

in fact rests. The basis of that conception now universally accepted⁸ is to be sought, namely, in the insight into the *necessary conflict* of the determinations of the understanding with themselves. – The reflection already mentioned consists in *transcending* the concrete immediate, in *determining* and *parting* it. But this reflection must *equally transcend* its *separating* determinations and above all *connect* them. The conflict of determinations breaks out precisely at the point of connection. This reflective activity of connection belongs in itself to reason, and to rise above the determinations and attain insight into their discord is the great negative step on the way to the true concept of reason. But, when not carried through, this insight runs into the misconception that reason is the one that contradicts itself; it fails to see that the contradiction is in fact the elevation of reason above the restrictions of the understanding and the dissolution of them. At that point, instead of making the final step that would take it to the summit, knowledge flees from the unsatisfactoriness of the determinations of the understanding to sensuous existence, believing that there it will find stability and accord. On the other hand, since this cognition is self-admittedly a cognition only of appearances, the unsatisfactoriness of the latter is admitted but at the same time presupposed: as much as to say that although we do not have cognition of things in themselves, nevertheless, within the sphere of appearance we do have correct cognition; as if, so to speak, there were a difference only in the *kind of subject matters* and one kind, namely the things in themselves, does not fall within the scope of knowledge whereas the other kind, namely the appearances, does.⁹ This is like attributing right insight to someone, with the stipulation, however, that he is not fit to see what is true but only what is false. Absurd as this might be, no less absurd would be a cognition which is true but does not know its subject matter as it is in itself.

The *critique of the forms of the understanding*¹⁰ has arrived precisely at this result, namely that such forms do *not apply to things in themselves*. – This can only mean that they are in themselves something untrue. However, since they have been allowed to remain valid for reason and experience, the critique has not altered them in any way but rather has let them be for the subject in the same shape as they formerly applied to the object. But if they are inadequate for the thing in itself, still less must the understanding to which they supposedly belong have to put up with them and rest content with them. If they cannot be determinations of *the thing in itself*, still less

⁸ i.e. the concept of truth as merely subjective.

⁹ This is a criticism of Kant. Cf. Bxxv.

¹⁰ The reference is to Kant. Cf. A276/B332ff.

can they be determinations of the *understanding*, to which one ought to concede at least the dignity of a thing. The determinations of finite and infinite run into the same conflict, whether they are applied to time and space, to the world, or are determinations internal to the spirit – just as black and white yield gray, whether they are mixed on a wall or on a palette. If our representation of the *world* is dissolved when we carry over to it the determinations of the infinite and finite, still more is *spirit* itself, which contains both determinations within itself, something inwardly self-contradictory, self-dissolving. – It is not the nature of the material or of the subject matter to which they are applied or in which they are found that can make a difference; for it is only through such determinations, and in accordance with them, that the subject matter has contradiction within it.

The said critique has therefore removed the forms of objective thinking only from the thing, but has left them in the subject as it originally found them. That is to say, it did not consider them in and for themselves, according to their proper content, but simply took them over from subjective logic in the manner of lemmas. There was no question, therefore, of an immanent deduction of such forms, or also of deducing them as logico-subjective forms, still less, of a dialectical treatment of them.

In its more consistent form, transcendental idealism did recognize the nothingness of the spectral *thing-in-itself*, this abstract shadow divorced from all content left over by critical philosophy, and its goal was to destroy it completely. This philosophy also made a start at letting reason produce its determinations from itself. But the subjective attitude assumed in the attempt prevented it from coming to fruition. This attitude and, together with it, the attempt and the cultivation of pure science were eventually abandoned.

But what is commonly understood by logic is considered with a total disregard of metaphysical significance. This science, in the state in which it still finds itself, has admittedly no content of the kind which ordinary consciousness would accept as reality, or as a genuine fact. But it is not for that reason a formal science void of any material truth. Besides, the region of truth is not to be sought in that material missing in it – a lack to which the insufficiency of logic is usually attributed. More to the point is that the emptiness of the logical forms lies rather solely in the manner in which they are considered and dealt with. Scattered in fixed determinations and thus not held together in organic unity, they are dead forms and the spirit which is their vital concrete unity does not reside in them. Therefore they lack proper content – a matter that would in itself be substance. The content which is missed in the logical forms is nothing else than a fixed foundation

and a concretion of these abstract determinations, and such a substantial being is usually sought for them outside them. But logical reason is itself the substantial or real factor which, within itself, holds together all the abstract determinations and constitutes their proper, absolutely concrete, unity. There is no need, therefore, to look far and wide for what is usually called a matter; it is not the fault of the subject matter of logic if the latter seems empty but only of the manner in which this subject matter is grasped.

This reflection brings us to a statement of the standpoint from which logic is to be considered, of how this standpoint differs from previous treatments of this science and is alone the true base on which the science is to rest in the future.

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*¹¹ I have presented consciousness as it progresses from the first immediate opposition of itself and the subject matter to absolute knowledge. This path traverses all the forms of the *relation of consciousness to the object* and its result is the *concept of science*. There is no need, therefore, to justify this concept here (apart from the fact that it emerges within logic itself). It has already been justified in the other work, and would indeed not be capable of any other justification than is produced by consciousness as all its shapes dissolve into that concept as into their truth. – A discursive justification or explanation of the concept of science can yield at best a general notion of it and a historical acquaintance; but a definition of science – or more precisely of logic – has its *proof* only in the necessity of the manner it is produced by consciousness as just mentioned. Any definition with which a science makes an absolute beginning can contain nothing else than the precise and correct expression of what is represented in one's mind as the *traditionally accepted* subject matter and purpose of the science. That just this subject matter and this purpose are so represented is a historical warrant for invoking such or such fact as conceded, or, more precisely, only for pleading that such or such fact should be accepted as conceded. There will always be the possibility that someone else will adduce a case, an instance, in which something more and different must be understood by some term or other – a term which is therefore to be defined in a narrower or broader sense and the science, too, will have to be refashioned accordingly. – Further still, definition is always a matter of argumentation as to what is to be included in it or excluded from it, within which limits and to what extent; but argumentation is open

¹¹ i.e. in Hegel's final Jena work (1807). Hegel gives one summary of this process at the beginning of Chapter 8, the concluding chapter.

to the most manifold and various opinions, and on these a decision can finally be determined only arbitrarily. In this method of beginning science with a definition, no mention is made of the need to demonstrate the necessity of its *subject matter*, and hence the necessity of the science itself.

The concept of pure science and its deduction is therefore presupposed in the present work in so far as the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is nothing other than that deduction. Absolute knowledge is the *truth* of all the modes of consciousness because, as the course of the *Phenomenology* brought out, it is only in absolute knowledge that the separation of the *subject matter* from the *certainty of itself* is completely resolved: truth has become equal to certainty and this certainty to truth.

Pure science thus presupposes the liberation from the opposition of consciousness. It contains *thought in so far as this thought is equally the fact as it is in itself*; or the *fact in itself* in so far as this is *equally pure thought*. As *science*, truth is pure self-consciousness as it develops itself and has the shape of the self, so that *that which exists in and for itself is the conscious concept and the concept as such is that which exists in and for itself*.

21.34

This objective thinking is thus the *content* of pure science. Consequently, far from being formal, far from lacking the matter required for an actual and true cognition, it is its content which alone has absolute truth, or, if one still wanted to make use of the word “matter,” which alone is the veritable matter – a matter for which the form is nothing external, because this matter is rather pure thought and hence the absolute form itself. Accordingly, logic is to be understood as the system of pure reason, as the realm of pure thought. *This realm is truth unveiled, truth as it is in and for itself*. It can therefore be said that this content is *the exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and of a finite spirit*.

Anaxagoras is celebrated as the man who first gave voice to the thought that *Nous, thought*, is the principle of the world; that the essence of the world is to be defined as thought.¹² In this, he laid down the foundation for an intellectual view of the universe, the pure shape of which must be *logic*. Logic has nothing to do with a thought *about* something which stands outside by itself as the base of thought; nor does it have to do with forms meant to provide mere *markings* of the truth; rather, the necessary forms of thinking, and its specific determinations, are the content and the ultimate truth itself.

To get at least some inkling of this, one must put aside the notion that truth must be something tangible. Such tangibility, for example, is carried

¹² Cf. Aristotle, *Metaph.*, 984b.

over even into the ideas of Plato which are in God's thought, as if they were, so to speak, things that exist but in another world or region, and a world of actuality were to be found outside them which has a substantiality distinct from those ideas and is real only because of this distinctness. The Platonic idea is nothing else than the universal, or, more precisely, it is the concept of the subject matter; it is only in the concept that something has actuality, and to the extent that it is different from its concept, it ceases to be actual and is a nullity; the side of tangibility and of sensuous self-externality belongs to this null side. – But on the other side one can appeal to the representations typical of ordinary logic; for it is assumed that in definitions, for example, the determinations are not just of the knowing subject but are rather determinations of the subject matter, such that constitute its innermost essential nature. Or in an inference drawn from given determinations to others, the assumption is that the inferred is not something external to the subject matter and alien to it, but that it belongs to it instead, that to the thought there corresponds being. – Everywhere presupposed by the use of the forms of the concept, of judgment, inference, definition, division, etc., is that they are not mere forms of self-conscious thinking but also of objective understanding. – *Thought* is an expression which attributes the determination contained in it primarily to consciousness. But inasmuch as it is said that *understanding, that reason, is in the objective world*, that spirit and nature have *universal laws* to which their life and their changes conform, then it is conceded just as much that the determinations of thought have objective value and concrete existence.

Critical philosophy did indeed already turn *metaphysics* into *logic* but, like the subsequent idealism, it gave to the logical determinations an essentially subjective significance out of fear of the object, as we said earlier;¹³ for that reason, these determinations remained affected by the very object that they avoided, and were left with the remains of a thing-in-itself, an infinite check, as a beyond. But the liberation from the opposition of consciousness that science must be able to presuppose elevates the determinations of thought above this anxious, incomplete standpoint, and demands that they be considered for what they are in and for themselves without any such cautious restriction, as the logical, the purely rational.

Kant thought further of logic, that is, the aggregate of definitions and propositions that ordinarily passes for logic, as fortunate because, as contrasted with other sciences, it was its lot to attain an early completion; since Aristotle, it has taken no backward step, but also none forward, the latter

¹³ Hegel is probably referring to 21.29, above.

because to all appearances it seems to be finished and complete. If logic has not undergone change since Aristotle – and in fact, judging from the latest compendiums of logic, the usual changes mostly consist only of omissions – then surely the conclusion to be drawn is that it is all the more in need of a total reworking; for the two thousand years of spirit's continuous labor must have procured for it a higher consciousness about its thinking and the purity of its inner essence. A comparison of the shapes to which the spirit of the practical and the religious world, and of science in every form of real or idealized consciousness, has raised itself, with the shape in which logic, spirit's consciousness of its own pure essence, finds itself, reveals too wide a difference that one would not be struck, even on the most superficial observation, by the disproportion and the unworthiness of the latter consciousness as contrasted with spirit's other elevations.

21.36

As a matter of fact, the need for a reformation of logic has long been felt. In the form and content in which it is found in the textbooks, it must be said that it has fallen into disrepute. It is still being dragged along, more from a feeling that one cannot dispense with a logic altogether and the persisting traditional belief in its importance, than from any conviction that such a commonplace content and the occupation with such empty forms are of any value or use.

The additions of psychological, pedagogical, and even physiological material which logic was at one time given, have later been almost universally recognized as disfigurements. A large part of these psychological, pedagogical, or physiological observations, of these laws and rules, whether they occur in logic or anywhere else, must appear in and for themselves to be quite shallow and trivial. The rule, for instance, that one should think through and personally test what one reads in books or hears by word of mouth; or, if one has poor sight, that one should aid the eyes with spectacles – rules which were offered for the attainment of truth in the textbooks of so-called applied logic, and even pompously set out in paragraphs – these must immediately strike everyone as superfluous – apart from the writer or the teacher who is in the embarrassing position of having to pad with extra material the otherwise too short and lifeless content of logic.^{c,14}

^c A just published and most up-to-date adaptation of this science, Fries's *System of Logic* [1811, Introduction §1] goes back to its anthropological foundations. The shallowness of the representation or opinion on which it is based, in and of itself, and of the execution, dispenses me from the trouble of taking any notice of this insignificant publication.

¹⁴ Note in the first edition, dropped in the second.

Regarding this content, the reason why it is so spiritless has already been given above. Its determinations are accepted in their undisturbed fixity and are brought together only in external connection. Since in judgments and syllogisms the operations are mostly reduced to, and founded upon, the quantitative aspect of the determinations, everything rests on external differentiation, on mere comparison, and becomes a completely analytical procedure and a calculus void of concept. The deduction of the so-called rules and laws, of inference especially, is no better than the manipulation of rods of unequal lengths for sorting them out in groups according to size – than a children's game of fitting together the pieces of a colored picture puzzle. – Not incorrectly, therefore, has this thinking been equated with reckoning, and reckoning again with this thinking.¹⁵ In mathematics, numbers have no conceptual content, no meaning outside equality or inequality, that is, outside relations which are entirely external; neither in themselves nor in connection are they a thought. When one mechanically calculates that three-fourths multiplied by two-thirds makes one-half, this operation contains about as much and as little thought as estimating whether in a logical figure this or that kind of syllogism applies.

21.37

For the dead bones of logic to be quickened by spirit and become substance and content, its *method* must be the one which alone can make it fit to be pure science. In the present situation of logic, hardly a trace of scientific method is to be seen in it. It has roughly the form of an empirical science. The empirical sciences did find a method of defining and classifying their material specifically suited, such as it is, to what they are supposed to be. Pure mathematics, too, has its method suited to its abstract objects and the quantitative form in which alone it considers them. In the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, I have said what is essential regarding this method and, in general, the derived form of scientific procedure proper to mathematics,¹⁶ but we shall return to it in more detail within the logic itself.¹⁷ Spinoza, Wolff, and others, have let themselves be led astray into applying that method also to philosophy and in making the conceptually void external course of quantity, the course of the concept – a move contradictory in and for itself. Hitherto philosophy had yet to find its method but looked with envy at the systematic edifice of mathematics and,

¹⁵ Hegel is referring to Reinhold, at the time when the latter had espoused the philosophy of C. G. Bardili. Reinhold defines thought as “*the determinable and, to this extent, finite repeatability of one and just this one in an other, through the indeterminable and, to this extent, infinite repeatability of one and just this one in one and just this one determining.*” He calls this process a “*Rechnen.*” K. L. Reinhold, “Was ist das Denken, als Denken?” in *Beyträge zur leichtern Übersicht der Philosophie beyrn Anfänge des 19. Jahrhunderts* I (Hamburg: Perthes, 1801), p. 103.

¹⁶ GW 9, 31–34. ¹⁷ GW 12, 226–229.

as we have said, borrowed it from it or helped itself with the method of sciences which are only an admixture of given material, propositions of experience and thoughts – or it even resorted to the crude rejection of all method. But the exposition of that which alone can be the true method of philosophical science falls within the treatment of logic itself; for method is the consciousness of the form of the inner self-movement of the content of logic. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, I have presented an example of this method with respect to a concrete object, namely *consciousness*.^d At issue there are shapes of consciousness, each of which dissolves itself in being realized, has its own negation for result – and thereby has gone over to a higher shape. The one thing needed to *achieve scientific progress* – and it is essential to make an effort at gaining this quite *simple* insight into it – is the recognition of the logical principle that negation is equally positive, or that what is self-contradictory does not resolve itself into a nullity, into abstract nothingness, but essentially only into the negation of its *particular* content; or that such a negation is not just negation, but is *the negation of the determined fact* which is resolved, and is therefore determinate negation; that in the result there is therefore contained in essence that from which the result derives – a tautology indeed, since the result would otherwise be something immediate and not a result. Because the result, the negation, is a *determinate* negation, it has a *content*. It is a new concept but one higher and richer than the preceding – richer because it negates or opposes the preceding and therefore contains it, and it contains even more than that, for it is the unity of itself and its opposite. – It is above all in this way that the system of concepts is to be erected – and it has to come to completion in an unstoppable and pure progression that admits of nothing extraneous.

21.38

How could I possibly pretend that the method that I follow in this system of logic, or rather the method that this system itself follows within, would not be capable of greater perfection, of greater elaboration of detail? Yet I know that it is the one and only true method. This is made obvious by the very fact that this method is not something distinct from its subject matter and content – for it is the content in itself, *the dialectic which it possesses within itself*, which moves the subject matter forward. It is clear that no expositions can be accepted as scientifically valid that do not follow the progression of this method and are not in tune with its simple rhythm, for it is the course of the fact itself.

^d Later, with respect to other concrete objects and corresponding parts of philosophy.

In keeping with this method, I remind the reader that the divisions and the headings of the books, the sections and chapters given in this work, as well as the explanations associated with them, are made for the purpose of a preliminary overview, and that strictly speaking they only are of *historical* value. They do not belong to the content and body of the science but are rather compilations of an external reflection which has already gone through the whole of the exposition, therefore knows the sequence of its moments in advance and anticipates them before they are brought on by the matter at issue itself.

21.39

Similarly in other sciences, preliminary definitions and divisions are by themselves nothing other than such external indications; but also within the science they never exceed this status. Even in logic, for example, we are told something like this, that “logic has two main parts, the doctrine of the elements and methodology,” and under the doctrine of the elements we then immediately find such *headings* as “Laws of Thinking,” followed by *Chapter One*, “On Concepts,” *Section One*, “On the Clarity of Concepts,” etc. – These definitions and divisions, made without any deduction and justification, constitute the systematic framework and the entire connectedness of such sciences. Such a logic considers it its vocation to talk about the necessity of deducing concepts and truths from principles; however, of what they call method, there is not the shadow of a deduction. Order consists in something like grouping together what is alike, in bringing in the simple ahead of the composite, and in other such external considerations. But as regards any internal, necessary connectedness, the list of headings is all that there is, and a transition is made simply by saying that now we are at “Chapter Two,” or that “*we now come* to judgments,” and the like.

Also the headings and divisions that appear in the present system are not intended to have for themselves any other significance than that of an indication of content. But then the *necessity* of the connectedness and the *immanent emergence* of distinctions must be found in the treatment of the fact itself, for it falls within the concept’s own progressive determination.

What propels the concept onward is the already mentioned negative¹⁸ which it possesses in itself; it is this that constitutes the truly dialectical factor. *Dialectic*, once considered a separate part of logic and, one may say, entirely misunderstood so far as its purpose and standpoint are concerned, thereby assumes a totally different position. – Even the Platonic dialectic, in the *Parmenides* itself and elsewhere even more directly, on the one hand

21.40

¹⁸ Cf. above, 21.28.

only has the aim of refuting limited assertions by internally dissolving them and, on the other hand, generally comes only to a negative result. Dialectic is commonly regarded as an external and negative activity which does not belong to the fact itself but is rooted in mere conceit, in a subjective obsession for subverting and bringing to naught everything firm and true, or at least as in resulting in nothing but the vanity of the subject matter subjected to dialectical treatment.

Kant had a higher regard for dialectic – and this is among his greatest merits – for he removed from it the semblance of arbitrariness which it has in ordinary thought and presented it as *a necessary operation of reason*.¹⁹ Because dialectic was held to be merely the art of practicing deceptions and producing illusions, it was straight away assumed that it plays a false game; that its whole power rests solely on hiding its deception; that its results are only deviously obtained, a subjective shine. True, Kant's dialectical displays in the antinomies of pure reason, when examined more closely as will be done at length in the course of this work,²⁰ do not deserve great praise; but the general idea to which he gave justification and credence is the *objectivity of reflective shine* and the *necessity of the contradiction* which belongs to the *nature* of thought determinations: of course, this he did above all with reference to the way in which these determinations are applied by reason to *the things in themselves*; nevertheless, what such determinations are in reason, and with reference to what is in itself, this is precisely their nature. This result, *grasped in its positive aspect*, is nothing else but the *inner negativity* of the determinations which is their self-moving soul, the principle of all natural and spiritual life. But if one stays fixed at the abstract negative aspect of dialectics, the result is only the commonplace that reason is incapable of knowing the infinite – a peculiar result indeed, for it says that, since the infinite is what is rational, reason is not capable of cognizing the rational.

It is in this dialectic as understood here, and hence in grasping opposites in their unity, or the positive in the negative, that *the speculative* consists. It is the most important aspect of dialectic, but for the still unpracticed, unfree faculty of thought, the most difficult. Such a faculty, if still occupied with breaking itself free of the concrete representations of the senses and of ratiocination, must first practice abstract thinking, hold fast to concepts in their *determinateness* and learn to gain knowledge by means of them. An exposition of logic to this end would have, in its method, to keep to a subject division as mentioned above, and with regard to the more

21.41

¹⁹ Cf. A321/B377ff. ²⁰ Cf below, 21.179ff., 228ff.

detailed content, to the definitions given to the single concepts, without getting itself involved in dialectic. In external shape, it would turn out to be similar to the usual presentation of this science, yet would also depart from it in content and, though of no use for the practice of speculative thinking, it would however serve abstract thinking, and this is a purpose which can never be realized by a logic popularized with the additions of psychological and anthropological materials. What it would give to the mind is the picture of a methodically ordered whole, even though the soul of the edifice, the method dwelling in the dialectic, would not itself appear in it.

Finally, with respect to the *education and the relation of the individual to logic*, I would further remark that this science, like grammar, appears in two different aspects or values. It is one thing for one who comes to it and to the sciences generally for the first time, and something else for one who returns to it from these sciences. He who is beginning to make his acquaintance with grammar finds in its forms and laws dry abstractions, arbitrary rules, quite in general a disconnected aggregate of definitions that have no other value or meaning than what they immediately signify; at the start, there is nothing to be known in them except themselves. On the other hand, he who has mastered a language and is also acquainted with other languages with which to compare it, to such is given the capacity to feel in the grammar of the language the spirit and culture of a people; the same rules and forms now have an enriched, living value. In the medium of the language, he can recognize the expression of spirit as spirit, and this is logic. So, he who first comes to this science, at first finds in logic an isolated system of abstractions which, confined to itself, does not reach over to embrace other forms of cognition and of science. On the contrary, when held against the riches of the world-scenario, against the apparently real content of the other sciences; when compared with the promise of the absolute science to unveil the *essence* of these riches, to unveil the *inner nature* of spirit and of the world, the *truth*, then in the abstractness of its shape, in the colorlessness and stark simplicity of its pure determinations; this science has rather the look of one who can sooner afford anything than any such promise but stands penniless before those riches. The first acquaintance with logic restricts its significance to it alone; its content passes only for an isolated occupation with thought determinations, *next* to which the other scientific endeavors constitute a material and content of their own, one over which logical thought may indeed have some formal influence, but an influence which is more of their own making and which, if need be, scientific form and the study of this form can at any rate also dispense with.

The other sciences have on the whole discarded the well-regulated method of proceeding by way of definitions, axioms, theorems and their proofs, and so on; so-called natural logic has become their accepted norm and this manages to do its work without any specialized knowledge of thought itself. All in all, the matter and the content of these sciences stand totally independent of logic and are also better suited to the senses, to feeling, the imagination, and any kind of practical interest.

So logic must indeed at first be learned as something which one may well understand and penetrate into but in which, at the beginning, one misses the scope, depth, and broader significance. Only after a more profound acquaintance with the other sciences does logic rise for subjective spirit from a merely abstract universal to a universal that encompasses within itself the riches of the particular: in the same way a moral maxim does not possess in the mouth of a youngster who otherwise understands it quite well the meaning and scope that it has in the spirit of a man with a lifetime of experience, to whom therefore the weight of its content is expressed in full force. Thus logic receives full appreciation of its value only when it comes as the result of the experience of the sciences; then it displays itself to spirit as the universal truth, not as a *particular* cognition *alongside* another material and other realities, but as the essence rather of this further content.

Now although this power of logic is not consciously present to spirit at the beginning of its study, such a study will nevertheless impart to it the inward power which will lead it to the truth. The system of logic is the realm of shadows, the world of simple essentialities, freed of all sensuous concretion. To study this science, to dwell and to labor in this realm of shadows, is the absolute culture and discipline of consciousness. Its task is one which is remote from the intuitions and the goals of the senses, remote from feelings and from the world of merely fancied representation. Considered from its negative side, this task consists in holding off the accidentality of ratiocinative thought and the arbitrariness in the choice to accept one ground as valid rather than its opposite.

21.43

But above all, thought thereby gains self-subsistence and independence. It will make itself at home in abstractions and in the ways of working with concepts without sensuous substrata, will develop an unconscious power to assimilate in rational form the otherwise dispersed manifold of cognitions and sciences, the power to grasp and hold them in their essentiality, to strip them of every externality and in this way to abstract from them the logical element – or what is the same thing, the power to fill the abstract groundwork of logic previously acquired through study with the content of

every truth, and to bestow upon this content the value of a universal which no longer stands as a particular alongside other particulars but embraces them all in its grasp and is their essence, the absolutely true.

21.44

GENERAL DIVISION OF THE LOGIC

It follows from what has been said regarding the *concept* of this science and where its justification lies that the general *division* of it can be only *provisional* here – can be given, as it were, only in so far as the author is already acquainted with the science and is consequently *historically* in a position to indicate in advance the main distinctions in which the concept assumes determination as it develops.

Still, the attempt can be made to elicit in advance some general understanding of what is required for *performing the division*, although even here recourse must be made to a procedural method which will attain full disclosure and justification only within the science. – One must thus be reminded, first and foremost, that presupposed here is that the *division* must be connected with the concept, or rather must lie in the concept itself. The concept is not indeterminate but is *determinate within*; the division, however, expresses this *determinateness* of the concept *in developed form*; it is the *parting* of the concept *in judgment*,²¹ not a judgment *about* some subject matter or other picked out externally, but the judging, that is, the *determining*, of the concept within it. Right-angularity, acute-angularity, etc., or equilaterality, which are the determinations according to which triangles are divided, do not lie in the determinateness of the triangle itself, that is, not in what is usually called the concept of a triangle, no more than in the concept of animal in general, or of mammal, bird, etc., one can find the determinations according to which animal in general is divided into mammal, bird, etc., and these classes are then divided into further genera. Such determinations are taken from elsewhere, from empirical intuition; they come to those so-called concepts from without. In the philosophical treatment of division, the concept must show that it itself holds the source of the determinations.

21.45

But in the Introduction, the concept of logic was itself presented as the result of a science that transcends it, and hence as equally a *presupposition* here. Accordingly, logic was defined as the science of pure thought – the science that has *pure knowledge* for its principle and is a unity which is not

²¹ *parting . . . in judgment* = *Urteil*. The German *Urteil* (“judgment”) connotes a “parting,” like the Greek κρίσις.

abstract but living and concrete, so that the opposition of consciousness between *a being subjectively existing for itself*, and another but objectively *existing such being*, has been overcome in it, and being is known to be in itself a pure concept and the pure concept to be true being. These, then, are the two *moments* contained in logic. But they are now known to exist *inseparably*, not as in consciousness, where each *exists for itself*; it is for this reason and this reason alone, because they are at the same time known to be *distinct* (yet not to exist for themselves), that their unity is not abstract, dead and inert, but concrete.

This unity also constitutes the logical principle as *element*,²² so that the development of the distinction which is from the start present in it proceeds only *inside* this element. For since the division is, as we said, the *parting* or the *judgment* of the concept – is the positing of the determination which is already immanent in it and therefore the positing of its distinction – this positing must not be understood as resolving that concrete unity back into its determinations, as if these were to exist on their own, for this would be here a vacuous return to the previous standpoint, to the opposition of consciousness. But this opposition has vanished; the unity remains the element, and the distinctions of the division and of the development in general no longer transgress that unity. Therefore the earlier determinations which (on the *pathway to truth*) *existed for themselves*, as for instance that of subjective and objective, or also of thought and being, of concept and reality, no matter from what standpoint they were determined, are *now in their truth*, that is, in their unity, *reduced to forms*. In their difference they therefore implicitly remain, *in themselves*, the whole concept, and this concept is posited in the division only under its own determinations.

Thus it is the whole concept which we must consider, first as *existent* concept, and then as *concept*; in the one case it is concept only *implicitly, in itself*, the concept of reality or being; in the other, it is the concept as such, the *concept that exists for itself* (in more concrete forms, the concept as it is in the human being, who is endowed with thought, and also in the sentient animal and in general in organic individuality, although, of course, in these last it is not *conscious* and still less *known*; it is concept *in itself* only in inorganic nature). – Accordingly, the first division must be between the logic of the *concept as being* and of the concept *as concept*, or (if we want to avail ourselves of otherwise familiar, but very indeterminate and therefore very ambiguous expressions) in *objective* and *subjective* logic.

21.46

²² “Element” has classical connotations here. Like “water,” “fire,” or “air,” this unity is a pervasive element that embraces differences.

However, in accordance with the elemental unity which is immanent in the concept as basis, and hence in accordance with the inseparability of the concept's determinations, such determinations, even as *differentiated* (the concept is posited in their *difference*), must also stand at least in *reference* to each another. There results a sphere of *mediation*, the concept as a system of *reflected determinations*, that is, of being as it passes over into the in-itselfness of the concept – a concept which is in this way not yet posited for itself *as such* but is also fettered by an immediate being still external to it. This sphere is *the doctrine of essence* that stands between the doctrine of being and of the concept. – In the general division of logic in this work, it has been included in *objective logic* because, although essence is indeed already inwardness, the character of *subject* is to be reserved *nominatim* for the concept.

21.47 Recently Kant^c has opposed to what has usually been called “logic” another, namely a *transcendental logic*.²⁴ What has been called *objective logic* here would correspond in part to what for him is *transcendental logic*. Kant distinguishes it from what he calls general logic because (α) it deals with concepts that refer to *intended objects a priori*, and hence does not abstract from all the *content* of objective cognition, or in that it contains the rules of the pure thinking of an *intended object*; and because (β) it thereby goes to the source of our cognition so far as this cognition cannot be attributed to the intended objects. – It is to this second aspect that Kant's philosophical interest is exclusively directed. His principal idea is to vindicate the *categories* for self-consciousness understood as the

^c I should point out that in this work I make frequent references to the Kantian philosophy (which to many might seem superfluous) because, whatever might be said here or elsewhere of its distinctive character or of particular parts of its exposition, it constitutes the foundation and the starting point of the new German philosophy, and this is a merit of which it can boast undiminished by whatever fault may be found in it. An added reason for these frequent references in the objective logic is that Kantian philosophy delves deeply into important, *more specific* aspects of the logic, whereas later philosophical expositions have paid little attention to these aspects and in some instances have even expressed crude – though not unavenged – contempt for them. The philosophizing most widespread among us does *not reach* past the Kantian results that reason cannot cognize any true content, and that, when it comes to absolute truth, it must be directed to faith.²³ But what for Kant is the result is for this philosophizing the immediate starting point, so that the exposition which precedes the result, from which this result is derived and which constitutes philosophical cognition, is excised beforehand. The philosophy of Kant thus serves as a cushion for an intellectual indolence which takes comfort in the fact that everything is already proved and settled. For cognition and a specific content of thought which is not found in such a barren and arid complacency, one must therefore turn to that preceding exposition.

²³ The allusion here is at least to Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi. Cf. Jacobi, *David Hume über den Glauben, oder Idealismus und Realismus, Ein Gespräch* (Breslau, 1787), pp. 48–49; *Werke: Gesamtausgabe*, Series 2, Vol. 1, pp. 31–32. English trans., *David Hume on Faith, or Idealism and Realism: A Dialogue*, in *Main Philosophical Works*, pp. 271–272.

²⁴ A50/B74ff.

subjective “I.”²⁵ Because of this determination, his point of view remains confined within consciousness and its opposition, and, besides the empirical element of feeling and intuition, is left with something else not posited or determined by thinking self-consciousness, a *thing-in-itself*, something alien and external to thinking – although it is easy to see that such an abstract entity as the *thing-in-itself* is itself only the product of thought, and of merely abstractive thought at that. – If other Kantians²⁶ have expanded on the determining of the *intended object* by the “I” by saying that the objectifying of the “I” is to be regarded as an original and necessary deed of consciousness, so that in this original deed there is not yet the representation of the “I” – which would be only a consciousness of that consciousness, or itself an objectifying of that consciousness – then this objectifying deed, liberated from the opposition of consciousness, is closer to what may be taken simply as *thinking* as such.^f But this deed should no longer be called consciousness; for consciousness holds within itself the opposition of the “I” and its intended object which is not to be found in that original deed.²⁷ The name “consciousness” gives it more of a semblance of subjectivity than does the term “*thought*,” which here, however, is to be taken in the absolute sense of *infinite thought*, not as encumbered by the finitude of consciousness; in short, *thought as such*.

21.48

Now because the interest of the Kantian philosophy was directed to the so-called *transcendental* nature of the categories, the treatment itself of such categories came up empty. What they are in themselves apart from their abstract relation to the “I,” a relation which is the same for all, how they are determined and related to each other, this was not made a subject of consideration, and therefore knowledge of their nature was not in the least advanced by this philosophy. What alone is of interest in this connection comes only in the Critique of Ideas. – However, if there was to be a real progress in philosophy, it was necessary that the interest of

^f If the expression, the “*objectifying* deed of the ‘I,’” brings to mind other products of spirit, e.g. those of *fantasy*, it is to be observed that we are speaking of the determining of an intended object inasmuch as the elements of its content do *not* belong to *feeling* and *intuition*. The intended object is here a *thought*, and to determine it means both to produce it originally, and also, inasmuch as it is something presupposed, to have further thoughts about it, to develop it further by thinking.

²⁵ Cf., among other places, the B edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, §§25, 26.

²⁶ The most obvious allusion is to J. G. Fichte. For a clear statement of Fichte’s still early position on the matter, see his *Zweite Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre*, *Philosophisches Journal*, 6 (1797) §§; English trans., *Second Introduction to the Wissenschaftslehre*, trans. and ed. Daniel Breazeale (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), pp. 46ff.; GA I.4.463.

²⁷ Fichte was aware of this. Cf.: “I become conscious only of the concepts involved, that is, the concept of the object and the concept of the goal, not however of the two intuitions [i.e. intellectual intuition and intuition of the senses] that lie at the basis of these concepts.” Fichte, *Second Introduction to the Wissenschaftslehre*, p. 47; GA I.4. 467.

thought should be drawn to the consideration of the formal side, of the “I,” of consciousness as such, that is, of the abstract reference of a subjective awareness to an object, and that in this way the path should be opened for the cognition of the *infinite form*, that is, of the concept. Yet, in order to arrive at this cognition, the finite determinateness in which that form is as “I,” as consciousness, must be shed. The form, when thought out in its purity, will then have within itself the capacity to *determine* itself, that is, to give itself a content, and to give it as a necessary content – as a system of thought-determinations.

The objective logic thus takes the place rather of the former *metaphysics* which was supposed to be the scientific edifice of the world as constructed by *thoughts* alone. – If we look at the final shape in the elaboration of this science, then it is *ontology* which objective logic most directly replaces in the first instance, that is, that part of metaphysics intended to investigate the nature of *ens* in general²⁸ (and *ens* comprises within itself both *being* and *essence*, a distinction for which the German language has fortunately preserved different expressions). – But objective logic comprises within itself also the rest of metaphysics, the metaphysics which sought to comprehend with the pure forms of thought such particular substrata, originally drawn from the imagination,²⁹ as the soul, the world, and God, and in this type of consideration the *determinations of thought* constituted the *essential factor*. Logic, however, considers these forms free of those substrata, which are the subjects of *figurative representation*, considers their nature and value in and for themselves. That metaphysics neglected to do this, and it therefore incurred the just reproach that it employed the pure forms of thought *uncritically*, without previously investigating whether and how they could be the determinations of the thing-in-itself, to use Kant’s expression – or more precisely, of the rational. – The objective logic is therefore the true critique of such determinations – a critique that considers them, not according to the abstract form of the *a priori* as contrasted with the *a posteriori*, but in themselves according to their particular content.

The *subjective logic* is the logic of the *concept* – of essence which has sublated its reference to a being or to its reflective shine, and in its determination is no longer external but something subjective, freely self-subsisting, self-determining, or rather the *subject* itself. – Since *subjective* brings with it the misconception of “accidental” and “arbitrary” and also, in general,

²⁸ Cf.: “Ontology or first philosophy is the science of being in general or being as such.” Christian Wolff, *Philosophia prima, sive ontologia, methodo scientifica pertractata* (Frankfurt & Leipzig, 1736), §1.

²⁹ *Vorstellen*.

of determinations that belong to the form of *consciousness*, no particular weight is to be attached here to the distinction of subjective and objective. This is a distinction which will be more precisely developed later in the logic itself.

Logic thus divides overall into *objective* and *subjective* logic, but more specifically it has three parts:

- I. The Logic of Being,
- II. The Logic of Essence, and
- III. The Logic of the Concept.

The Doctrine of Being

21.51

21.53

WITH WHAT MUST THE BEGINNING OF SCIENCE BE MADE?

It is only in recent times that there has been a new awareness of the difficulty of finding a *beginning* in philosophy, and the reason for this difficulty, and so also the possibility of resolving it, have been discussed in a variety of ways. The beginning of philosophy must be either *something mediated* or *something immediate*, and it is easy to show that it can be neither the one nor the other; so either way of beginning runs into contradiction.¹

The *principle* of a philosophy also expresses a beginning, of course, but not so much a subjective as an *objective* one, the beginning of *all things*. The principle is a somehow determinate *content* – “water,” “the one,” “nous,” “idea,” or “substance,” “monad,” etc. – or, if it designates the nature of cognition and is therefore meant simply as a criterion rather than an objective determination, as “thinking,” “intuition,” “sensation,” “I,” even “subjectivity,” then here too the interest still lies in the content determination. The beginning as such, on the other hand, as something subjective in the sense that it is an accidental way of introducing the exposition, is left unconsidered, a matter of indifference, and consequently also the need to ask with what a beginning should be made remains of no importance in face of the need for the principle in which alone the interest of *the fact* seems to lie, the interest as to what is the *truth*, the *absolute ground* of everything.

But the modern perplexity about a beginning proceeds from a further need which escapes those who are either busy demonstrating their principle dogmatically or skeptically looking for a subjective criterion against dogmatic philosophizing, and is outright denied by those who begin, like a shot from a pistol, from their inner revelation, from faith, intellectual

¹ There is an allusion here to Fichte. Cf. *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre* (1794), English trans., *The Science of Knowledge*, Peter Heath and John Lachs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 93ff. GA, I.2, 255ff.

intuition, etc. and who would be exempt from *method* and *logic*.² If earlier abstract thought is at first interested only in the principle as *content*, but is driven as philosophical culture advances to the other side to pay attention to the conduct of the *cognitive process*, then the *subjective* activity has also been grasped as an essential moment of objective truth, and with this there comes the need to unite the method with the content, the *form* with the *principle*. Thus the *principle* ought to be also the beginning, and that *which has priority* for thinking ought to be also the *first* in the process of thinking.

Here we only have to consider how the *logical* beginning appears. The two sides from which it can be taken have already been named, namely either by way of mediation as result, or immediately as beginning proper. This is not the place to discuss the question apparently so important to present-day culture, whether the knowledge of truth is an immediate awareness that begins absolutely, a faith, or rather a mediated knowledge. In so far as the issue allows *passing* treatment, this has already been done elsewhere (in my *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, 3rd edn, in the Prefatory Concept, §§21ff.). Here we may quote from it only this, that *there is* nothing in heaven or nature or spirit or anywhere else that does not contain just as much immediacy as mediation, so that both these determinations prove to be *unseparated* and *inseparable* and the opposition between them nothing real. As for a *scientific discussion*, a case in point is every logical proposition in which we find the determinations of immediacy and mediacy and where there is also entailed, therefore, a discussion of their opposition and their truth. This opposition, when connected to thinking, to knowledge, to cognition, assumes the more concrete shape of immediate or mediated *knowledge*, and it is then up to the science of logic to consider the nature of cognition in general, while the more concrete forms of the same cognition fall within the scope of the science of spirit and the phenomenology of spirit. But to want to clarify the nature of cognition *prior* to science is to demand that it should be discussed *outside* science, and *outside* science this cannot be done, at least not in the scientific manner which alone is the issue here.

A beginning is *logical* in that it is to be made in the element of a free, self-contained thought, in *pure knowledge*; it is thereby *mediated*, for pure knowledge is the ultimate and absolute truth of *consciousness*. We said in the Introduction that the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is the science of consciousness, its exposition; that consciousness has the *concept* of science,

² The allusion here is most likely to Jacobi. Cf. also the Preface to the *Phenomenology*, GW 9, 24.10–12.

that is, pure knowledge, for its result.³ To this extent, logic has for its presupposition the science of spirit in its appearance, a science which contains the necessity, and therefore demonstrates the truth, of the standpoint which is pure knowledge and of its mediation. In this science of spirit in its appearance the beginning is made from empirical, *sensuous* consciousness, and it is this consciousness which is *immediate* knowledge in the strict sense; there, in this science, is where its nature is discussed. Any other consciousness, such as faith in divine truths, inner experience, knowledge through inner revelation, etc., proves upon cursory reflection to be very ill-suited as an instance of immediate knowledge. In the said treatise, immediate consciousness is also that which in the science comes first and immediately and is therefore a presupposition; but in logic the presupposition is what has proved itself to be the result of that preceding consideration, namely the idea as pure knowledge. *Logic* is the *pure science*, that is, pure knowledge in the full compass of its development. But in that result the idea has the determination of a certainty that has become truth; it is a certainty which, on the one hand, no longer stands over and against a subject matter confronting it externally but has interiorized it, is knowingly aware that the subject matter is itself; and, on the other hand, has relinquished any knowledge of itself that would oppose it to objectivity and would reduce the latter to a nothing; it has externalized this subjectivity and is at one with its externalization.

21.55

Now starting with this determination of pure knowledge, all that we have to do to ensure that the beginning will remain immanent to the science of this knowledge is to consider, or rather, setting aside every reflection, simply to take up, *what is there before us*.

Pure knowledge, thus *withdrawn* into this *unity*, has sublated every reference to an other and to mediation; it is without distinctions and as thus distinctionless it ceases to be knowledge; what we have before us is only *simple immediacy*.

Simple immediacy is itself an expression of reflection; it refers to the distinction from what is mediated. The true expression of this simple immediacy is therefore *pure being*. Just as *pure* knowledge should mean nothing but knowledge as such, so also pure being should mean nothing but *being* in general; *being*, and nothing else, without further determination and filling.

21.56

Being is what makes the beginning here; it is presented indeed as originating through mediation, but a mediation which at the same time sublates

³ Cf above, 21.32.

itself, and the presupposition is of a pure knowledge which is the result of finite knowledge, of consciousness. But if no presupposition is to be made, if the beginning is itself to be taken *immediately*, then the only determination of this beginning is that it is to be the beginning of logic, of thought as such. There is only present the resolve, which can also be viewed as arbitrary, of considering *thinking as such*. The beginning must then be *absolute* or, what means the same here, must be an abstract beginning; and so there is *nothing* that it may *presuppose*, must not be mediated by anything or have a ground, ought to be rather itself the ground of the entire science. It must therefore be simply *an immediacy*, or rather only *immediacy* itself. Just as it cannot have any determination with respect to an other, so too it cannot have any within; it cannot have any content, for any content would entail distinction and the reference of distinct moments to each other, and hence a mediation. The beginning is therefore *pure being*.

After this simple exposition of what alone first belongs to this simplest of all simples, the logical beginning, we may add the following further reflections which should not serve, however, as elucidation and confirmation of the exposition – this is complete by itself – but are rather occasioned by notions and reflections which may come our way beforehand and yet, like all other prejudices that antedate the science of logic, must be disposed of within the science itself and are therefore to be patiently deferred until then.

The insight that absolute truth must be a result, and conversely, that a result presupposes a first truth which, because it is first, objectively considered is not necessary and from the subjective side is not known – this insight has recently given rise to the thought that philosophy can begin only with something which is *hypothetically* and *problematically* true, and that at first, therefore, philosophizing can be only a quest. This is a view that Reinhold has repeatedly urged in the later stages of his philosophizing,⁴ and which must be given credit for being motivated by a genuine interest in the speculative nature of philosophical *beginning*. A critical examination of this view will also be an occasion for introducing a preliminary understanding of what progression in logic generally means, for the view has direct implications for the nature of this advance. Indeed, as portrayed by it, progression in philosophy would be rather a retrogression and a grounding, only by virtue of which it then follows as result that that, with which the beginning was made, was not just an arbitrary assumption but was in fact *the truth*, and *the first truth* at that.

⁴ Reinhold, *Beyträge* I (1801), p. 101.

It must be admitted that it is an essential consideration – one which will be found elaborated again within the logic itself – that *progression* is a retreat to the *ground*, to the *origin* and the *truth* on which that with which the beginning was made, and from which it is in fact produced, depends. – Thus consciousness, on its forward path from the immediacy with which it began, is led back to the absolute knowledge which is its innermost *truth*. This truth, the ground, is then also that from which the original first proceeds, the same first which at the beginning came on the scene as something immediate. – It is most of all in this way that absolute spirit (which is revealed as the concrete and supreme truth of all being) comes to be known, as at the *end* of the development it freely externalizes itself, letting itself go into the shape of an *immediate* being – resolving itself into the creation of a world which contains all that fell within the development preceding that result and which, through this reversal of position with its beginning, is converted into something dependent on the result as principle. Essential to science is not so much that a pure immediacy should be the beginning, but that the whole of science is in itself a circle in which the first becomes also the last, and the last also the first.

Conversely, it follows that it is just as necessary to consider as *result* that into which the movement returns as to its *ground*. In this respect, the first is just as much the ground, and the last a derivative; since the movement makes its start from the first and by correct inferences arrives at the last as the ground, this last is result. Further, the *advance* from that which constitutes the beginning is to be considered only as one more determination of the same advance, so that this beginning remains as the underlying ground of all that follows without vanishing from it. The advance does not consist in the derivation of an *other*, or in the transition to a truly other: inasmuch as there is a transition, it is equally sublated again. Thus the beginning of philosophy is the ever present and self-preserving foundation of all subsequent developments, remaining everywhere immanent in its further determinations.

In this advance the beginning thus loses the one-sidedness that it has when determined simply as something immediate and abstract; it becomes mediated, and the line of scientific forward movement consequently turns *into a circle*. – It also follows that what constitutes the beginning, because it is something still undeveloped and empty of content, is not yet truly known at that beginning, and that only science, and science fully developed, is the completed cognition of it, replete with content and finally truly grounded.

But for this reason, because it is as absolute ground that the *result* finally emerges, the progression of this cognition is not anything provisory, still

problematic and hypothetical, but must be determined through the nature of the matter at issue and of the content itself. Nor is the said beginning an arbitrary and only temporary assumption,⁵ or something which seems to be an arbitrary and tentative presupposition but of which it is subsequently shown that to make it the starting point was indeed the right thing to do; this is not as when we are instructed to make certain constructions in order to aid the proof of a geometrical theorem, and only in retrospect, in the course of the proof, does it become apparent that we did well to draw precisely these lines and then, in the proof itself, to begin by comparing them or the enclosed angles – though the line-drawing or the comparing themselves escape conceptual comprehension.

21.59

So we have just given, right within science itself, the *reason* why in pure science the beginning is made with pure being. This pure being is the unity into which pure knowledge returns, or if this knowledge, as form, is itself still to be kept distinct from its unity, then pure being is also its content. It is in this respect that this *pure being*, this absolute immediate, is just as absolutely mediated. However, *just because* it is here as the beginning, it is just as essential that it should be taken in the one-sidedness of being purely immediate. If it were not this pure indeterminacy, if it were determined, it would be taken as something mediated, would already be carried further than itself: a determinate something has the character of an *other with respect to* a first. It thus lies in the *nature of a beginning itself* that it should be being and nothing else. There is no need, therefore, of other preparations to enter philosophy, no need of further reflections or access points.

Nor can we derive a *more specific determination* or a *more positive* content for the beginning of philosophy from the fact that it is such a beginning.⁶ For here, at the beginning, where the fact itself is not yet at hand, philosophy is an empty word, a received and yet unjustified notion. Pure knowledge yields only this negative determination, namely that the beginning ought to be *abstract*. If pure being is taken as the *content* of pure knowledge, then the latter must step back from its content, allowing it free play and without determining it further. – Or again, inasmuch as pure being is to be considered as the unity into which knowledge has collapsed when at the highest point of union with its objectification, knowledge has then disappeared into this unity, leaving behind no distinction from it and hence no determination for it. – Nor is there anything else present, any content whatever, that could be used to make a more determinate beginning with it.

⁵ i.e. as Reinhold thought.

⁶ The allusion is still to Reinhold.

But, it may be said, the determination of *being* assumed so far as the beginning can also be let go, so that the only requirement would be that a pure beginning should be made. Nothing would then be at hand except the *beginning* itself, and we must see what this would be. – This position could be suggested also for the benefit of those who are either not comfortable, for whatever reason, with beginning with being and even less with the transition into nothing that follows from being, or who simply do not know how else to make a beginning in a science except by *presupposing* a *representation* which is subsequently *analyzed*, the result of the analysis then yielding the first determinate concept in the science. If we also want to test this strategy, we must relinquish every particular object that we may intend, since the beginning, as the beginning of *thought*, is meant to be entirely abstract, entirely general, all form with no content; we must have nothing, therefore, except the representation of a mere beginning as such. We have, therefore, only to see what there is in this representation.

21.60

As yet there is nothing, and something is supposed to become. The beginning is not pure nothing but a nothing, rather, from which something is to proceed; also being, therefore, is already contained in the beginning. Therefore, the beginning contains both, being and nothing; it is the unity of being and nothing, or is non-being which is at the same time being, and being which is at the same time non-being.

Further, being and nothing are present in the beginning as *distinguished*; for the beginning points to something other – it is a non-being which refers to an other; that which begins, as yet *is* not; it only reaches out to being. The being contained in the beginning is such, therefore, that it distances itself from non-being or sublates it as something which is opposed to it.

But further, that which begins already *is*, but *is* also just as much *not* yet. The opposites, being and non-being, are therefore in immediate union in it; or the beginning is their *undifferentiated unity*.

An analysis of the beginning would thus yield the concept of the unity of being and non-being – or, in a more reflected form, the concept of the unity of differentiated and undifferentiated being – or of the identity of identity and non-identity.⁷ This concept could be regarded as the first, purest, that is, most abstract, definition of the absolute – as it would indeed be if the issue were just the form of definitions and the name of the absolute. In this sense, just as such an abstract concept would be the first definition of the absolute, so all further determinations and developments would be only

21.61

⁷ This is Hegel's earliest formulation of his position. Cf. *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy* (1801), p. 156. GW 4, 6.23.7–21.

more determinate and richer definitions of it. But let those who are not satisfied with *being* as the beginning, since being passes over into nothing and what emerges is the unity of the two – let them consider what is more likely to satisfy them: this beginning that begins with the representation of the *beginning* and an analysis of it (an analysis that is indeed correct yet equally leads to the unity of being and non-being) or a beginning which makes being the beginning.

But, regarding this strategy, there is still a further observation to be made. The said analysis presupposes that the representation of the beginning is known; its strategy follows the example of other sciences. These presuppose their object and presume that everyone has the same representation of it and will find in it roughly the same determinations which they have collected here or there, through analysis, comparison, and sundry argumentation, and they then offer as its representations. But that which constitutes the absolute beginning must likewise be something otherwise known; now, if it is something concrete and hence in itself variously determined, then this *connectedness* which it is in *itself* is presupposed as a known; the connectedness is thereby adduced as something *immediate*, which however it is *not*; for it is connectedness only as a connection of distinct elements and therefore contains *mediation* within itself. Further, the accidentality and the arbitrariness of the analysis and the specific mode of determination affect the concrete internally. Which determinations are elicited depends on what each individual *happens to discover* in his immediate accidental representation. The connection contained within a concrete something, within a synthetic unity, is *necessary* only in so far as it is not found already given but is produced rather by the spontaneous return of the moments back into this unity, a movement which is the opposite of the analytical procedure that occurs rather within the subject and is external to the fact itself.

21.62

Here we then have the precise reason why that with which the beginning is to be made cannot be anything concrete, anything containing a connection *within its self*. It is because, as such, it would presuppose within itself a process of mediation and the transition from a first to an other, of which process the concrete something, now become a simple, would be the result. But the beginning ought not itself to be already a first *and* an other, for anything which is in itself a first *and* an other implies that an advance has already been made. Consequently, that which constitutes the beginning, the beginning itself, is to be taken as something unanalyzable, taken in its simple, unfilled immediacy; and therefore *as being*, as complete emptiness.

If, impatient with this talk of an abstract beginning, one should say that the beginning is to be made, not with the beginning, but directly with the *fact* itself, well then, this subject matter is nothing else than that empty being. For what this subject matter is, that is precisely what ought to result only in the course of the science, what the latter cannot presuppose to know in advance.

On any other form otherwise assumed in an effort to have a beginning other than empty being, that beginning would still suffer from the same defects. Let those who are still dissatisfied with this beginning take upon themselves the challenge of beginning in some other way and yet avoiding such defects.

But we cannot leave entirely unmentioned a more original beginning to philosophy which has recently gained notoriety, the beginning with the "I."⁸ It derived from both the reflection that all that follows from the first truth must be deduced from it, and the need that this *first* truth should be something with which one is already acquainted, and even more than just acquainted, something of which one is *immediately certain*. This proposed beginning is not, as such, an accidental representation, or one which might be one thing to one subject and something else to another. For the "I," this immediate consciousness of the self, appears from the start to be both itself an immediate something and something with which we are acquainted in a much deeper sense than with any other representation; true, anything else known belongs to this "I," but it belongs to it as a content which remains distinct from it and is therefore accidental; the "I," by contrast, is the simple certainty of its self. But the "I" is, as such, *at the same time* also a concrete, or rather, the "I" is the most concrete of all things – the consciousness of itself as an infinitely manifold world. Before the "I" can be the beginning and foundation of philosophy, this concreteness must be excised, and this is the absolute act by virtue of which the "I" purifies itself and makes its entrance into consciousness as abstract "I." But this pure "I" is now *not* immediate, is not the familiar, ordinary "I" of our consciousness to which everyone immediately links science. Truly, that act of excision would be none other than the elevation to the standpoint of pure knowledge in which the distinction between subject and object has disappeared. But as thus immediately demanded, this elevation is a subjective postulate; before it proves itself as a valid demand, the progression of the concrete "I" from immediate consciousness to pure knowledge must be demonstratively exhibited within the "I" itself, through its own necessity. Without this

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⁸ The reference here is to Fichte. Cf. *Wissenschaftslehre* (1794), §1.

objective movement, pure knowledge, also when defined as *intellectual intuition*, appears as an arbitrary standpoint, itself one of those empirical *states* of consciousness for which everything depends on whether someone, though not necessarily somebody else, *discovers* it within himself or is able to produce it there. But inasmuch as this pure “I” must be essential, pure knowledge – and pure knowledge is however one which is only posited in individual consciousness through an absolute act of self-elevation, is not present in it immediately – we lose the very advantage which was to derive from this beginning of philosophy, namely that it is something with which everyone is well acquainted, something which everyone finds within himself and to which he can attach further reflection; that pure “I,” on the contrary, in its abstract, essential nature, is to ordinary consciousness an unknown, something that the latter does not find within itself. What comes with it is rather the disadvantage of the illusion that we are speaking of something supposedly very familiar, the “I” of empirical self-consciousness, whereas at issue is in fact something far removed from the latter. Determining pure knowledge as “I” acts as a continuing reminder of the subjective “I” whose limitations should rather be forgotten; it leads to the belief that the propositions and relations which result from the further development of the “I” occur within ordinary consciousness and can be found pre-given there, indeed that the whole issue is about this consciousness. This mistake, far from bringing clarity, produces instead an even more glaring and bewildering confusion; among the public at large, it has occasioned the crudest of misunderstandings.

21.64

Further, as regards the *subjective* determinateness of the “I” in general, pure knowledge does remove from it the restriction that it has when understood as standing in unsurmountable opposition to an object. But for this reason it would be at least *superfluous* still to hold on to this subjective attitude by determining pure knowledge as “I.” For this determination not only carries with it that troublesome duality of subject and object; on closer examination, it also remains a subjective “I.” The actual development of the science that proceeds from the “I” shows that in the course of it the object has and retains the self-perpetuating determination of an *other* with respect to the “I”; that therefore the “I” from which the start was made does not have the pure knowledge that has truly overcome the opposition of consciousness, but is rather still entangled in appearance.

In this connection, there is the further essential observation to be made that, although the “I” might well be determined to be *in itself* pure knowledge or intellectual intuition and declared to be the beginning, in science we are not concerned with what is present *in itself* or as *something inner*, but

with the external existence⁹ rather of what in *thought* is inner and with the *determinateness* which this inner assumes in that existence. But whatever *externalization there might be* of¹⁰ intellectual intuition *at the beginning* of science, or – if the subject matter of science is called the eternal, the divine, the absolute – of the eternal or absolute, this cannot be anything else than a first, immediate, simple determination. Whatever richer name be given to it than is expressed by mere being, the only legitimate consideration is how such an absolute enters into *discursive*¹¹ knowledge and the enunciation of this knowledge. Intellectual intuition might well be the violent rejection of mediation and of demonstrative, external reflection. However, anything which it says over and above simple immediacy would be something concrete, and this concrete would contain a diversity of determinations in it. But, as already remarked, the enunciation and exposition of this concrete something is a process of mediation which starts with *one* of the determinations and proceeds to another, even though this other returns to the first – and this is a movement which, moreover, is not allowed to be arbitrary or assertoric. Consequently, that from which the *beginning* is made in any such exposition is not something itself concrete but only the simple immediacy from which the movement proceeds. Besides, what is lacking if we make something concrete the beginning is the demonstration which the combination of the determinations contained in it requires.

21.65

Therefore, if in the expression of the absolute, or the eternal, or God (and *God* would have the perfectly undisputed right that the beginning be made with him), if in the intuition or the thought of them, *there is more* than there is in pure being, then this *more* should first *emerge* in a knowledge which is discursive¹² and not figurative;¹³ as rich as what is implicitly contained in knowledge may be, the determination that *first* emerges in it is something simple, for it is only in the immediate that no advance is yet made from one thing to an other. Consequently, whatever in the richer representations of the absolute or God might be said or implied over and above being, all this is at the beginning only an empty word and only being; this simple determination which has no further meaning besides, this empty something, is as such, therefore, the beginning of philosophy.

This insight is itself so simple that this beginning is as beginning in no need of any preparation or further introduction, and the only possible purpose of this preliminary disquisition regarding it was not to lead up to it but to dispense rather with all preliminaries.

21.66

⁹ external existence = *Dasein*.

¹⁰ whatever *externalization there might be* of = *was vom . . . da ist*.

¹¹ *denkende*. ¹² *denkendes*.

¹³ *vorstellendes*.

GENERAL DIVISION OF BEING

Being is determined, *first*, as against another in general; *secondly*, it is internally self-determining; *thirdly*, as this preliminary division is cast off, it is the abstract indeterminateness and immediacy in which it must be the beginning.

According to the *first* determination, being partitions itself off from *essence*, for further on in its development it proves to be in its totality only one sphere of the concept, and to this sphere as moment it opposes another sphere.

According to the *second*, it is the sphere within which fall the determinations and the entire movement of its reflection. In this, being will posit itself in three determinations:

- I. as determinateness; as such, quality;
- II. as sublated determinateness; magnitude, quantity;
- III. as qualitatively determined quantity; measure.

This division, as was generally remarked of such divisions in the Introduction,¹⁴ is here a preliminary statement; its determinations must first arise from the movement of being itself, and receive their definitions and justification by virtue of it. As regards the divergence of this division from the usual listing of the categories, namely quantity, quality, relation and modality – for Kant, incidentally, these are supposed to be only classifications of his categories, but are in fact themselves categories, only more abstract ones¹⁵ – about this, there is nothing to remark here, since the entire listing will diverge from the usual ordering and meaning of the categories at every point.

This only can perhaps be remarked, that the determination of *quantity* is ordinarily listed ahead of *quality* and as a rule this is done for no given reason. It has already been shown that the beginning is made with being *as such*, and hence with qualitative being. It is clear from a comparison of quality with quantity that the former is by nature first. For quantity is quality which has already become negative; *magnitude* is the determinateness which, no longer one with being but already distinguished from it, is the sublated quality that has become indifferent. It includes the alterability of being without altering the fact itself, namely being, of which it is the determination; qualitative determinateness is on the contrary one with its being, it neither transcends it nor stays within it but is its immediate

¹⁴ Cf. above, 21.38 and 39.

¹⁵ Cf. A80/B106, B110.

restrictedness. Hence quality, as the determinateness which is *immediate*, is the first and it is with it that the beginning is to be made.

Measure is a *relation*, not relation in general but specifically of quality and quantity to each other; the categories dealt with by Kant under relation will come up elsewhere in their proper place.¹⁶ Measure, if one so wishes, can be considered also a modality; but since with Kant modality is no longer supposed to make up a determination of content, but only concerns the reference of the content to thought, to the subjective, the result is a totally heterogeneous reference that does not belong here.¹⁷

The *third* determination of *being* falls within the section Quality inasmuch as being, as abstract immediacy, reduces itself to one single determinateness as against its other determinacies inside its sphere.

21.68

¹⁶ Cf. below, II.394–409.

¹⁷ There is an almost imperceptible, yet very important difference here between the 1812 and the 1832 edition. In the earlier text, Kant is not mentioned at all, but Hegel seems to accept what is in fact his position regarding modality. In the present text, Kant's position is explicitly mentioned, but Hegel distances himself from it. For the importance of this change, see the editor's "Introduction." Cf. A219/B266.

SECTION I

Determinateness (Quality)

Being is the indeterminate immediate; it is free of determinateness with respect to essence, just as it is still free of any determinateness that it can receive within itself. This reflectionless being is being as it immediately is only within.

Since it is immediate, it is being without quality; but the character of indeterminateness attaches to it *in itself* only in opposition to what is *determinate* or qualitative. *Determinate* being thus comes to stand over and against being in general; with that, however, the very indeterminateness of being constitutes its quality. It will therefore be shown that the *first* being is in itself determinate, and therefore, *secondly*, that it passes over into *existence*, is *existence*; that this latter, however, as finite being, sublates itself and passes over into the infinite reference of being to itself; it passes over, *thirdly*, into *being-for-itself*.

CHAPTER I

Being

A. BEING

Being, pure being – without further determination. In its indeterminate immediacy it is equal only to itself and also not unequal with respect to another; it has no difference within it, nor any outwardly. If any determination or content were posited in it as distinct, or if it were posited by this determination or content as distinct from an other, it would thereby fail to hold fast to its purity. It is pure indeterminateness and emptiness. – There is *nothing* to be intuited in it, if one can speak here of intuiting; or, it is only this pure empty intuiting itself. Just as little is anything to be thought in it, or, it is equally only this empty thinking. Being, the indeterminate immediate is in fact *nothing*, and neither more nor less than nothing.

21.69

B. NOTHING

Nothing, pure nothingness; it is simple equality with itself, complete emptiness, complete absence of determination and content; lack of all distinction within. – In so far as mention can be made here of intuiting and thinking, it makes a difference whether something or *nothing* is being intuited or thought. To intuit or to think nothing has therefore a meaning; the two are distinguished and so nothing *is* (concretely exists) in our intuiting or thinking; or rather it is the empty intuiting and thinking itself, like pure being. – Nothing is therefore the same determination or rather absence of determination, and thus altogether the same as what pure *being* is.

C. BECOMING

1. *Unity of being and nothing*

Pure being and pure nothing are therefore the same. The truth is neither being nor nothing, but rather that being has passed over into nothing and

nothing into being – “has passed over,” not passes over. But the truth is just as much that they are not without distinction; it is rather that *they are not the same*, that they are absolutely distinct yet equally unseparated and inseparable, and that *each* immediately *vanishes in its opposite*. Their truth is therefore this *movement* of the immediate vanishing of the one into the other: *becoming*, a movement in which the two are distinguished, but by a distinction which has just as immediately dissolved itself.

21.70

Remark 1

It is customary to oppose *nothing* to *something*. Something is however already a determinate existent that distinguishes itself from another something; consequently, the nothing which is being opposed to something is also the nothing of a certain something, a determinate nothing. Here, however, the nothing is to be taken in its indeterminate simplicity. – If it is deemed more correct to oppose *non-being* to being, instead of nothing, there is no objection to this as regards the result, since in *non-being* there is contained the reference to *being*. Non-being is both, being and its negation as said in *one*: nothing as it is in becoming. But the issue first of all is not the form of opposition, which is at the same time the form of *reference*, but the abstract, immediate negation, the nothing purely for itself, negation devoid of reference – and this can also be expressed, if one so wishes, simply by saying “*nothing*.”

The *Eleatics* were the first to give voice to the simple thought of *pure being* – notable among them Parmenides, who declared it to be the absolute and sole truth. In his surviving fragments, he did it with the pure enthusiasm of thought which has for the first time apprehended itself in its absolute abstraction: *only being is, and nothing is not absolutely*.¹⁸ – In the oriental systems, essentially in Buddhism, it is well known that nothing, the void, is the absolute principle. – Against that simple and one-sided abstraction, the profound Heraclitus proposed the loftier, total concept of becoming and said: *being is no more than nothing*; or also, all *flows*, that is, all is *becoming*.¹⁹ – The popular proverbs, particularly the oriental ones, that all that exists has the germ of death in its very birth, that death is on the other hand the entrance into a new life, express at bottom the same union of being and nothing. But these expressions have a substrate in which the transition takes place; being and nothing are held apart in time, represented as alternating in it; they are not thought in their abstraction and also, therefore, not so that they are the same in and for themselves.

¹⁸ Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 986b.28–29.

¹⁹ Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 985b7–8.

Ex nihilo, nihil fit – is one of the propositions to which great significance was attributed in metaphysics. The proposition is either to be viewed as just a barren tautology, nothing is nothing, or, if *becoming* is supposed to have real meaning in it, then, since only *nothing comes* from *nothing*, there is in fact none in it, for the nothing remains nothing in it. Becoming entails that nothing not remain nothing, but that it pass over into its other, being. – Later metaphysics, especially the Christian, rejected the proposition that out of nothing comes nothing, thus asserting a transition from nothing into being; no matter how synthetically or merely imaginatively it took this proposition, there is yet even in the most incomplete unification of being and nothing a point at which they meet, and their distinguishedness vanishes. – The proposition, *nothing comes from nothing, nothing is just nothing*, owes its particular importance to its opposition to *becoming* in general and hence also to the creation of the world out of nothing. Those who zealously hold firm to the proposition, nothing is just nothing, are unaware that in so doing they are subscribing to the abstract *pantheism* of the Eleatics and essentially also to that of Spinoza. The philosophical view that accepts as principle that being is only being, nothing only nothing, deserves the name of “system of identity”; this abstract identity is the essence of pantheism.

If the result that being and nothing are the same seems inherently startling or paradoxical, there is not much to be done about it. We should be amazed rather at this amazement that appears so refreshing in philosophy but forgets that the determinations that occur in this science of logic are quite different from those of so-called common sense – which is not exactly sound understanding but an understanding schooled rather in abstractions and in the belief in abstractions, or more accurately in the superstitious belief in them. It would not be difficult to demonstrate the unity of being and nothing in every example, in *every* actual thing or thought. The same must be said of *being* and *nothing* as was said above of immediacy and mediation (which contain a reference to each other and hence *negation*), *that nowhere on heaven or on earth is there anything which does not contain both being and nothing in itself*.²⁰ To be sure, since we are speaking here of a *certain something* and a *certain actual thing*, those determinations are no longer present in the complete untruth in which they are as being and nothing; they are rather present in some more advanced determination and are grasped, for example, as *positive* or *negative*, the one as reflected being and the other as reflected nothing; but the positive contains being

²⁰ Cf. above, 21.54.

and the negative contains nothing, as their abstract foundation. – Thus even in God quality carries essentially the determination of the negative: *activity, creation, power*, and so forth, are the bringing forth of an *other*. But an empirical elucidation of the claim by means of examples would be entirely superfluous here. For from now on this unity of being and nothing will stand once and for all as foundation, as first truth, and will thus constitute the element of all that follows. All further logical determinations besides *becoming* itself (existence, quality, and in general all the concepts of philosophy) are therefore examples of this unity. – As for that sense that styles itself as common or sound, if it rejects the inseparability of being and nothing, let it try to produce an example in which the one is found separate from the other (let it separate something from limit or limitation, or, as just said, the infinite, God, from activity). Only the empty figments of thought, being and nothing, only these, are separate things, and they are the ones which are accorded priority by common sense over the truth, the inseparability of the two which is everywhere before us.

We cannot hope to address all the confusions in which ordinary consciousness lands itself in connection with this logical proposition, for they are inexhaustible. Only a few can be cited. One cause among others of such confusions is that consciousness brings with it, to such an abstract logical proposition, the figure of some concrete thing, forgetting that the issue here is not anything concrete but only the pure abstractions of being and nothing and that these alone are to be held firmly in mind.

Being and non-being are the same; *therefore* it is the same whether I am or am not, whether this house is or is not, whether these hundred dollars are in my possession or not. – This conclusion from the proposition, or this application of it, alters its meaning completely. The proposition contains the pure abstractions of being and nothing; but the application makes of them a determinate being and a determinate nothing. But, as we have said, determinate being is not an issue here. A determinate, a finite being, is one that refers to another; it is a content that stands in the relation of necessity to another content, to the whole world. As regards the reciprocal determinations that hold the whole together, metaphysics could make the basically tautological claim that if one speck of dust were destroyed the whole universe would collapse. In the instances adduced against our proposition, something appears as not indifferent to whether it is or is not, not on account of being or non-being, but because of its *content* which connects it with some other content. If a determinate content, some determinate being, is *presupposed*, this being, since it is *determinate*, stands in manifold reference to another content. It is not a matter of indifference

to it whether a certain other content to which it refers is or is not, for only through such a referring is it essentially what it is. The same applies to *representing* (inasmuch as we take non-being in the determinate sense of representing as contrasted with actuality). In this case the being or the absence of a content, which is a determinate representation that refers to another, is not a matter of indifference. –

This observation already contains what constitutes a capital point in the Kantian critique of the ontological proof of God's existence, although we only consider it here with reference to the distinction that comes up in it of being and nothing in general and of *determinate* being or non-being. – As we know, that so-called proof presupposed the concept of a being that possesses all realities, including therefore *concrete existence*, which it likewise assumed as one of the realities. Kant's critique took mainly the line that *existence* or being (the two taken here as synonymous) is not a *property* or a *real predicate*, that is to say, not a concept of something that can be added to the *concept* of a thing.⁸ – What Kant means to say is that being is not a content determination. – Therefore, he goes on, the possible does not contain more than the actual; a hundred actual dollars do not contain a whit more than a hundred possible ones;²¹ – that is, the actual one hundred have no other content determination than the possible. And in fact, considered in isolation, it is a matter of indifference to this content whether it is or is not; there is no distinction of being and non-being in it, this distinction does not affect it at all; the one hundred dollars do not become less if they do not exist, or more if they do. Any distinction would have to originate from elsewhere. – “But in my financial state,” Kant reminds us, “there is more to a hundred actual dollars than there is to the mere concept of them (that is, their possibility). For with actuality the *intended object* is not merely included in my concept analytically, but is *synthetically* added to my *concept* (which is a *determination* of my *state*), without the thought itself of the hundred dollars being in the least increased by this being which they have outside my concept.”²²

21.74

Here two kinds of “states” (to retain Kantian expressions which are not free of a confused awkwardness) are *presupposed*: one that Kant calls “concept,” by which we must understand “representation”; and another, my “financial state.” For the one as for the other, for the finances and the representation, the hundred dollars are a content determination, or

⁸ *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, 2nd edn, pp. 628ff.

²¹ A598/B626–A599/B627. The following dash, presumably, is to set off Hegel's own gloss on the paraphrase of Kant's own words.

²² A599/B627.

“they are added to each *synthetically*,” as Kant puts it. “I,” as *possessing* a hundred dollars or as not possessing them, or again, “I,” as *representing* a hundred dollars to myself or as not representing them, is of course a different content. Stated more generally: the abstractions of being and nothing both cease to be abstractions by receiving a determinate content; being is then reality, the determinate being of one hundred dollars; and nothing is negation, the determinate non-being of the same dollars. This determinate content itself, the hundred dollars, also abstracted by itself, is unaltered the same in the one as in the other. But when being is further taken as a financial state, the hundred dollars refer to this state, and for this state their determinate content is not a matter of indifference; their being or non-being is only an *alteration*; they are transposed into the sphere of *existence*. When it is therefore urged against the unity of being and nothing that it is not a matter of indifference whether this or that (the hundred dollars) are or are not, the deception is to project the difference, whether I *have* or *do not have* the hundred dollars, into the difference merely of being and non-being. And this is a deception, as we have shown, based on a one-sided abstraction that leaves out the *determinate existence* present in such examples and retains only being and non-being; just as, conversely, it transforms the abstract being and non-being that should be apprehended into a determinate being or non-being, into an existence. Only *existence* contains the real distinction of being and nothing, namely, a *something* and an *other*. – This real distinction is the one that comes to mind in representation instead of that of abstract being and nothing and their merely intended distinction.

As Kant puts it, “through existence something enters into the context of the whole experience . . . We obtain one more object of *perception*, but our *concept* of the intended object is not thereby augmented.”²³ – This only means, as follows from our explanation, that through existence, essentially because something is a determinate existence, this something is in relationship to *others*, and also to a perceiver among these others. – “The concept of a hundred dollars,” Kant says, “is not augmented through perception.”²⁴ By “concept” is meant here the above noted hundred dollars represented *in isolation*. As so isolated, these dollars are indeed an empirical content, but cut off, without connection or determinateness as against *something else*; their form of immediate self-identity deprives them of external connection and makes them indifferent to whether they are perceived or not. This so-called concept of a hundred dollars is however a false concept; the form

²³ A599/B627–A600/B628. ²⁴ A599/B627.

of simple self-reference does not belong to such a limited, finite content itself; it is a form on loan to it, like a dress, by a subjective understanding; a “hundred dollars” is nothing self-referring but something alterable and perishable.

This thinking or imagining which has before it only a determinate being, existence, must be referred back to the previously mentioned beginning of science which Parmenides made – the one who purified and elevated to *pure thought*, to being as such, his own otherwise pictorial representations and hence also those of posterity, thus ushering in the element of science. – What is the *first* in *science* had of necessity to show itself to be the *first historically*. And we must regard the *one* or the *being* of the Eleatics as the first instance of knowledge by thought. *Water* and suchlike material principles are indeed *meant* to be the universal even though, as things material, they are not pure thoughts; *numbers* are neither the first simple, nor the self-abiding thought,²⁵ but thought rather which is entirely self-external. 21.76

The move from *particular finite* being to being as such in its totally abstract universality is to be regarded not only as the very first theoretical demand but also as the very first practical one. For when a lot of fuss is made about the hundred dollars, that it does make a difference to my financial state whether I *have* them or *not*, still more whether I am or am not or something else is or is not, we can then be reminded that the human being (quite apart from such financial situations in which the possession of a hundred dollars will in fact be a matter of indifference) ought to raise his mind to this abstract universality in which it is in fact indifferent to him whether the hundred dollars, whatever the quantitative relation that they might have to his financial state, are or are not; just as it would be indifferent to him whether he himself is or is not, that is, whether he is or is not in finite life (by which is meant a state, a determinate being), and so on. *Si fractus illabatur orbis, impavidum ferient ruinae*, a Roman even said,²⁶ and still more ought the Christian to find himself in this state of indifference.

Still to be noted is the immediate connection between, on the one hand, the elevation above the hundred dollars and finite things generally, and, on the other hand, the ontological proof and the mentioned Kantian criticism of it. This criticism, because of its popular example, has won universal plausibility. Who does not know that a hundred actual dollars are different

²⁵ *bey sich bleibende*.

²⁶ Flaccus: *Carminum liber tertium*. Ode III, verse 7–8. “If the world were to fall to pieces, the ruins would still sustain the undaunted.”

from a hundred merely possible dollars and that they make a difference to my financial situation? This difference is easily demonstrable in the case of the hundred dollars: therefore, the concept, that is, the determinateness of the content as empty possibility, and being are different from each other; *therefore*, the concept of God and his being are also different, and just as I cannot extract from the possibility of the hundred dollars their actuality, I can just as little “extract”²⁷ God’s existence from his concept. But the ontological proof consists precisely in thus extracting God’s existence from his concept. Now, though there is of course truth to the claim that the concept is different from being, God’s difference from the hundred dollars and other finite things is yet greater. It is the *definition of finite things* that in them concept and being are different; that the concept and reality, soul and body, are separable; that they are therefore perishable and mortal. The abstract definition of God, on the contrary, is precisely that his concept and his being are *unseparated* and *inseparable*. The true critique of the categories and of reason²⁸ is just this: to acquaint cognition with this distinction and to prevent it from applying to God the determinations and the relations of the finite.

Remark 2

Yet another reason can be cited that helps to explain the resistance to the proposition about being and nothing. This reason is that, as expressed in the proposition “*being and nothing are one and the same*,” the result of considering being and nothing is incomplete. The accent falls primarily on the being-*one-and-the-same*, as is the case in judgment generally, where the predicate says what the subject *is*. Consequently, the sense seems to be that the distinction is denied which yet patently occurs in the proposition at the same time; for the proposition says both determinations, being and nothing, and contains them as distinguished. – At the same time, the meaning cannot be that abstraction ought to be made from the two determinations and only their unity retained. This sense would be manifestly one-sided, since that from which abstraction would be made is equally present in the proposition and explicitly named there. – Now, in so far as the proposition “*being and nothing are the same*” expresses the identity of these determinations, yet in fact equally contains the two as distinguished, it internally contradicts itself and thus dissolves itself. And if we concentrate on this result, what we have before us is a proposition which, on closer inspection,

²⁷ Cf. A603/B631.

²⁸ Kant’s critical work was in his day generically referred to as “the critique of reason.”

turns out to vanish spontaneously. It has movement. But in thus vanishing, it is its proper content which comes to be in it, namely *becoming*.

The proposition thus *contains* the result; it is this result *implicit in it*. But the circumstance to which we must pay attention here is the defect that this result is not itself *expressed* in the proposition; it is external reflection that recognizes it there. – In this connection, we must observe right at the beginning that the proposition, in the form of *a judgment*, is not adept to express speculative truths; recognition of this circumstance would go a long way in preventing many misunderstandings of speculative truths. Judgment joins subject and object in a connection of *identity*; abstraction is therefore made from the fact that the subject has yet more determinacies than the predicate has, just as that the predicate is wider than the subject. Now, if the content is speculative, the *non-identity* of subject and predicate is also an essential moment; but this is not expressed in judgment. The paradoxical and even bizarre light in which much of recent philosophy is cast for those not intimate with speculative thought is due in many ways to the form of the simple judgment when used to convey speculative results.

For the purpose of expressing the speculative truth, the defect is first remedied by adding the contrary proposition, namely “*being and nothing are not the same*,” which we also stated above. But another defect then crops up, for these propositions are disconnected and therefore present their content only in an antinomy, whereas the content refers to one and the same thing, and the determinations expressed in the two propositions should be united absolutely – in a union which can then only be said to be an *unrest* of simultaneous *incompatibles*, *a movement*. The commonest injustice done to a speculative content is to render it one-sidedly, that is, to give prominence only to one of the propositions in which it can be resolved. This proposition is then undeniably asserted; but *the statement is just as false as it is correct*, for once one proposition is taken out of its speculative context, the other also must be given at least as much attention and articulation. – Attention must also be drawn at this point to, so to speak, the unfortunate word “unity.” “Unity,” even more so than *identity*, designates a subjective reflection. It is normally taken as a connection that arises from *comparison*, from external reflection. Inasmuch as this reflection finds the same thing in two *different subject matters*, a unity is there with respect to which complete *indifference* is presupposed on the part of the subject matters compared, so that the comparing and the unity do not touch these subject matters themselves but are rather a doing and a determining external to them. Unity thus expresses a totally *abstract* sameness, and it will sound all the harsher and the more discordant the more the terms of

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which it is asserted show themselves to be utterly distinct. For this reason it would therefore be better to say simply *unseparatedness* and *inseparability*; but then the *affirmative aspect* of the connection of the whole would not be expressed.

So the whole true result that we have here before us is *becoming*, but a becoming which is not the merely one-sided or abstract unity of being and nothing. It consists rather in this movement, that pure being is immediate and simple and for that very reason is just as much pure nothing; that the distinction between them *is*, but equally *sublates itself* and *is not*. This result does also assert, therefore, the distinction of being and nothing, but it asserts it as one which is merely *intended*.

The *ordinary assumption* is that being is the absolutely other of nothing, and that there is nothing as clear as this absolute distinction; indeed, nothing seems easier than being able to state it. But it is just as easy to convince oneself that this is impossible, that the distinction is *unsayable*. *Let those who insist on the distinction of being and nothing, let them just try to state in what the distinction consists*. If being and nothing had any determinateness differentiating them, then, as we said, they would be determinate being and determinate nothing, not the pure being and the pure nothing which they still are at this point. Their distinction is therefore completely empty, each is as indeterminate as the other; the distinction depends, therefore, not on them but on a third element, on *intention*. But intention is a form of subjectivity, and subjectivity does not belong to the present order of exposition. The third element in which being and nothing have their subsistence must however also be present here; and it is present indeed, it is *becoming*. In becoming, they are present as distinct; becoming only occurs to the extent that they are distinguished. This third is an other than they – they subsist only in an other, which is equivalent to saying that they do not subsist on their own. Becoming equally is the subsistence of being and of non-being; or their subsistence is only their being in a *one*; precisely this, their subsistence in a *one*, is that which equally sublates their distinction.

21.80 The challenge to produce the distinction between being and nothing also brings with it the challenge to state what, then, is *being*, and *what is nothing*. Those who resist acknowledging that the two are equally only a *transition* of the one into the other, and who assert this or that about being and nothing, let them declare *whereof* they speak, that is, let them advance a *definition* of being and nothing, and let them demonstrate that it is correct. Without having satisfied this first demand of the ancient science, whose logical rules they otherwise accept and apply, all their assertions about being and nothing are only assurances without scientific validity. If it has somewhere

been said that existence,²⁹ which is held from the start to be equivalent to being, is the *completion of possibility*, then another determination, namely possibility, is presupposed along with it; so being is not declared in its immediacy but precisely as not standing on its own, as conditioned. For being which is *mediated*, we shall reserve the expression *concrete existence*.³⁰ But the common practice is to *imagine* being, as if it were a picture of pure light, the clarity of unclouded seeing, and then nothing as the pure night – and the distinction between the two is then enshrined into this well-known sensuous difference. But in fact, if this very seeing is more accurately imagined, one can readily perceive that in absolute light one sees just as much and just as little as in absolute darkness; that the one seeing is just as good as the other; that pure seeing is a seeing of nothing. Pure light and pure darkness are two voids that amount to the same thing. Only in determinate light (and light is determined through darkness: in clouded light therefore), just as only in determinate darkness (and darkness is determined through light: in illuminated darkness therefore), can something be distinguished, since only clouded light and illuminated darkness have distinction in them and hence are determinate being, *existence*.

Remark 3

The unity, whose moments, being and nothing, are inseparable, is at the same time different from these moments. It thus stands as a *third* with respect to them – a third which, in its most proper form, is *becoming*. *Transition* is the same as becoming except that the two terms, from one of which the transition is made to the other, are represented in it more as at rest, outside each other, the transition occurring *between* them. Now, wherever and however being or nothing are at issue, this third must be there; for the two have no subsistence on their own but are only in becoming, in this third. But this third has various empirical shapes that abstraction either sets aside or neglects for the sake of holding fast to its two products, being and nothing, each for itself, and showing them as protected against

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²⁹ "I define existence as the complement of possibility." Wolff, *Philosophia prima, sive ontologia* (1736), §174. Hegel uses here the term "*Existenz*," which I normally translate as "concrete existence" to differentiate it from "*Dasein*." See the note immediately following.

³⁰ For the distinction between *Existenz* and *Dasein*, see "Issues of translation" in the editor's "Translator's note." To be noted here is that both terms signify "being" as determinate and therefore as mediated. But the difference is whether the mediation is explicitly expressed within the structure of the logical object itself (as it is the case with *Existenz*, which explicitly refers to "essence") or is only immediately present there (as it is the case with *Dasein*). I translate *Existenz* as "concrete existence" because of the immediately preceding mention of "possibility" that definitely places it within the realm of "essence," which is the realm of explicit mediation.

transition. Such a simple manoeuvre of abstraction can be countered, with equal ease, simply by pointing to the empirical concrete existence in which that abstraction itself is only a something, has a determinate existence. Or else it is by virtue of other forms of reflection that this separation of the inseparable would be held fixed. But in any such determination of reflection, its opposite is present within it in and for itself, and it is thus possible to refute it on its own terms without going back to the nature of the fact and appealing to it, by taking the determination as it presents itself, and by pointing to its other in it. It would be labor in vain to attempt to ensnare, so to speak, all the shifts and turns of reflection and its argumentation in order to pre-empt and render impossible all the evasions and the leaps with which it hides its own contradiction from itself. For this reason I also refrain from taking notice of the many self-styled objections and refutations that have been advanced against the claim that neither being nor nothing are something true but that becoming is their truth. The intellectual education required to perceive the nothingness of these refutations, or rather to dispel such arbitrary ideas on one's own, will be attained only through a critical cognition of the forms of the understanding. But those who are the most prolific in such objections straight away set themselves upon reflecting on the first propositions, without helping themselves or having helped themselves through further study of the logic to the awareness of the nature of their crude reflections.

We shall consider some of the cases that occur when being and nothing are posited in isolation, each outside the sphere of the other, with the result that the transition is negated.

Parmenides held fast to being and was the most consistent, since he also said of nothing that it *absolutely is not*; only being is.³¹ Totally for itself, being is thus the indeterminate, and has therefore no connecting reference to any other; consequently, it seems that *from this beginning* no further *forward move* is possible – that is, from that beginning itself – and that an advance can only occur by adding something foreign to it *from outside*. The advance, where being is the same as nothing, thus appears as a second, absolute beginning – a transition which is for itself, and that would be added to being externally. Being would not be an absolute beginning at all if it had a determinateness; in that case, it would depend on another and would not be immediate, would not be the beginning. If, however, it is indeterminate and is therefore a true beginning, it has nothing by virtue of which it can

³¹ *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker (The Fragments of the Pre-Socratics)* Volume II, ed. Hermann Diels and Walther Kranz (Berlin: Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1956), Parmenides, 232B6.

pass over to an other; as beginning it is equally the *end*. It is just as impossible for anything to break out of it as to break into it; with Parmenides as with Spinoza, there is no advance from being or from absolute substance to the negative, the finite. If there is forward movement nevertheless – something which, as just remarked, can occur only externally if we start from being devoid of any connecting reference and so without forward movement – then, this advance is a second, new beginning. Thus, Fichte's most absolute, unconditional first principle, $A = A$, is a *positing*, a *thesis*; the second principle is a *counter-positing*, an *antithesis*; this latter should be *partly* conditioned, *partly* unconditioned (and so contradiction in itself).³² This is an advance by external reflection that negates the absolute with which it makes its beginning (the counter-positing is the negation of the first identity) while at the same time equally reducing its second absolute, explicitly, to something conditioned. But if there were any justification at all for the advance, that is, for sublating the first beginning, then the possibility that an other could connect with it would have to lie in the nature of this first beginning itself; the beginning would have to be, therefore, a *determinate* being. But *being*, as also the absolute substance, will not be such, quite the contrary. Being is the *immediate*, the still absolutely *indeterminate*.

The most eloquent, perhaps most forgotten accounts of the impossibility of advancing from an abstraction to something beyond it, and of uniting the two, are given by Jacobi in support of his polemic against the Kantian *a priori* synthesis of self-consciousness, in his *Treatise Concerning the Undertaking of Critique to Reduce Reason to the Understanding* (Jacobi, *Werke*, Vol. III).³³ He defines the task (p. 113) as one of demonstrating the originating or the producing of a synthesis in a *pure somewhat*, be it consciousness, space or time. "Let space be *a one*; time *a one*; consciousness *a one*. Now, do say how any of these three 'ones' *purely* turns itself internally into a manifold: each is *a one* and *no other*; an all-the-same-ness; just *selfhood* in general without a he-hood, she-hood, or it-hood, for these still slumber together with the *he, she, it* in the infinite zero of the indeterminate from which each and every *determinate being* has yet to proceed! What brings *finitude* into these three infinities? What impregnates space and time *a priori* with number and measure, and turns them into a *pure manifold*? What brings *pure spontaneity* ('I') into oscillation? How does its pure vowel sound come to its concomitant sound, the consonant, or better, how does its *soundless*, uninterrupted *sounding* interrupt itself and break off in order to gain at least some kind of self-sound, an *accent*?" One

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³² Cf. Fichte, *Wissenschaftslehre* (1794) §§1, 2; GA I.2.

³³ Leipzig, 1816.

sees that Jacobi very distinctly recognized that abstraction is a *nonentity*, whether this *nonentity* is the so-called absolute (only abstract) space, or the equally abstract time or abstract pure consciousness, the “I.” He insists on this nonentity for the sake of maintaining the impossibility of any advance to an other, which is the condition of a synthesis, and to a synthesis itself. The synthesis which is the point of interest here must not be taken as a tying together of *external* determinations already at hand. Rather, the issue is twofold: one of the genesis of a second next to a first, of a determinate something next to something which is initially indeterminate, but also one of *immanent* synthesis, of synthesis *a priori* – a unity of distinct terms that exists in and for itself. *Becoming* is this immanent synthesis of being and nothing; but because the sense most closely attached to “synthesis” is that of an external gathering of things externally at hand, the name of synthesis, of synthetic unity, has rightly gone out of use. – Jacobi asks, *how* does the pure vowel of the “I” come to its concomitant sound, to the consonant? *what* brings determinacy to indeterminateness? – The question of the *what* would be easy to answer, and has been answered by Kant in his way. The question of the *how*, however, means: in which way and manner? in what relation? and so forth, and requires the application of a particular category; but there can be no question here of a “way” or “manner,” of the categories of the understanding. The question of the *how* is itself one that belongs to the bad practices of reflection, which demands comprehensibility, but for that it presupposes its fixed categories and is thereby assured from the start to be forearmed against the answer to what it asks. Nor does the question have in Jacobi the higher sense of a query regarding the *necessity* of the synthesis, for Jacobi, as we said, remains fixed in the abstractions in order to assert the impossibility of the synthesis. Especially graphic is his description (p. 147) of the procedure for attaining the abstraction of space. “For a time I must try clean to forget that I ever saw anything, heard, touched or moved anything, myself expressly not exempted. Clean, clean, clean must I forget all movement, and let precisely this *forgetting* be my most pressing concern, since it is the hardest. Just as I have thought all things away, so must I also get perfectly *rid* of them all, retaining nothing at all except the intuition, which *violently* held its ground, of the infinite *immutable* space. I may not, therefore, *think* even myself *back into it* as something distinguished from it yet equally bound to it; I may not let myself even be merely *surrounded* and *pervaded* by it, but I must rather *give myself over* to it totally, become a one with it, transform myself into it; I must allow no leftover of myself except *this my intuition* itself, in order to behold it as a truly self-subsisting, independent, single and sole representation.”

With this totally abstract purity of continuity, that is, with this indeterminateness and emptiness of representation, it is indifferent whether one names this abstraction "space" or "pure intuition" or "pure thought." It is altogether the same as what an Indian calls Brahma, when for years on end, looking only at the tip of his nose, externally motionless and equally unmoved in sensation, representation, phantasy, desire, and so on, he inwardly says only *Om, Om, Om*, or else says nothing at all. This dull, empty consciousness, taken as consciousness, is just this – *being*.

In this void, Jacobi now states further, he encounters the opposite of what should happen to him according to Kant's assurance. He does not find himself to be a *many* and a *manifold* but to be rather a one without any plurality and manifoldness; indeed, "I am *impossibility* itself, the *nihilating* of all things manifold and plural – *cannot*, from my pure, absolutely simple and unchanging essence, *produce again*, or conjure in me as shadow, even *the least bit of anything* . . . Thus all externality and juxtaposition, any manifoldness and plurality dependent on them, are revealed in this purity as a *pure impossibility*."³⁴

The meaning of this impossibility is nothing else than the tautology: I hold fast to abstract unity and exclude all plurality and manifoldness; I keep myself in indistinctness and indeterminacy, and look away from anything distinguished and determinate. Kant's *a priori* synthesis of self-consciousness, that is, the work of this unity of differentiating itself but in this differentiation of preserving itself, is diluted by Jacobi to just this abstraction. He one-sidedly reduces that "synthesis *in itself*," the "*original parting of judgment*,"³⁵ to "*the copula in itself*;" – an '*is, is, is*' without beginning and end, without 'what', 'who', or 'which'; this repetition of repetition *ad infinitum* is the one single occupation, function, and production of the purest of all pure syntheses; the synthesis is itself this mere, pure, absolute repetition."³⁶ Though, in fact, since there is no pause in it, that is, no negation, no distinguishing, the synthesis is not a repetition but rather undifferentiated simple being. – But then, is this still a synthesis when Jacobi leaves out precisely that which makes the unity a synthetic unity?

First of all, it must be said that when Jacobi assumes his position in absolute (that is, abstract) space, time, and consciousness as well, he transposes himself into something which is *empirically* false, and fixes himself there. *There is* no such thing as a spatially or temporally unlimited space or time, that is, none is empirically at hand which would not be filled with a continuous manifold of limited existence and of change, so that these

³⁴ pp. 148ff., paraphrase.

³⁵ "parting of judgment" = *Urteil*.

³⁶ pp. 125ff., paraphrase.

limits and these changes would not belong, unseparated and inseparably, to spatiality. Consciousness is likewise filled with determinate sensation, representation, desire, and so forth; it does not exist *in concreto* apart from some particular content or other. – The *transition* to the empirical then goes without saying. Consciousness can indeed make empty space, empty time, and even empty consciousness or pure being, its intended object and content, but it does not stay with them. Rather, from this emptiness it passes over – more than that, it forces itself over to a better content, that is, one which is somehow more concrete and to this extent, however bad as content, still better and truer. Precisely such a content is the synthetic as such, “synthetic” understood in its more general sense. Thus Parmenides has to make do with semblance and opinion, the opposite of being and truth; Spinoza likewise, with attributes, modes, extension, movement, understanding, will, and so forth. The synthesis contains as well as exposes the untruth of those abstractions; in it they are in unity with their other, are not therefore as self-subsistent, not as absolute but strictly as relative.

The demonstration of the empirical nullity of empty space and so forth is not however the task here. Consciousness can of course, by means of abstraction, fill itself with such indeterminateness, and the abstractions to which it thus holds fast are *the thoughts* of pure space, time, pure consciousness, pure being. It is the thought of pure space etc. (that is, pure space etc. taken *in themselves*) which is to be demonstrated to be null, that is, what must be demonstrated is that, as such a thought, its opposite has already forced its way into it, that by itself it is already being that has gone outside itself, a determinateness.

But this happens in them immediately. They are, as Jacobi correctly describes them, results of abstraction; they are expressly determined as *indeterminate* – and this, to go back to their simplest form, is being. This *indeterminateness* is however precisely what constitutes their determinateness. For indeterminateness is opposed to determinateness; as opposed, it is therefore itself something determinate or negative – the pure, entirely abstract negative. This indeterminateness or abstract negation which thus has being in it is that to which reflection, whether external or internal, gives voice when it equates such a being with nothing, when it declares it to be an empty product of thought, a nothingness. – Or, one can say, since being is the indeterminate, it is not the (affirmative) determinateness that it is; it is not being but nothing.

In the pure reflection of the beginning as it is made in this Logic with *being* as such, the transition is still hidden; because *being* is posited as

immediate, the *nothing* only breaks out in it immediately. All the subsequent determinations are however more concrete, like *existence* which follows right after; there is already *posited* in existence that which contains and produces the contradiction of those abstractions, and consequently their transition. In being, when taken in that simplicity and immediacy, the memory that it is the result of a perfect abstraction, and that it is therefore already abstract negativity, nothing, is left back behind the science which, starting explicitly from *essence*, will exhibit that one-sided *immediacy* as a mediated immediacy where being is *posited* as *concrete existence*, and that which mediates being, the ground, is also *posited*.

With the recovery of this memory, it is possible to present the transition from being to nothing, or also, as it is said, to *clarify* it and make it *comprehensible*, as something itself easy and trivial. Of course, the being which is made into the beginning of science is a nothing, since it is possible to abstract from everything, and when abstraction is made from all, nothing is left over. However, one can continue, so understood the beginning is nothing affirmative, not being, but just nothing, and nothing is then the *end*, at least as much as immediate being, and even more so. Shortest is to let such an argument run its course and to observe how the results of which it boasts take shape. That “nothing” is the result of the argument, and that the beginning would then have to be made with nothing (as in Chinese philosophy)³⁷ need not cause us to lift a finger. For even before we had lifted it, this nothing would have turned into being just as much (see Section B above, “Nothing”). But further, if we presuppose the said abstraction from *everything* (an “everything” which is an *existent* nevertheless), such an abstraction must be defined with greater exactitude. The result of such an abstraction from everything existent is first of all abstract being, *being* in general. For just as in the cosmological proof of the existence of God from the contingent being of the world, where we ascend above this contingent being, *being* is still taken up with us in the ascent; it is determined as *infinite being*. But of course, one *can* abstract also from this pure being. Being *can* be thrown in with the everything from which abstraction has already been made, and then *nothing* remains. Now, if we want to ignore the *thinking* of nothing, that is, that it turns around into being, or would know nothing of it, one *can* indeed proceed in this way in the style of the “*one can*.” One can (God be praised!) even abstract from nothing (for the creation of the world, too, is an abstraction from nothing). But then, what remains

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³⁷ Apparently Hegel is associating Buddhism with China. Cf. above, 21.70, where Hegel speaks of oriental philosophies.

is not nothing, since abstraction would be made even from it and so we would be back at being again. – This “*one can*” generates an external play of abstraction in which the abstracting itself is only the one-sided activity of the negative. Directly implied in this very “one can” is that being is just as indifferent to it as nothing, and that as the one vanishes, the other appears in turn; but whether a beginning is made with the activity of nothing or with nothing is equally indifferent, for the activity of nothing, that is, the mere abstracting, is neither more nor less true than the mere nothing.

Plato’s dialectical treatment of the One in the *Parmenides* must also be regarded rather as a dialectic of external reflection. Being and the One are both Eleatic forms which are the same thing. But, as Plato understands them in that dialogue, they are also to be distinguished. After he removes from the One the various determinations of whole and parts, of being-in-itself, of being-in-another, etc.; of figure, time, etc., his result is that being does not pertain to the One, for being does not accrue to a something except according to one of these forms. (Ed. Stephanus, Vol. II, p. 141e.) Plato then turns to the proposition, “*the One is*”; and it is there that we can see how, starting from this proposition, he performs the transition to the non-being of the One. It happens by way of a *comparison* between the two determinations of the presupposed proposition, namely of “*the One is*.” This proposition contains “the One” and “being”; but “the one *is*” contains more than when one only says “the One.” In this, in their being *distinguished*, the moment of negation is demonstrated. It is clear that this method has a presupposition and is an external reflection.

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Just as the One is posited here in combination with being, so is being, which should be held fast abstracted *by itself* in the simplest form without entering into thought, exhibited in a combination that entails the opposite of what should be asserted. Taken in its immediacy, being belongs to a *subject*, is something said, has an empirical *existence* in general, and therefore stands on a ground of restriction and negativity. Whatever the expressions or the turns of phrase that the understanding adopts in protesting against the unity of being and nothing, however much it appeals to what is immediately given, it will find precisely in this experience nothing but *determinate* being, being with a restriction or negation – the very unity which it rejects. The assertion of immediate being thus comes down to an empirical concrete existence, and it cannot reject the demonstration of it, since it is the immediacy outside thought to which it wants to cling.

The same is the case with *nothing*, only in the contrary way. This is a well-known reflection, made often enough respecting nothing. When taken in its immediacy, nothing shows itself as *existing*; for it is by nature

the same as being. Nothing is thought of, represented; it is spoken about; it therefore *is*; nothing has its being in thinking, representing, speaking, etc. But, further, this being is also distinguished from it; it is therefore said that nothing is indeed in thinking or representing, yet for that very reason it is not *it* which *is*, it is not *it* to which being belongs, that only thinking or representing are this being. Even on this distinction, there is no denying that nothing *refers* to a being; but in this reference, though the latter equally also contains distinction, there is a unity with being. In whatever way nothing is said or demonstrated, it shows itself in combination with or, if one prefers, in touch with a being, unseparated from a being, that is to say, precisely in a *determinate existence*.

But when the presence of nothing in a determinate existence is thus demonstrated, this distinction of it from being still commonly comes to mind, namely that the existence of the nothing is nothing at all that pertains to it *per se*. It is said that nothing does not have being in it; that it *is* not *being as such*; that it is rather an absence of being, just as darkness is only the *absence* of light, cold only the absence of warmth, and so forth. It is said that darkness has meaning only with reference to the eye, by being externally compared with the positive, with light, just as cold is something only in our sensation, whereas light, warmth, just like being, are on the contrary objective on their own, they are the real, the effective, of quite another quality and dignity than those negatives, than nothing. One can often find it advanced as a very weighty reflection and a significant item of cognition that darkness is *only absence* of light, cold *only absence* of warmth. Regarding this astute reflection, it can be observed empirically in this field of empirical subject matters that darkness in fact shows its effective presence in light by determining it as color and thereby imparting visibility to it in the first place, because, as we said above, one can see just as little in pure light as in pure darkness. Visibility, however, is an effect in the eye, and the said negative makes just as much of a contribution to it as does the light that passes for the real, the positive; similarly, cold makes itself present enough to water, to our sensation, and so forth, and if we deny its so-called objective reality, we thereby stand to gain absolutely nothing against it. And we should further repeat³⁸ the complaint that here the talk is again of a negative with determinate content; that one has not restricted oneself to the nothing, with respect to which, so far as empty abstraction goes, being is neither at a loss nor at an advantage. – But we must equally take cold, darkness, and similar determinate negations, just for themselves, and, in

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³⁸ Cf above, 21.72 and 75.

respect to their general determination which is at issue here, let us see what is posited thereby. They are supposed to be not nothing in general, but the nothing rather of light, warmth, and so forth, of something determinate, of a content; thus they are a determinate, “contentful nothing” if one may so speak. A determinateness, however, as will be found later on, is itself a negation; thus they are negative nothings; a negative nothing is however something affirmative. The conversion of nothing into an affirmative by virtue of its determinateness (which previously appeared as *a determinate existence* in a subject or in what have you) appears to a consciousness bound to the abstraction of the understanding as the greatest paradox. Simple as it is, or rather because of its very simplicity, the insight that the negation of negation is something positive appears a trivial matter to which the haughty understanding need pay no heed, even though its correctness is undeniable – and not just its correctness, but also, on account of the universality of the determinations involved, its infinite extension and universal applicability, so that it would indeed be well to pay heed to it.

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Regarding the determination of the transition of being and nothing into each other, the further remark can be made that such a transition is to be taken just as it is without additional reflective determination. It is immediate and entirely abstract, on account of the abstractness of the moments in transition, that is, because there is yet to be posited in these moments the determinateness of the other through which they have undergone the transition. Nothing is not yet *posited* in being, even though being is *essentially* nothing, and the other way around. It is therefore improper to apply here more determinate mediations, and to take being and nothing in some relation – their transition is not yet a relation. Thus it is inadmissible to say: nothing is the ground of being, or being is the ground of nothing; nothing is the *cause* of being, and so forth; or, the transition into nothing can have occurred only *under the condition* that something is, or the transition into being only *under the condition* of non-being. The mode of the connecting reference cannot be further determined without the connected *sides* being at the same time also further determined. The connection of ground and consequent, and so forth, no longer has mere being and nothing for the sides which it binds, but has being expressly as ground, and something which, although only posited and not standing on its own, is however not abstract nothing.

Remark 4

One can gather from the preceding what to think of the dialectic directed against the *beginning of the world* and also its end (that dialectic which

would prove the *eternity* of matter), that is, of the dialectic directed at *becoming*, against coming-to-be or passing-away in general. (Kant's antinomies regarding the finitude or the infinity of the world in space and time will be more closely considered below, under the concept of the quantitative infinity.)³⁹ This simple, common dialectic rests on fixing the opposition of being and nothing. That a beginning of the world or of anything is not possible is proven as follows:

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Nothing can begin, either in so far as something is, or in so far as it is not; for in so far as it is, it does not begin to be; and in so far as it is not, it also does not begin to be. – If the world, or anything, had begun, it would have begun in nothing; but in nothing there is no beginning – or nothing is not a beginning; for a beginning implies a being, but nothing contains no being. Nothing is only nothing. In a ground, a cause, and so on, if this is how nothing is determined, there is contained an affirmation, being. – For the same reason, too, something cannot cease to be. For then it would have to contain nothing, but being is only being, not the opposite of itself.

It is clear that in this proof there is nothing brought against becoming, or beginning and ceasing-to-be, against this unity of being and nothing, except an assertorical denial and the ascription of truth to being and nothing taken in separation each from the other. – Such a dialectic is however at least more consistent than ordinary reflective thought. This thought accepts as the whole truth that being and nothing are only in separation, yet allows on the other hand for a beginning and a ceasing-to-be that are equally accepted as true determinations; in these, however, it in fact assumes the inseparability of being and nothing.

Once we presuppose that being and nothing are absolutely divorced, beginning or becoming, as we often hear said, is of course *incomprehensible*, for we make a presupposition which does away with beginning or becoming and yet *again* admits it. And this contradiction, which we create ourselves and make impossible to resolve, this is what is called the *incomprehensible*.

The dialectic just cited is also the same as the understanding deploys against the concept of *infinitesimal* magnitude given by higher analysis. More will be said below about this concept.⁴⁰ – These magnitudes are so determined that they *are in their vanishing* – not *before* this vanishing, for they would then be finite magnitudes; not *after* it, for then they would be nothing. Against this pure thought, it is objected and endlessly repeated that these magnitudes are *either something or nothing*; that there is no *intermediary state* between being and nothing ("state" is here an inappropriate,

21.92

³⁹ See below, 21.228–232. ⁴⁰ See below, 21.252–253.

barbaric expression). – Assumed here is again the absolute separation of being and nothing. But we have shown against this that being and nothing are in fact the same, or to speak in the language cited, that there *is* nothing which is not an *intermediary state between being and nothing*. Mathematics owes its most brilliant successes to precisely that determination which the understanding rejects.

This form of argumentation that falsely presupposes the absolute separation of being and nothing, and insists on it, should be called not *dialectic* but *sophistry*. For sophistry is an argumentation derived from a baseless presupposition rashly accepted without critique; but we call dialectic the higher rational movement in which these, being and nothing, apparently utterly separated, pass over into each other on their own, by virtue of what they are, and the presupposition sublates itself. It is the dialectical immanent nature of being and nothing themselves to manifest their unity, which is becoming, as their truth.

2. *The moments of becoming*

Becoming is the unseparatedness of being and nothing, not the unity that abstracts from being and nothing; as the unity *of being and nothing* it is rather this *determinate* unity, or one in which being and nothing equally *are*. However, inasmuch as being and nothing are each unseparated from its other, *each is not*. In this unity, therefore, *they are*, but as vanishing, only as *sublated*. They sink from their initially represented *self-subsistence* into moments which are *still distinguished* but at the same time sublated.

21.93

Grasped as thus distinguished, each is in their *distinguishedness* a unity with the *other*. Becoming thus contains being and nothing as *two such unities*, each of which is itself unity of being and nothing; the one is being as immediate and as reference to nothing; the other is nothing as immediate and as reference to being; in these unities the determinations are of unequal value.

Becoming is in this way doubly determined. In one determination, nothing is the immediate, that is, the determination begins with nothing and this refers to being; that is to say, it passes over into it. In the other determination, being is the immediate, that is, the determination begins with being and this passes over into nothing – *coming-to-be* and *ceasing-to-be*.

Both are the same, becoming, and even as directions that are so different they interpenetrate and paralyze each other. The one is *ceasing-to-be*; being passes over into nothing, but nothing is just as much the opposite of

itself, the passing-over into being, coming-to-be. This coming-to-be is the other direction; nothing goes over into being, but being equally sublates itself and is rather the passing-over into nothing; it is ceasing-to-be. – They do not sublata themselves reciprocally – the one sublating the other externally – but each rather sublates itself in itself and is within it the opposite of itself.

3. Sublation of becoming

The equilibrium in which coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be are poised is in the first place becoming itself. But this becoming equally collects itself in *quiescent unity*. Being and nothing are in it only as vanishing; becoming itself, however, is only by virtue of their being distinguished. Their vanishing is therefore the vanishing of becoming, or the vanishing of the vanishing itself. Becoming is a ceaseless unrest that collapses into a quiescent result.

This can also be expressed thus: becoming is the vanishing of being into nothing, and of nothing into being, and the vanishing of being and nothing in general; but at the same time it rests on their being distinct. It therefore contradicts itself in itself, because what it unites within itself is self-opposed; but such a union destroys itself.

21.94

This result is a vanishedness, but it is not *nothing*; as such, it would be only a relapse into one of the already sublated determinations and not the result of nothing *and of being*. It is the unity of being and nothing that has become quiescent simplicity. But this quiescent simplicity is *being*, yet no longer for itself but as determination of the whole.

Becoming, as transition into the unity of being and nothing, a unity which is as existent or has the shape of the one-sided *immediate* unity of these moments, is *existence*.

Remark

To sublata and *being sublated* (the *idealized*) constitute one of the most important concepts of philosophy. It is a fundamental determination that repeatedly occurs everywhere in it, the meaning of which must be grasped with precision and especially distinguished from *nothing*. – What is sublated does not thereby turn into nothing. Nothing is the *immediate*; something sublated is on the contrary something *mediated*; it is something non-existent but as a result that has proceeded from a being; it still *has in itself*, therefore, the *determinateness from which it derives*.

The German “*aufheben*” (“to sublata” in English) has a twofold meaning in the language: it equally means “to keep,” “to ‘preserve’,” and “to cause

to cease,” “to put an end to.” Even “to preserve” already includes a negative note, namely that something, in order to be retained, is removed from its immediacy and hence from an existence which is open to external influences. – That which is sublated is thus something at the same time preserved, something that has lost its immediacy but has not come to nothing for that. – These two definitions of “to sublate” can be cited as two dictionary *meanings* of the word. But it must strike one as remarkable that a language has come to use one and the same word for two opposite meanings. For speculative thought it is gratifying to find words that have in themselves a speculative meaning. The German language has several such words. The double meaning of the Latin “*tollere*” (made notorious by Cicero’s quip, “*tollendum est Octavium*”)⁴¹ does not go as far; its affirmative determination only goes so far as “lifting up.” Something is sublated only in so far as it has entered into unity with its opposite; in this closer determination as something reflected, it may fittingly be called a *moment*. In the case of the lever, “*weight*” and “*distance from a point*” are called its mechanical *moments* because of the *sameness* of their effect, in spite of the difference between something real like weight, and something idealized such as the merely spatial determination of “line.” (See *Encycl. of the Phil. Sc.*, 3rd edn, §261, Remark.) – We shall often not help but observe that the technical language of philosophy uses Latin terms for reflected determinations, either because the mother tongue has no terms for them, or, if it has as it does here, because in expressing them it is more likely to call to mind the immediate, whereas the foreign tongue recalls the reflected.

The more precise sense and precise expression that being and nothing receive now that they are *moments* will have to transpire from the consideration of existence, the unity in which they are preserved. Being is being, and nothing is nothing, only as held distinct from each other; in their truth, however, in their unity, they have vanished as such determinations and are now something else. Being and nothing are the same and, *precisely because they are the same, they no longer are being and nothing* but possess a different determination; in becoming they were coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be; in existence, which is another determinate unity, they are again moments but differently determined. This unity now remains their base from which they no longer surface in the abstract meaning of being and nothing.

⁴¹ “Caesar [Octavianus], he says, made no complaints against you to be sure, except as to a remark which he attributed to you: ‘the young man must be praised, honoured, and lifted up [*tollendum*].” Brutus (2001), Letter 401, to Cicero, p. 307. *Tollendum* can also be translated as “immortalized.” Of course, to be made into a god one must die first.

CHAPTER 2

Existence

Existence is *determinate* being; its determinateness is *existent* determinateness, *quality*. Through its quality, *something* is opposed to an *other*; it is *alterable* and *finite*, negatively determined not only towards an other, but absolutely within it. This negation in it, in contrast at first with the finite something, is the *infinite*; the abstract opposition in which these determinations appear resolves itself into oppositionless infinity, into *being-for-itself*.

The treatment of existence is therefore in three divisions:

- A. existence as such
- B. something and other, finitude
- C. qualitative infinity.

A. EXISTENCE AS SUCH

In existence (a) *as such*, its determinateness is first (b) to be distinguished as *quality*. The latter, however, is to be taken in both the two determinations of existence as *reality* and *negation*. In these determinacies, however, existence is equally reflected into itself, and, as so reflected, it is posited as (c) *something*, an existent.

21.97

a. Existence in general

Existence proceeds from becoming. It is the simple oneness of being and nothing. On account of this simplicity, it has the form of an *immediate*. Its mediation, the becoming, lies behind it; it has sublated itself, and existence therefore appears as a first from which the forward move is made. It is at first in the one-sided determination of *being*; the other determination which it contains, *nothing*, will likewise come up in it, in contrast to the first.

It is not mere being but *existence*, or *Dasein* [in German]; according to its [German] etymology, it is being (*Sein*) in a certain *place* (*da*). But the

representation of space does not belong here. As it follows upon becoming, existence is in general *being* with a *non-being*, so that this non-being is taken up into simple unity with being. *Non-being* thus taken up into being with the result that the concrete whole is in the form of being, of immediacy, constitutes *determinateness* as such.

The *whole* is likewise in the form or *determinateness* of being, since in becoming being has likewise shown itself to be only a moment – something sublated, negatively determined. It is such, however, *for us, in our reflection*; not yet as *posited* in it. What is posited, however, is the determinateness as such of existence, as is also expressed by the *da* (or “there”) of the *Dasein*. – The two are always to be clearly distinguished. Only that which is *posited* in a concept belongs in the course of the elaboration of the latter to its content. Any determinateness not yet posited in the concept itself belongs instead to our reflection, whether this reflection is directed to the nature of the concept itself or is a matter of external comparison. To remark on a determinateness of this last kind can only be for the clarification or anticipation of the whole that will transpire in the course of the development itself. That the whole, the unity of being and nothing, is in the *one-sided determinateness* of being is an external reflection; but in negation, in something and *other*, and so forth, it will become *posited*. – It was necessary here to call attention to the distinction just given; but to comment on all that reflection can allow itself, to give an account of it, would lead to a long-winded anticipation of what must transpire in the fact itself. Although such reflections may serve to facilitate a general overview and thus facilitate understanding, they also bring the disadvantage of being seen as unjustified assertions, unjustified grounds and foundations, of what is to follow. They should be taken for no more than what they are supposed to be and should be distinguished from what constitutes a moment in the advance of the fact itself.

Existence corresponds to *being* in the preceding sphere. But being is the indeterminate; there are no determinations that therefore transpire in it. But existence is determinate being, *something concrete*; consequently, several determinations, several distinct relations of its moments, immediately emerge in it.

b. Quality

On account of the immediacy with which being and nothing are one in existence, neither oversteps the other; to the extent that existence is existent, to that extent it is non-being; it is determined. Being is not the *universal*,

determinateness not the *particular*.⁴² Determinateness *has yet to detach itself* from *being*; nor will it ever detach itself from it, since the now underlying truth is the unity of non-being with being; all further determinations will transpire on this basis. But the connection which determinateness now has with being is one of the immediate unity of the two, so that as yet no differentiation between the two is posited.

Determinateness thus isolated by itself, as *existent* determinateness, is *quality* – something totally simple, immediate. *Determinateness* in general is the more universal which, further determined, can be something quantitative as well. On account of this simplicity, there is nothing further to say about quality as such.

Existence, however, in which nothing and being are equally contained, is itself the measure of the one-sidedness of quality as an only *immediate* or *existent* determinateness. Quality is equally to be posited in the determination of nothing, and the result is that the immediate or existent determinateness is posited as distinct, reflected, and the nothing, as thus the determinate element of determinateness, will equally be something reflected, a *negation*. Quality, in the distinct value of *existent*, is *reality*; when affected by a negating, it is *negation* in general, still a quality but one that counts as a lack and is further determined as limit, restriction.

21.99

Both are an existence, but in *reality*, as quality with the accent on being an existent, that it is determinateness and hence also negation is concealed; reality only has, therefore, the value of something positive from which negating, restriction, lack, are excluded. Negation, for its part, taken as mere lack, would be what nothing is; but it is an existence, a quality, only determined with a non-being.

Remark

Reality may seem to be an ambiguous word, since it is used in different, even opposite determinations. In philosophical usage, for instance, one speaks of *mere empirical* reality as of a worthless being. But when it is said of thoughts, concepts, theories, that they *have no reality*, this means that there is no *actuality* to them. Of the idea of a Platonic republic, for instance, it is said that it might well be true *in itself* or in its concept. Here the idea is not denied its value and is even allowed room *alongside* reality. However, as against the so-called *mere* ideas, the *mere* concepts, “the real” counts as alone true. – The sense in which external existence is made the criterion of the truth of a content is for its part just as one-sided as when

⁴² This will happen in the Subjective Logic, when the logical object assumes the form of “concept.”

the idea, the essence, or even inner feeling, is represented as indifferent to external existence and is even held to be all the more estimable the more remote it is from reality.

In connection with the term “reality,” mention must be made of the former metaphysical *concept of God* that was once made the foundation of the so-called ontological proof of God’s existence.⁴³ God was defined as *the sum-total of all realities*, and of this sum-total it was said that it contained no contradiction within, that none of the realities canceled any other, for a reality is to be taken only as a perfection, as *something affirmative* that contains no negation. Consequently, as it was said, the realities are not in opposition and do not contradict one another.

21.100 On this concept of reality, the assumption is that the latter still remains after all negation has been thought away; however, to do this is to remove all determinateness from reality. Reality is quality, existence; it therefore contains the moment of the negative and is the determinate being that it is only through it. Taken in the so-called *eminent sense*, or as *infinite* in the ordinary meaning of the word – as we are said we should – reality is expanded into indeterminateness and loses its meaning. God’s goodness is supposed to be such not in the ordinary sense but eminently; it is not different from justice but is rather *tempered* by it (an expression of mediation of Leibnizian origin)⁴⁴ just as contrariwise justice is tempered by goodness; and so neither is goodness goodness any longer, nor justice justice. Power should be tempered by wisdom – but is then no longer power as such, for it is subject to wisdom. – Wisdom should be expanded into power, but then it vanishes as end and measure setting wisdom. The true concept of the infinite and of its *absolute* unity that will later emerge⁴⁵ is not to be understood as a *tempering*, a *mutual restricting* or *blending* – a superficial, nebulous connection that can only satisfy mindless representation. – When reality, taken in the sense of a determinate quality as in the said definition of God, is made to transgress its determinateness, it ceases to be reality; it becomes abstract being; God as the *pure* reality in all realities, or as the *sum-total* of all realities, is the same empty absolute, void of determination and content, in which all is one.

If, on the contrary, reality is taken in its determinateness, then, since it essentially contains the moment of the negative, the sum-total of all realities becomes just as much a sum-total of all negations, the sum-total

⁴³ “The most perfect being is defined as one in which all co-possible realities inhere in the absolutely highest degree.” Christian Wolff, *Theologia naturalis methodo scientifica pertractata* (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1741), §6.

⁴⁴ Leibniz, *Monadology* (1714), §41. ⁴⁵ Cf. below, 21.130–37.

of all contradictions, a sort of first absolute *power* in which everything determinate is absorbed. However, since reality only exists in so far as it still has over against it something which it has not sublated, by being thought expanded in this way into an accomplished power void of restrictions, it becomes the abstract nothing. The said reality in everything real, the *being* in all existence that should express the concept of God, is nothing else than abstract being, the same as nothing.

21.101

That determinateness is negation posited as affirmative is Spinoza's proposition: *omnis determinatio est negatio*,⁴⁶ a proposition of infinite importance. Only, negation as such is formless abstraction. However, speculative philosophy must not be accused of taking negation or nothing as an ultimate: negation is as little an ultimate for it as reality is for it the truth.

The unity of Spinoza's substance, or that there is only one substance, is the necessary consequence of this proposition, that determinateness is negation. Spinoza had of necessity to posit *thought* and *being* or extension, the two determinations, namely, which he had before him, as one in this unity,⁴⁷ for as determinate realities the two are negations whose infinity is their unity;⁴⁸ according to Spinoza's definition, about which more later on,⁴⁹ the infinity of something is its affirmation. He therefore conceived them as attributes, that is, such as do not have a particular subsistence, a being-in-and-for-itself, but only are as sublated as moments; or rather, since substance is the total void of internal determinateness, they are not even moments; the attributes, like the modes, are distinctions made by an external understanding. – Also the substantiality of individuals cannot hold its own before that substance. The individual refers to itself by setting limits to every other; but these limits are therefore also the limits of its self; they are references to the other; the individual's existence is not in the individual. True, the individual is *more* than just restrictions on all sides; but this *more* belongs to another sphere, that of the concept; in the metaphysics of being, the individual is an absolutely determinate something; and against this something, against this finite that would be in and for itself as such, determinateness asserts itself essentially as negation, dragging it into the same negative movement of the understanding that makes everything vanish into the abstract unity of substance.

Negation stands immediately over against reality; further on, in the sphere proper to reflected determinations, it will be opposed to the *positive*,

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⁴⁶ Letter 50 (1674) to Jarig Jellis. *Works of Spinoza*, trans. R. H. M. Elwes (New York: Dover, 1951), Vol. II, pp. 369–370.

⁴⁷ *Ethics*, Part 2, Prop. 1, 2.

⁴⁸ *Ethics*, Part I, Prop. 8, note 1.

⁴⁹ Cf. below, 21.139.

which is reality reflecting upon negation – the reality in which the negative, still hiding in reality as such, shines forth.⁵⁰

Quality specifically is a *property* only when, in an *external connection*, it manifests itself as an *immanent determination*. By properties of herbs, for instance, we understand determinations which are not just *proper* to a something but are such that, in virtue of them, the something *holds its own* while referring to others and will not give in to the alien influences posited in it by them; on the contrary, it *imposes* its own determinations in the other – though it does not keep it at a distance. On the other hand, more stable determinacies such as figure or shape are not called properties, nor even qualities, for they are thought of as alterable and therefore as not identical with *being*.

“*Qualierung*” or “*Inqualierung*,” an expression of Jacob Boehme’s profound but also profoundly turbid philosophy, signifies the movement within a quality (sourness, bitterness, fieriness, etc.) inasmuch as in its negative nature (in its *Qual* or torment) the quality posits itself, securing itself from another; it signifies in general the internal unrest of quality by which it produces and preserves itself only in conflict.⁵¹

c. *Something*

In existence its determinateness has been distinguished as quality; in this quality as something existing, the distinction *exists* – the distinction of reality and negation. Now though these distinctions are present in existence, they are just as much null and sublated. Reality itself contains negation; it is existence, not indeterminate or abstract being. Negation is for its part equally existence, not the supposed abstract nothing but posited here as it is in itself, as existent, as belonging to existence. Thus quality is in general unseparated from existence, and the latter is only determinate, qualitative being.

This sublation of the distinction is more than the mere retraction and external re-omission of it, or a simple return to the simple beginning, to existence as such. The distinction cannot be left out, for it *is*. Therefore, what *de facto* is at hand is this: existence in general, distinction in it, and the sublation of this distinction; the existence, not void of distinctions as at the

⁵⁰ Cf. below II.273ff.

⁵¹ For mention of *Inqualierung*, see Böhme, *Sämtliche Schriften*, Vol. I, *Aurora, oder Morgenröthe im Aufgang*, ed. August Faust and Will-Erich Peuckert (Stuttgart: Fr. Frommanns, 1955), chapter 13, §40. Böhme refers to these specific qualities mentioned by Hegel in chapter 4, §6 of the same text. (This text is a facsimile of the edition from 1730 in 11 volumes.)

beginning, but as *again* self-equal *through the sublation of the distinction*; the simplicity of existence *mediated* through this sublation. This state of sublation of the distinction is existence's own determinateness; existence is thus *being-in-itself*; it is *existent, something*.

Something is the *first negation of negation*, as simple existent self-reference. Existence, life, thought, and so forth, essentially take on the determination of an existent being, a living thing, a thinking mind ("I"), and so forth. This determination is of the highest importance if we do not wish to halt at existence, life, thought, and so forth, as generalities – also not at *Godhood* (instead of God). In common representation, *something* rightly carries the connotation of a *real thing*. Yet it still is a very superficial determination, just as *reality* and *negation*, existence and its determinateness, though no longer the empty being and nothing, still are quite abstract determinations. For this reason they also are the most common expressions, and a reflection that is still philosophically unschooled uses them the most; it casts its distinctions in them, fancying that in them it has something really well and firmly determined. – As *something*, the negative of the negative is only the beginning of the subject – its in-itselfness is still quite indeterminate. It determines itself further on, at first as *existent-for-itself* and so on, until it finally obtains in the concept the intensity of the subject. At the base of all these determinations there lies the negative unity with itself. In all this, however, care must be taken to distinguish the *first* negation, negation as negation *in general*, from the second negation, the negation of negation which is concrete, *absolute* negativity, just as the first is on the contrary only *abstract* negativity.

Something is an *existent* as the negation of negation, for such a negation is the restoration of the simple reference to itself – but the something is thereby equally the *mediation of itself with itself*. Present in the simplicity of something, and then with greater determinateness in being-for-itself, in the subject, and so forth, this mediation of itself with itself is also already present in becoming, but only as totally abstract mediation; mediation with *itself* is *posited* in the something in so far as the latter is determined as a simple *identity*. – Attention can be drawn to the presence of mediation in general, as against the principle of the alleged bare immediacy of a knowledge from which mediation should be excluded. But there is no further need to draw particular attention to the moment of mediation, since it is to be found everywhere and on all sides, in every concept.

This mediation with itself which something is *in itself*, when taken only as the negation of negation, has no concrete determinations for its sides; thus it collapses into the simple unity which is *being*. Something *is*, and

is therefore also an existent. Further, it is *in itself* also *becoming*, but a becoming that no longer has only being and nothing for its moments. One of these moments, being, is now existence and further an existent. The other moment is equally an existent, but determined as the negative of something – an *other*. As becoming, something is a transition, the moments of which are themselves something, and for that reason it is an *alteration* – a becoming that has already become *concrete*. – At first, however, something alters only in its concept; it is not yet *posited* in this way, as mediated and mediating, but at first only as maintaining itself simply in its reference to itself; and its negative is posited as equally qualitative, as only an *other* in general.

B. FINITUDE

- (a) Something and other: at first they are indifferent to one another; an other is also an immediate existent, a something; the negation thus falls outside both. Something is *in itself* in contrast to its *being-for-other*. But the determinateness belongs also to its *in-itself*, and
- (b) the *determination* of this in-itself in turn passes over into *constitution*, and this latter, as identical with determination, constitutes the immanent and at the same time negated being-for-another, the *limit* of something which
- (c) is the immanent determination of the something itself, and the something thus is the *finite*.

In the first division where *existence* in general was considered, this existence had, as at first taken up, the determination of *an existent*. The moments of its development, quality and something, are therefore of equally affirmative determination. The present division, on the contrary, develops the negative determination which is present in existence and was there from the start only as negation in general. It was then the *first* negation but has now been determined to the point of the *being-in-itself* of the something, the point of the negation of negation.

a. Something and an other

1. Something and other are, first, both *existents* or *something*.

Second, each is equally an *other*. It is indifferent which is named first, and just for this reason it is named *something* (in Latin, when they occur in a proposition, both are *aliud*, or “the one, the other,” *alius alium*; in the case of an alternating relation, the analogous expression is *alter alterum*).

If of two beings we call the one A and the other B, the B is the one which is first determined as other. But the A is just as much the other of the B. Both are *other* in the same way. "This" serves to fix the distinction and the something which is to be taken in the affirmative sense. But "this" also expresses the fact that the distinction, and the privileging of one something, is a subjective designation that falls outside the something itself. The whole determinateness falls on the side of this external pointing; also the expression "*this*" contains no distinctions; each and every something is just as good a "this" as any other. By "this" we *mean* to express something completely determinate, overlooking the fact that language, as a work of the understanding, only expresses the universal, albeit *naming* it as a single object. But an individual name is something meaningless in the sense that it does not express a universal. It appears as something merely posited and arbitrary for the same reason that proper names can also be arbitrarily picked, arbitrarily given as well as arbitrarily altered.⁵²

Otherness thus appears as a determination alien to the existence thus pointed at, or the other existence as *outside* this one existence, partly because the one existence is determined as other only by *being compared* by a Third, and partly because it is so determined only on account of the other which is outside it, but is not an other for itself. At the same time, as has been remarked, even for ordinary thinking every existence equally determines itself as an other existence, so that there is no existence that remains determined simply as an existence, none which is not outside an existence and therefore is not itself an other.

21.106

Both are determined as *something* as well as *other*: thus they are *the same* and there is as yet no distinction present in them. But this *sameness* of determinations, too, falls only within external reflection, in the comparison of the two; but the *other*, as posited at first, though an other with reference to something, is other also *for itself apart from the something*.

Third, the *other* is therefore to be taken in isolation, with reference to itself, has to be taken *abstractly* as the other, the τὸ ἕτερον of Plato who opposes it to the one as a moment of totality, and in this way ascribes to *the other* a *nature* of its own. Thus the *other*, taken solely as such, is not the other of something, but is the other within, that is, the other of itself. – Such an other, which is the other by its own determination, is *physical nature*; nature is the *other of spirit*; this, its determination, is at first a mere relativity expressing not a quality of nature itself but only a reference external to it. But since spirit is the true something, and hence nature is

⁵² Hegel is repeating the argument of Chapter I of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

what it is within only in contrast to spirit, taken for itself the quality of nature is just this, to be the other within, that *which-exists-outside-itself* (in the determinations of space, time, matter).

The other which is such for itself is the other within it, hence the other of itself and so the other of the other – therefore, the absolutely unequal in itself, that which negates itself, *alters* itself. But it equally remains identical with itself, for that into which it alters is the *other*, and this other has no additional determination; but that which alters itself is not determined in any other way than in this, to be an other; in *going over* to this other, it *only unites with itself*. It is thus posited as reflected into itself with sublation of the otherness, a self-*identical* something from which the otherness, which is at the same time a moment of it, is therefore distinct, itself not appertaining to it as something.

2. The something *preserves* itself in its non-being; it is essentially *one* with it, and essentially *not one* with it. It therefore stands in *reference* to an otherness without being just this otherness. The otherness is at once contained in it and yet *separated* from it; it is *being-for-other*.

Existence as such is an immediate, bare of references; or, it is in the determination of *being*. However, as including non-being within itself, existence is *determinate* being, being negated within itself, and then in the first instance an other – but, since in being negated it preserves itself at the same time, it is only *being-for-other*.

21.107

It preserves itself in its non-being and is being; not, however, being in general but being with reference to itself *in contrast* to its reference to the other, as self-equality in contrast to its inequality. Such a being is *being-in-itself*.

Being-for-other and being-in-itself constitute the *two moments* of something. There are here *two pairs* of determinations: (1) *something* and *other*; (2) *being-for-other* and *being-in-itself*. The former contain the non-connectedness of their determinateness; something and other fall apart. But their truth is their connection; being-for-other and being-in-itself are therefore the same determinations posited as *moments* of one and the same unity, as determinations which are connections and which, in their unity, remain in the unity of existence. Each thus itself contains within it, at the same time, also the moment diverse from it.

Being and nothing in their unity, which is existence, are no longer being and nothing (these they are only outside their unity); so in their restless unity, in becoming, they are coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be. – In the something, being is *being-in-itself*. Now, as self-reference, self-equality, being is no longer immediately, but is self-reference only as the non-being

of otherness (as existence reflected into itself). – The same goes for non-being: as the moment of something in this unity of being and non-being; it is not non-existence in general but is the other, and more determinedly – according as being is at the same time *distinguished* from it – it is *reference* to its non-existence, being-for-other.

Hence *being-in-itself* is, first, negative reference to non-existence; it has otherness outside it and is opposed to it; in so far as something is *in itself*, it is withdrawn from being-other and being-for-other. But, second, it has non-being also right in it; for it *is* itself *the non-being* of being-for-other.

21.108

But being-for-other is, first, the negation of the simple reference of being to itself which, in the first place, is supposed to be existence and something; in so far as something is in an other or for an other, it lacks a being of its own. But, second, it is not non-existence as pure nothing; it is non-existence that points to being-in-itself as its being reflected into itself, just as conversely the being-in-itself points to being-for-other.

3. Both moments are determinations of one and the same, namely of something. Something is *in-itself* in so far as it has returned from the being-for-other back to itself. But something has also a determination or circumstance, whether *in itself* (here the accent is on the *in*) or *in it*; in so far as this circumstance is *in it* externally, it is a being-for-other.

This leads to a further determination. *Being-in-itself* and being-for-other are different at first. But that something also has *in it what it is in itself* and conversely is in itself also what it is as being-for-other – this is the identity of being-in-itself and being-for-other, in accordance with the determination that the something is itself one and the same something of both moments, and these are in it, therefore, undivided. – This identity already occurs formally in the sphere of existence, but more explicitly in the treatment of essence and later of the relations of *interiority* and *externality*, and in the most determinate form in the treatment of the idea, as the unity of concept and actuality. – Opinion has it that with the *in-itself* something lofty is being said, as with the *inner*; but what something is *only in itself*, is also *only in it*; in-itself is a merely abstract, and hence itself external determination. The expressions: there is nothing *in it*, or there is something *in it*, imply, though somewhat obscurely, that what is *in a thing* also pertains to its *in-itselfness*, to its inner, true worth.

It may be observed that here we have the meaning of the *thing-in-itself*. It is a very simple abstraction, though it was for a while a very important determination, something sophisticated, as it were, just as the proposition that we know nothing of what things are in themselves was a much valued piece of wisdom. – Things are called “in-themselves” in so far as abstraction

21.109

is made from all being-for-other, which really means, in so far as they are thought without all determination, as nothing. In this sense, of course, it is impossible to know *what* the thing-in-itself is. For the question "*what?*" calls for determinations to be produced; but since the things of which the determinations are called for are at the same time presumed to be *things-in-themselves*, which means precisely without determination, the impossibility of an answer is thoughtlessly implanted in the question, or else a senseless answer is given. – The thing-in-itself is the same as that absolute of which nothing is known except that in it all is one. What there is *in* these things-in-themselves is therefore very well known; they are as such nothing but empty abstractions void of truth. What, however, the thing-in-itself in truth is, what there basically is in it, of this the Logic is the exposition. But in this Logic something better is understood by the *in-itself* than an abstraction, namely, what something is in its concept; but this concept is in itself concrete: as concept, in principle conceptually graspable; and, as determined and as the connected whole of its determinations, inherently cognizable.

Being-in-itself has at first the being-for-other as a moment standing over against it. But *positedness* also comes to be positioned over against it, and, although in this expression being-for-other is also included, the expression still contains the determination of the bending back, which has already occurred, of that which is not in itself into that wherein it is *positive*, and this is its being-in-itself. *Being-in-itself* is normally to be taken as an abstract way of expressing the concept; *positing*, strictly speaking, first occurs in the sphere of essence, of objective reflection; the ground *posits* that which is grounded through it; more strongly, the cause *produces an effect*, an existence whose subsistence is *immediately* negated and which carries the meaning that it has its *substance*, its being, in an other. In the sphere of being, existence only *emerges* out of becoming. Or again, with the something an other is posited; with the finite, an infinite; but the finite does not bring forth the infinite, does not *posit* it. In the sphere of being, the *self-determining* of the concept is at first only *in itself or implicit*, and for that reason it is called a transition or passing over. And the reflecting determinations of being, such as something and other, or finite and infinite, although they essentially point to one another, or are as being-for-other, also stand on their own *qualitatively*; the *other exists*; the finite, like the infinite, is equally to be regarded as *an immediate existent* that stands firm on its own; the meaning of each appears complete even without its other. The positive and the negative, on the contrary, cause and effect, however much they are taken in isolation, have at the same time no meaning each

without the other; their *reflective shining* in each other, the shine in each of its other, is present *right in them*. – In the different cycles of determination and especially in the progress of the exposition, or, more precisely, in the progress of the concept in the exposition of itself, it is of capital concern always to clearly distinguish what still *is in itself or implicitly* and what *is posited*, how determinations are in the concept and how they are as posited or as existing-for-other. This is a distinction that belongs only to the dialectical development and one unknown to metaphysical philosophizing (to which the critical also belongs); the definitions of metaphysics, like its presuppositions, distinctions, and conclusions, are meant to assert and produce only the *existent* and that, too, as *existent-in-itself*.

In the unity of the something with itself, *being-for-other* is identical with its *in-itself*; the being-for-other is thus *in* the something. The determinateness thus reflected into itself is therefore again *a simple existent* and hence again a quality – *determination*.

b. Determination,⁵³ constitution, and limit

The *in-itself*, in which the something is reflected into itself from its being-for-other, no longer is an abstract in-itself but, as the negation of its being-for-other, is mediated through this latter, which is thus its moment. It is not only the immediate identity of the something with itself, but the identity by virtue of which the something also has *present in it* what it is *in itself*; the being-for-other is *present in it* because the *in-itself* is the sublation of it, is in itself *from it*; but, because it is still abstract, and therefore essentially affected with negation, it is equally affected with being-for-other. We have here not only quality and reality, existent determinateness, but determinateness *existent-in-itself*; and the development consists in *positing* such determinateness as thus immanently reflected.

1. The quality which in the simple something is an in-itself essentially in unity with the something's other moment, its *being-in-it*, can be named its *determination*, provided that this word is distinguished, in a more precise signification, from *determinateness* in general. Determination is affirmative determinateness; it is the in-itself by which a something abides in its existence while involved with an other that would determine it, by which it preserves itself in its self-equality, holding on to it in its being-for-other. Something *fulfills* its determination to the extent that the further

21.III

⁵³ *Bestimmung* also carries the meaning of "vocation" or "destiny" as in "*die Bestimmung des Menschen*," the vocation of humankind.

determinateness, which variously accrues to it in the measure of its being-in-itself as it relates to an other, becomes its filling. Determination implies that what something is *in itself* is also *present in it*.

The *determination of the human being*, its vocation, is rational thought: thinking in general is his simple *determinateness*; by it the human being is distinguished from the brute; he is thinking *in himself*, in so far as this thinking is distinguished also from his being-for-other, from his own natural and sensuous being that brings him in immediate association with the other. But thinking is also *in him*; the human being is himself thinking, he *exists* as thinking, thought is his concrete existence and actuality; and, further, since thinking is in his existence and his existence is in his thinking, thinking is *concrete*, must be taken as having content and filling; it is rational thought and as such the *determination* of the human being. But even this determination is again only *in itself*, as an *ought*, that is to say, it is, together with the filling embodied in its in-itself, in the form of an in-itself in general *as against* the existence which is not embodied in it but still lies outside confronting it, immediate sensibility and nature.

2. The filling of the being-in-itself with determinateness is also distinct from the determinateness which is only being-for-other and remains outside the determination. For in the sphere of the qualitative, the distinguished terms are left, in their sublated being, also with an immediate, qualitative being contrasting them. That which the something has *in it* thus separates itself and is from this side the external existence of the something and also *its* existence, but not as belonging to its being-in-itself. — Determinateness is thus *constitution*.

Constituted in this or that way, the something is caught up in external influences and in external relationships. This external connection on which the constitution depends, and the being determined through an other, appear as something accidental. But it is the quality of the something to be given over to this externality and to have a *constitution*.

In so far as something alters, the alteration falls on the side of its constitution; the latter is that *in the something* which becomes an other. The something itself preserves itself in the alteration; the latter affects only this unstable surface of the something's otherness, not its determination.

Determination and constitution are thus distinct from each other; something, according to its determination, is indifferent to its constitution. But that which the something has *in it* is the middle term of this syllogism connecting the two, determination and constitution. Or, rather, the *being-in-the-something* showed itself to fall apart into these two extremes. The simple middle term is *determinateness* as such; its identity belongs to

determination just as well as to constitution. But determination passes over into constitution on its own, and constitution into determination. This is implied in what has been said. The connection, upon closer consideration, is this: in so far as that which something is *in itself* is also *in it*, the something is affected with being-for-other; determination is therefore open, as such, to the relation with other. Determinateness is at the same time moment, but it contains at the same time the qualitative distinction of being different from *being-in-itself*; of being the negative of the something, another existence. This determinateness which thus holds the other in itself, united with the being-in-itself, introduces otherness in the latter or in determination, and determination is thereby reduced to constitution. – Conversely, the being-for-other, isolated as constitution and posited on its own, is in it the same as what the other as such is, the other in it, that is, the other of itself; but it consequently is *self-referring* existence, thus being-in-itself with a determinateness, therefore determination. – Consequently, inasmuch as the two are also to be held apart, constitution, which appears to be grounded in something external, in an other in general, also *depends* on determination, and the determining from outside is at the same time determined by the something's own immanent determination. And further, constitution belongs to that which something is in itself: something alters along with its constitution.

This altering of something is no longer the first alteration of something merely in accordance with its being-for-other. The first was an alteration only implicitly present, one that belonged to the inner concept; now the alteration is also posited in the something. – The something itself is further determined, and negation is posited as immanent to it, as its developed being-in-itself.

21.II3

The transition of determination and constitution into each other is at first the sublation of their distinction, and existence or something in general is thereby posited; moreover, since this something in general results from a distinction that also includes qualitative otherness within it, there are two somethings. But these are, with respect to each other, not just others in general, so that this negation would still be abstract and would occur only in the comparison of the two; rather the negation now is *immanent* to the somethings. As *existing*, they are indifferent to each other, but this, their affirmation, is no longer immediate: each refers itself to itself *through the intermediary* of the sublation of the otherness which in determination is reflected into the in-itselfness.

Something behaves in this way in relation to the other *through itself*; since otherness is posited in it as its own moment, its in-itselfness holds

negation in itself, and it now has its affirmative existence through its intermediary alone. But the other is also qualitatively distinguished from this affirmative existence and is thus posited outside the something. The negation of its other is only the quality of the something, for it is in this sublation of its other that it is something. The other, for its part, truly confronts an existence only with this sublation; it confronts the first something only externally, or, since the two are in fact inherently joined together, that is, according to their concept, their connectedness consists in this, that existence *has passed over* into otherness, something into other; that something is just as much an other as the other is. Now in so far as the in-itselfness is the non-being of the otherness that is contained in it but is at the same time also distinct as existent, something is itself negation, *the ceasing to be of an other in it*; it is posited as behaving negatively in relation to the other and in so doing preserving itself. This other, the in-itselfness of the something as negation of the negation, is the something's *being-in-itself*, and this sublation is as simple negation at the same time *in it*, namely, as its negation of the other something external to it. It is one determinateness of the two somethings that, on the one hand, as negation of the negation, is identical with the in-itselfness of the somethings, and also, on the other hand, since these negations are to each other as other somethings, joins them together of their own accord and, since each negation negates the other, equally separates them. This determinateness is *limit*.

3. *Being-for-other* is indeterminate, affirmative association of something with its other; in limit the *non-being-for-other* is emphasized, the qualitative negation of the other, which is thereby kept out of the something that is reflected into itself. We must see the development of this concept – a development that will rather look like confusion and contradiction. Contradiction immediately raises its head because limit, as an internally reflected negation of something, *ideally* holds in it the moments of something and other, and these, as distinct moments, are at the same time posited in the sphere of existence as *really, qualitatively, distinct*.

21.114

α. Something is therefore immediate, self-referring existence and at first it has a limit with respect to an other; limit is the non-being of the other, not of the something itself; in limit, something marks the boundary of its other. – But other is itself a something in general. The limit that something has with respect to an other is, therefore, also the limit of the other as a something; it is the limit of this something in virtue of which the something holds the first something as *its other* away from itself, or is a *non-being of that something*. The limit is thus not only the non-being of the other, but of

the one something just as of the other, and consequently of the *something* in general.

But the limit is equally, essentially, the non-being of the other; thus, through its limit, something at the same time *is*. In limiting, something is of course thereby reduced to being limited itself; but, as the ceasing of the other in it, its limit is at the same time itself only the being of the something; *this something is what it is by virtue of it, has its quality in it*. – This relation is the external appearance of the fact that limit is simple negation or the *first* negation, whereas the other is, at the same time, the negation of the negation, the in-itselfness of the something.

Something, as an immediate existence, is therefore the limit with respect to another something; but it has this limit *in it* and is something through the mediation of that limit, which is just as much its non-being. The limit is the mediation in virtue of which something and other each *both is and is not*.

β. Now in so far as something in its limit both *is* and *is not*, and these moments are an immediate, qualitative distinction, the non-existence and the existence of the something fall outside each other. Something has its existence *outside* its limit (or, as representation would also have it, *inside* it); in the same way the other, too, since it is something, has it outside it. The limit is the *middle point between* the two at which they leave off. They have existence *beyond* each other, *beyond their limit*; the limit, as the non-being of each, is the other of both.

– It is in accordance with this difference of the something from its limit that the *line* appears as line outside its limit, the point; the *plane* as plane outside the line; the *solid* as solid only outside its limiting plane. – This is the aspect of limit that first occurs to figurative representation (the self-external-being of the concept) and is also most commonly assumed in the context of spatial objects.

γ. But further, something as it is outside the limit, as the unlimited something, is only existence in general. As such, it is not distinguished from its other; it is only existence and, therefore, it and its other have the same determination; each is only something in general or each is other; and so both are *the same*. But this, their at first immediate existence, is now posited in them as limit: in it both are what they are, distinct from each other. But it is also equally their *common* distinguishedness, the unity and the distinguishedness of both, just like existence. This double identity of the two, existence and limit, contains this: that something has existence only in limit, and that, since limit and immediate existence are each at the same time the negative of each other, the something, which is now only

in its limit, equally separates itself from itself, points beyond itself to its non-being and declares it to be its being, and so it passes over into it. To apply this to the preceding example, the one determination is this: that something is what it is only in its limit. Therefore, the *point* is the limit of *line*, not because the latter just ceases at the point and has existence outside it; the *line* is the limit of *plane*, not because the plane just ceases at it; and the same goes for the *plane* as the limit of *solid*. Rather, at the point the line also *begins*; the point is its absolute beginning, and if the line is represented as unlimited on both its two sides, or, as is said, as extended to infinity, the point still constitutes its element, just as the line constitutes the element of the plane, and the plane that of the solid. These *limits* are the *principle* of that which they delimit; just as one, for instance, is as hundredth the limit, but also the element, of the whole hundred.

The other determination is the unrest of the something in its limit in which it is immanent, the *contradiction* that propels it beyond itself. Thus the point is this dialectic of itself becoming line; the line, the dialectic of becoming plane; the plane, of becoming total space. A second definition is given of line, plane, and whole space which has the line come to be through the *movement* of the point; the plane through the movement of the line, and so forth. This *movement* of the point, the line, and so forth, is however viewed as something accidental, or as movement only in figurative representation. In fact, however, this view is taken back by supposing that the determinations from which the line, and so forth, originate are their *elements* and *principles*, and these are, at the same time, nothing else but their limits; the coming to be is not considered as accidental or only as represented. That the point, the line, the plane, are *per se* self-contradictory beginnings which on their own repel themselves from themselves, and consequently that the point passes over from itself into the line through its concept, *moves in itself* and makes the line come to be, and so on – all this lies in the concept of the limit which is immanent in the something. The application itself, however, belongs to the treatment of space; as an indication of it here, we can say that the point is the totally abstract limit, but *in a determinate existence*; this existence is still taken in total abstraction, it is the so-called absolute, that is, abstract *space*, the absolutely continuous being-outside-one-another. Inasmuch as the limit is not abstract negation, but is rather *in this existence*, inasmuch as it is *spatial* determinateness, the point is spatial, is the contradiction of abstract negation and continuity and is, for that reason, the transition as it occurs and has already occurred into the line, and so forth. And so *there is* no point, just as there is no line or plane.

The something, posited with its immanent limit as the contradiction of itself by virtue of which it is directed and driven out and beyond itself, is the *finite*.

c. Finitude

Existence is determinate. Something has a quality, and in this quality it is not only determined but delimited; its quality is its limit and, affected by it, something remains affirmative, quiescent existence. But, so developed that the opposition of its existence and of the negation as the limit immanent to this existence is the very in-itselfness of the something, and this is thus only becoming in it, this negation constitutes the finitude of the something.

When we say of things that *they are finite*, we understand by this that they not only have a determinateness, that their quality is not only reality and existent determination, that they are not merely limited and as such still have existence outside their limit, but rather that non-being constitutes their nature, their being. Finite things *are*, but in their reference to themselves they refer to themselves *negatively* – in this very self-reference they propel themselves beyond themselves, beyond their being. They *are*, but the truth of this being is (as in Latin) their *finis*, their *end*.⁵⁴ The finite does not just alter, as the something in general does, but *perishes*, and its perishing is not just a mere possibility, as if it might be without perishing. Rather, the being as such of finite things is to have the germ of this transgression⁵⁵ in their in-itselfness: the hour of their birth is the hour of their death.

21.117

α. The immediacy of finitude

The thought of the finitude of things brings this mournful note with it because finitude is qualitative negation driven to the extreme, and in the simplicity of such a determination there *is* no longer left to things an affirmative being *distinct* from their determination as things destined to ruin.⁵⁶ Because of this qualitative simplicity of negation that has returned to the abstract opposition of nothing and perishing to being, finitude is the most obstinate of the categories of the understanding; negation in

⁵⁴ "... (as in Latin) their *finis*..." is my gloss. The Latin root of "finite" and "finitude" is *finis*, that is, "end." This connection between "finite" and "end" is clear in the German, *endlich*, *Endlichkeit*, *Ende*, and Hegel plays on it. I have tried to bring out this wordplay, which in English implicates the Latin word.

⁵⁵ *Vergehen* has the meaning of both "offence" (as in "transgression") and "passage of time."

⁵⁶ *Bestimmung zum Untergange*. *Bestimmung* means both "determination" and "destiny" or "vocation."

general, constitution, limit, are compatible with their other, with existence; even the abstract nothing, by itself, is given up as an abstraction; but finitude is negation *fixed in itself* and, as such, stands in stark contrast to its affirmative. The finite thus does indeed let itself be submitted to flux; this is precisely what it is, that it should come to an end, and this end is its only determination. Its refusal is rather to let itself be brought affirmatively to its affirmative, the infinite, to be associated with it; it is therefore inseparably posited with its nothing, and thereby cut off from any reconciliation with its other, the affirmative. The determination of finite things does not go past their *end*. The understanding persists in this sorrow of finitude, for it makes non-being the determination of things and, at the same time, this non-being *imperishable* and *absolute*. Their transitoriness would only pass away in their other, in the affirmative; their finitude would then be severed from them; but this finitude is their unalterable quality, that is, their quality which does not pass over into their other, that is, not into the affirmative; *and so finitude is eternal*.

This is a very important consideration. But that the finite is absolute is certainly not a standpoint that any philosophy or outlook, or the understanding, would want to endorse. The opposite is rather expressly present in the assertion of finitude: the finite is the restricted, the perishable, the finite is *only* the finite, not the imperishable; all this is immediately part and parcel of its determination and expression. But all depends on whether in one's view of *finitude* its *being* is insisted on, and the *transitoriness* thus persists, or whether the *transitoriness* and the *perishing* *perish*. The fact is that this perishing of the perishing does not happen on precisely the view that would make the *perishing* the *final* end of the finite. The official claim is that the finite is incompatible with the infinite and cannot be united with it; that the finite is absolutely opposed to the infinite. Being, absolute being, is ascribed to the infinite. The finite remains held fast over against it as its negative; incapable of union with the infinite, it remains absolute on its own side; from the affirmative, from the infinite, it would receive affirmation and thus it would perish; but a union with the infinite is precisely what is declared impossible. If the finite were not to persist over against the infinite but were to perish, its perishing, as just said, would then be the last of it – not its affirmative, which would be only a perishing of the perishing. However, if it is not to perish into the affirmative but its end is rather to be grasped as a *nothing*, then we are back at that first, abstract nothing that itself has long since passed away.

With this nothing, however, which is supposed to be *only* nothing but to which a reflective existence is nevertheless granted in thought, in

representation or in speech, the same contradiction occurs as we have just indicated in connection with the finite, except that in the nothing it just *occurs* but in the finite it is instead *expressed*. In the one case, the contradiction appears as subjective; in the other, the finite is said to *stand in perpetual opposition* to the infinite, in itself to *be* null, and to be *as* null in itself. This is now to be brought to consciousness. The development of the finite will show that, expressly as this contradiction, it collapses internally, but that, in this collapse, it actually resolves the contradiction; it will show that the finite is not just perishable, and that it perishes, but that the perishing, the nothing, is rather not the last of it; that the perishing rather perishes.

β. Restriction and the ought

This contradiction is indeed abstractly present by the very fact that the *something* is finite, or that the finite *is*. But *something* or being is no longer posited abstractly but reflected into itself, and developed as being-in-itself that has determination and constitution in it, or, more determinedly still, in such a way that it has a limit within it; and this limit, as constituting what is immanent to the something and the quality of its being-in-itself, is finitude. It is to be seen what moments are contained in this concept of the finite something.

Determination and constitution arose as *sides* for external reflection, but determination already contained otherness as belonging to the *in-itself* of something. On the one side, the externality of otherness is within the something's own inwardness; on the other side, it remains as otherness distinguished from it; it is still externality as such, but *in* the something. But further, since otherness is determined as *limit*, itself as negation of the negation, the otherness immanent to the something is posited as the connection of the two sides, and the unity of the something with itself (to which both determination and constitution belong) is its reference turned back upon itself, the reference to it of its implicitly existing determination that in it negates its immanent limit. The self-identical in-itself thus refers itself to itself as to its own non-being, but as negation of the negation, as negating that which at the same time retains existence in it, for it is the quality of its in-itselfness. Something's own limit, thus posited by it as a negative which is at the same time essential, is not only limit as such, but *restriction*. But restriction is not alone in being posited as negative; the negation cuts two ways, for that which it posits as negated is *limit*, and limit is in general what is common to something and other, and is also

the determinateness of the *in-itself* of determination as such. This in-itself, consequently, as negative reference to its limit (which is also distinguished from it), as negative reference to itself as restriction, is the *ought*.

In order for the limit that is in every something to be a restriction, the something must at the same time *transcend* it in itself – must refer to it from within *as to a non-existent*. The existence of something lies quietly indifferent, as it were, *alongside* its limit. But the something transcends its limit only in so far as it is the sublatedness of the limit, the negative in-itselfness over against it. And inasmuch as the limit is as restriction in the *determination* itself, the something thereby *transcends itself*.

The ought therefore contains the double determination: *once*, as a determination which has an in-itselfness over against negation; *and again*, as a non-being which, as restriction, is distinguished from the determination but is at the same time itself a determination existing in itself.⁵⁷

The finite has thus determined itself as connecting determination and limit; in this connection, the determination is the *ought* and the limit is the *restriction*. Thus the two are both moments of the finite, and therefore both themselves finite, the ought as well as the restriction. But only restriction is *posited* as the finite; the ought is restricted only in itself, and therefore only for us. It is restricted by virtue of its reference to the limit already immanent within it, though this restriction in it is shrouded in in-itselfness, for according to its determinate being, that is, according to its determinateness in contrast to restriction, it is posited as being-in-itself.

What ought to be *is*, and at the same time *is not*. If it *were*, it would not be what merely *ought to be*. The ought has therefore a restriction essentially. This restriction is not anything alien; *that which only* ought to be is *determination* now posited as it is in fact, namely as at the same time only a determinateness.

The being-in-itself of the something is thus reduced in its determination to the *ought* because the very thing that constitutes the something's in-itselfness is, in one and the same respect, as *non-being*; or again, because in the in-itselfness, in the negation of the negation, the said being-in-itself is as one negation (what negates) a unity with the other, and this other, as qualitatively other, is the limit by virtue of which that unity is as *reference*

⁵⁷ Hegel is making a deflationary move here. The “ought” is nothing special. It defines explicitly the true relation that obtains between any subject and its predicate. The subject is its predicate while at the same time being distinguished from it. The relation between the two is therefore always one of identity but at a distance. The predicate is what the subject is “destined” or “said” to be. It is important to keep in mind that *Bestimmung* in German means both, “determination” and “destiny” or “vocation.”

to it.⁵⁸ The restriction of the finite is not anything external, but the finite's own determination is rather also its restriction; and this restriction is both itself and the ought; it is that which is common to both, or rather that in which the two are identical.

But further, as "ought" the finite *transcends* its restriction; the same determinateness which is its negation is also sublated, and is thus its in-itself; its limit is also not its limit.

As *ought* something is thus *elevated above its restriction*, but conversely it has its *restriction* only as *ought*. The two are indivisible. Something has a restriction in so far as it has negation in its determination, and the determination is also the being sublated of the restriction.

Remark

The ought has of late played a major role in philosophy, especially in connection with morality but also in metaphysics in general, as the final and absolute concept of the identity of the in-itself or of *self-reference*, and of *determinateness* or the limit.

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"*You can because you ought.*"⁵⁹ This expression, which is supposed to say a lot, is implied in the concept of the ought. For the ought is the transcendence of restriction; restriction is sublated in it, the in-itself of the ought is thus identical self-reference, and consequently the abstraction of "*being able.*" – But, conversely, "*you cannot, even though you ought*" is just as correct. For the restriction as restriction is equally implied in the ought; the one formalism of possibility has in it a reality, a qualitative otherness, that stands opposed to it, and the connection of each to the other is a contradiction, and thus a "cannot" or rather an impossibility.

In the ought the transcendence of finitude, infinity, begins. The ought is that which, in the subsequent development, in accordance with the said impossibility, will display itself as a progress to infinity.

Regarding the form of *restriction* and of the *ought*, two prejudices deserve more detailed criticism. First, *much* is commonly made of the restrictions of thought, of reason, and so forth, and the claim is made that it is *impossible*

⁵⁸ This is a very convoluted sentence. Hegel's point seems to be this. A subject is reflectively what it is by negating that its predicate (otherwise qualitatively other than it) is truly an other. The subject *is* that predicate as other; it negates the predicate as a would-be other (i.e. as a negative with respect to it). The subject is therefore reflectively what the predicate is qualitatively (i.e. immediately). It is what the predicate is, but at a distance as it were. Its self-identity (the negation of the negation that constitutes its internal being) is thus modified by carrying a reference to the would-be, qualitatively independent predicate. The latter is what the subject *ought* to be, what it is "destined" or "said" to be.

⁵⁹ Cf. A807/B835.

to transcend such restrictions. What is lost track of in this claim is that something is already transcended by the very fact of being determined as a restriction. For a determinateness, a limit, is determined as restriction only in opposition to its other in general, that is, in opposition to *that which is without its restriction*; the other of a restriction is precisely the *beyond* with respect to it. Stone, metal, do not transcend their restriction, for the simple reason that the restriction is not a restriction *for them*. However, with respect to such general propositions that are typical of the way the understanding thinks, as that it is impossible to transcend restriction, if thought will not apply itself to see what is implied in the concept, it can then be referred to actuality, where the propositions prove themselves to be completely unrealistic. Just because thought *ought* to be something higher than actuality, just because it *ought* to dwell in higher regions remote from it, and therefore be itself determined as an *ought*, it fails on the one hand to advance to the concept, and on the other hand it manages to be equally untrue both in its relation to actuality and to the concept. – Because a stone does not think, does not even feel, its determinateness is not a restriction *for it*, that is, it is not in it a negation for the sensation, the representation, the thought, and so on, which it does not have. But the stone too is as a something distinguished in its determination or its in-itself and existence, and to this extent it too transcends its restriction; the concept which the stone is in itself contains the identity with its other. If it is a base receptive to acids then it is oxidizable, neutralizable, and so on. In the process of oxidization, neutralization, and so on, its restriction to being only a base is sublated; the base transcends it; similarly, the acid transcends its restriction to being an acid, and in the acid just as in the caustic base the *ought, the imperative* to transcend their restriction, is so strong that it is only with violence that they can be kept fixed as acid and caustic base (as waterless, that is, purely non-neutral).

If, however, a concrete existence contains the concept not merely as abstract in-itselfness, but as a totality existing for itself, as instinct, life, sensation, representation, and so forth, it itself then brings about, by itself, this transcendence and this transcending. The plant transcends the restriction of being a seed, similarly, of being blossom, fruit, leaf; the seed becomes the developed plant, the blossom fades, and so forth. In the grip of hunger, thirst, and so forth, the sentient is the impulse to transcend this restriction, and it does transcend it. It feels *pain*, and to feel pain is the privilege of sentient nature. Pain is a negation within the sentient's self, and this negation is determined *as a restriction* in the sentient's feeling just because the sentient has a feeling of its *self*, and this self is the totality that transcends

the determinateness of the negation. If the sentient did not transcend it, it would not feel it as its negation and would have no pain. – But reason, thought, is not supposed to be able to transcend this restriction: reason, which is the *universal*, which is for itself the beyond of particularity *as such*, that is, of *all* particularity, only is the transcendence of restriction. – To be sure, not every transcending, not every transcendence beyond restriction, is a true liberation from it, a true affirmation; even the “ought” itself is this kind of imperfect transcending, and so abstraction in general. But the mention of a totally abstract universal is sufficient to counter the equally abstract pronouncement that restriction cannot be transcended, or, again, the mention of the infinite in general is sufficient to counter the pronouncement that the finite cannot be transcended.

We can recall in this context a seemingly ingenious notion of Leibniz: that if a magnet had consciousness, it would regard its pointing to the North as a determination of its will, a law of its freedom.⁶⁰ Rather, if the magnet did have consciousness and along with it a will and freedom, it would be a thinking being. Consequently, space would be for it a *universal* embracing *all* directions, and its *one* direction to the North thus a restriction rather of its freedom – just as being held fixed to one place is a restriction for a human being, but not for a plant.

21.123

The *ought*, for its part, is the transcending of restriction, but a *transcending* which is itself only *finite*. It therefore has its place and legitimacy in the field of finitude, where it holds in-itself fixed over against what is restricted, declaring it to be the norm and the essential relative to what is null. Duty is an *ought* directed against the particular will, against self-seeking desire and arbitrary interest; it is the ought held up before a will capable of isolating itself from the truth because of its instability. Those who hold the ought of morality so high as to believe that, by not recognizing it as the ultimate truth, morality itself would be destroyed; the brokers of reason whose understanding takes unceasing satisfaction in being able to confront everything that there is with an ought and consequently a would-be superior knowledge – who therefore are all the more resistant to being robbed of the ought – these do not see that, as regards the finitude of their sphere, the ought receives full recognition. – But in the actual order of things, reason and law are not in such a sad state of affairs that they only *ought* to be (only the abstraction of the in-itself stays at this); equally, the ought does not perpetuate itself nor, which is the same, is finitude absolute. The philosophy of Kant and Fichte holds out the *ought* as the resolution of

⁶⁰ Leibniz, *Theodicy* (1710), Part I, §50.

the contradictions of reason – though it is rather only a standpoint that remains fixed in finitude and therefore in contradiction.

γ. Transition of the finite into the infinite

The ought contains restriction explicitly, for itself, and restriction contains the ought. Their mutual connection is the finite itself, which contains them both in its in-itself. These moments of its determination are qualitatively opposed; restriction is determined as the negative of the ought, and the ought equally as the negative of restriction. The finite is thus in itself the contradiction of itself; it sublates itself, it goes away and ceases to be.⁶¹ But this, its result, the negative as such, is (α) its very *determination*; for it is the negative of the negative. So, in going away and ceasing to be, the finite has not ceased; it has only become momentarily an *other* finite which equally is, however, a going-away as a going-over into another finite, and so forth *to infinity*. But, (β) if we consider this result more closely, in its going-away and ceasing-to-be, in this negation of itself, the finite has attained its being-in-itself; in it, it has *rejoined itself*. Each of its moments contains precisely this result; the ought transcends the restriction, that is, it transcends itself; but its beyond, or its other, is only restriction itself. Restriction, for its part, immediately points beyond itself to its other, and this is the ought; but this ought is the same diremption of *in-itselfness* and *determinateness* as is restriction; it is the same thing; in going beyond itself, restriction thus equally rejoins itself. This *identity with itself*, the negation of negation, is affirmative being, is thus the other of the finite which is supposed to have the first negation for its determinateness; this other is *the infinite*.

21.124

C. INFINITY

The infinite in its simple concept can be regarded, first of all, as a fresh definition of the absolute; as self-reference devoid of determination, it is posited as *being* and *becoming*. The forms of *existence* have no place in the series of determinations that can be regarded as definitions of the absolute, since the forms of that sphere are immediately posited for themselves only as determinacies, as finite in general. But the infinite is accepted unqualifiedly as absolute, since it is explicitly determined as the negation

⁶¹ "It goes away or ceases to be" = *vergeht*. I am using both expressions to retain Hegel's play on words in this whole passage.

of the finite; the restrictedness – to which being and becoming would somehow be susceptible even if they do not have it or exhibit it – is thereby both explicitly referred to and denied in it.

But, in fact, by just this negation the infinite is not already free from restrictedness and finitude. It is essential to distinguish the true concept of infinity from bad infinity, the infinite of reason from the infinite of the understanding. The latter is in fact a *finitized* infinite, and, as we shall now discover, in wanting to maintain the infinite pure and distant from the finite, the infinite is by that very fact only made finite.

The infinite

- (a) in *simple determination*, is the affirmative as negation of the finite;
- (b) but is thereby in *alternating determination* with the *infinite*, and is abstract, *one-sided infinite*;
- (c) is the self-sublation of this infinite and of the finite in *one process*. This is the *true infinite*.

21.125

a. The infinite in general

The infinite is the negation of negation, the affirmative, *being* that has reinstated itself out of restrictedness. The infinite *is*, in a more intense sense than the first immediate being; it is the true being; the elevation above restriction. At the mention of the infinite, soul and spirit *light up*, for in the infinite the spirit *is* at home, and not only abstractly; rather, it rises to itself, to the light of its thinking, its universality, its freedom.

What is first given with the concept of the infinite is this, that in its being-in-itself existence is determined as finite and transcends restriction. It is the very nature of the finite that it transcend itself, that it negate its negation and become infinite. Consequently, the infinite does not stand *above* the finite as something ready-made by itself, as if the finite stood fixed *outside* or *below* it. Nor is it *we* only, as a subjective reason, who transcend the finite into the infinite – as if, in saying that the infinite is a concept of reason and that through reason we elevate ourselves above things temporal, we did this without prejudice to the finite, without this elevation (which remains external to the finite) affecting it. In so far as the finite itself is being elevated to infinity, it is not at all an alien force that does this for it; it is rather its nature to refer itself to itself as restriction (both restriction as such and as ought) and to transcend this restriction, or rather, in this self-reference, to have negated the restriction and gone above and beyond it. It is not in the sublation of the finite in general that infinity in general comes to be, but the finite is rather just this, that through its nature it

comes to be itself the infinite. Infinity is its *affirmative determination*, its vocation, what it truly is in itself.

The finite has thus vanished into the infinite and what *is*, is only the infinite.

b. Alternating determination of finite and infinite

The infinite *is*; in this immediacy it is at the same time the *negation* of an *other*, of the finite. And so, as *existent* and at the same time as the *non-being* of an *other*, it has fallen back into the category of the something, of something determinate in general. More precisely: the infinite is the existence reflected into itself which results from the mediating sublation of determinateness in general and is consequently *posited* as existence distinct from its determinateness; therefore, it has fallen back into the category of something with a limit. In accordance with this determinateness, the finite stands over against the infinite as *real existence*; they thus *remain* outside each other, standing in qualitative *mutual reference*; the *immediate being* of the infinite resurrects the *being* of its negation, of the finite again, which seemed at first to have vanished into the infinite.

But the infinite and the finite are not in these referential categories only; the two sides are further determined in addition to being as mere *others* to each other. Namely, the finite is restriction posited as restriction; it is existence posited with the *determination* that it passes over into what is its *in-itself* and *becomes* infinite. Infinity is the nothing of the finite, the *in-itself* that the latter *ought to be*, but it is this at the same time as reflected within itself, as realized ought, as only affirmative self-referring being. In infinity we have the satisfaction that all determinateness, alteration, all restriction and the ought itself together with it, have vanished, are sublated, and the nothing of the finite is posited. As this negation of the finite is the being-in-itself determined which, as negation of negation, is in itself affirmative. Yet this affirmation is qualitatively *immediate* self-reference, *being*; and, because of this, the affirmative is led back to the category of being that has the finite confronting it as an *other*; its negative nature is posited as *existent* negation, and hence as first and immediate negation. The infinite is in this way burdened with the opposition to the finite, and this finite, as an other, remains a real existence even though in its being-in-itself, in the infinite, it is at the same time posited as sublated; this infinite is that which is not finite – a being in the determinateness of negation. Contrasted with the finite, with the series of existent determinacies, of realities, the infinite is

indeterminate emptiness, the beyond of the finite, whose being-in-itself is not in its existence (which is something determinate).

21.127

As thus posited over against the finite, the two connected by the qualitative mutual reference of *others*, the infinite is to be called the *bad infinite*, the infinite of the *understanding*, for which it counts as the highest, the absolute truth. The understanding believes that it has attained satisfaction in the reconciliation of truth while it is in fact entangled in unreconciled, unresolved, absolute contradictions. And it is these contradictions, into which it falls on every side whenever it embarks on the application and explication of these categories that belong to it, that must make it conscious of the fact.

This contradiction is present in the very fact that the infinite remains over against the finite, with the result that there are *two* determinacies. There are *two* worlds, one infinite and one finite, and in their connection the infinite is only the *limit* of the finite and thus only a determinate, *itself finite infinite*.

This contradiction develops its content into more explicit forms. – The finite is the real existence which persists as such even when it has gone over into its non-being, the infinite. As we have seen, this infinite has for its determinateness, over against the finite, only the first, immediate negation, just as the finite, as negated, has over against this negation only the meaning of an *other* and is, therefore, still a something. When, therefore, the understanding, elevating itself above this finite world, rises to what is the highest for it, to the infinite, the finite world remains for it as something on this side here, and, thus posited only *above* the finite, the infinite is *separated* from the finite and, for the same reason, the finite from the infinite: each is *placed in a different location*, the finite as existence here, and the infinite, although the *being-in-itself* of the finite, there as a beyond, at a nebulous, inaccessible distance *outside* which there stands, enduring, the finite.

As thus separated, they are just as much essentially *connected* with each other, through the very negation that divides them. This negation connecting them – these somethings reflected into themselves – is the common limit of each over against the other; and that, too, in such a way that each does not merely have this limit *in it* over against the other, but the negation is rather the *in-itselfness* of each; each thus has for itself, in its separation from the other, the limit in it. But the limit is the first negation; both are thus limited, finite, in themselves. Yet, as each affirmatively refers itself to itself, each is also the negation of its limit; each thus immediately repels the negation from itself as its non-being, and, qualitatively severed from it,

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posits it as an *other being* outside it: the finite posits its non-being as this infinite, and the infinite likewise the finite. It is readily conceded that the finite passes over into the infinite necessarily (that is, through its determination) and is thereby elevated to what is its in-itself, for while the finite is indeed determined as subsistent existence, it is at the same time *also* a null *in itself* and therefore destined to self-dissolution; whereas the infinite, although burdened with negation and limit, is equally also determined as the existent *in-itself*, so that this abstraction of self-referring affirmation is what constitutes its determination, and hence finite existence is not present in it. But it has been shown that the infinite itself attains affirmative being only *by the mediation* of negation, as negation of negation, and that when its affirmation thus attained is taken as just simple, qualitative being, the negation contained in it is demoted to simple immediate negation and, therefore, to determinateness and limit; and these, then, are excluded from the infinite as contradicting its in-itself; they are posited as not belonging to it but rather as opposed to its in-itself, as the finite. Since each is in it and through its determination the positing of its other, the two are *inseparable*. But this unity rests *hidden* in their qualitative *otherness*; it is their *inner* unity, one that lies *only at their base*.

The manner of the appearance of this unity has thereby been defined. The unity is posited in *existence* as a turning over or transition of the finite into the infinite, and vice-versa; so that the infinite only *emerges* in the finite, and the finite in the infinite, the other in the other; that is to say, each arises in the other independently and *immediately*, and their connection is only an external one.

The process of their transition has the following, detailed shape. We have the finite passing over into the infinite. This passing over appears as an external doing. In this emptiness beyond the finite, what arises? What is there of positive in it? On account of the inseparability of the infinite and the finite (or because this infinite, which stands apart, is itself restricted), the limit arises. The infinite has vanished and the other, the finite, has stepped in. But this stepping in of the finite appears as an event external to the infinite, and the new limit as something that does not arise out of the infinite itself but is likewise found given. And with this we are back at the previous determination, which has been sublated in vain. This new limit, however, is itself only something to be sublated or transcended. And so there arises again the emptiness, the nothing, in which we find again the said determination – and *so forth to infinity*.

We have before us the *alternating determination of the finite and the infinite*; the finite is finite only with reference to the ought or the infinite,

and the infinite is only infinite with reference to the finite. The two are inseparable and at the same time absolutely other with respect to each other; each has in it the other of itself; each is thus the unity of itself and its other, and, in its determinateness – *not to be* what itself and what its other is – it is existence.

This alternating determination of self-negating and of negating the negating is what passes as the *progress to infinity*, which is accepted in so many shapes and applications as an unsurpassable *ultimate* at which thought, having reached this “*and so on to infinity*,” has usually achieved its end. – This progress breaks out *wherever relative* determinations are pressed to the point of opposition, so that, though in inseparable unity, each is nevertheless attributed an independent existence over against the other. This progress is therefore the *contradiction* which is not resolved but is rather always pronounced simply as *present*.

What we have before us is an abstract transcending which remains incomplete because *the transcending itself* has not been *transcended*. Before us we have the infinite; of course, this infinite is transcended, for another limit is posited, but just because of that only a return is instead made back to the finite. This bad infinite is in itself the same as the perpetual *ought*; it is indeed the negation of the finite, but in truth it is unable to free itself from it; the finite constantly resurfaces in it as its other, since this infinite only is *with reference* to the finite, which is its other. The progress to infinity is therefore only repetitious monotony, the one and the same tedious *alternation* of this finite and infinite.

21.130

The infinity of the infinite progress remains burdened by the finite as such, is thereby restricted, and is itself *finite*. In fact, however, it is thereby posited as the unity of the finite and the infinite. Only, this unity is not reflected upon. Yet it alone rouses the finite in the infinite, and the infinite in the finite; it is, so to speak, the impulse driving the infinite progress. This progress is the *outside* of this unity at which representation remains fixated – fixated at that perennial repetition of one and the same alternation; at the empty unrest of a progression across the limit towards the infinite which, in this infinity, *finds* a new limit but is just as unable to halt at it as it is at the infinite. This infinite has the rigid determination of a *beyond* that cannot be attained, for the very reason that it *ought* not be attained, since the determinateness of the beyond, of an *existent* negation, has not been let go. In this determination, the infinite has the finite as a *this-side* over against it – a finite that is likewise unable to raise itself up to the infinite just because it has this determination of an *other*, that is, of an *existence* that perennially regenerates itself in that beyond precisely by being different from it.

c. *Affirmative infinity*

21.131

In this reciprocal determination of the finite and the infinite alternating back and forth as just indicated, the truth of these two is already implicitly *present* in itself, and all that is needed is to take up what is there. This back and forth movement constitutes the external realization of the concept in which the content of the latter is *posited*, but *externally*, as a falling out of the two; all that is needed is the comparing of these two different moments in which the *unity* is given which the concept itself gives. “*Unity* of the finite and the infinite” – as has often been already noted but must especially be kept in mind at this juncture – is the uneven expression for the unity as it is in truth; but also the removal of this uneven determination must be found in the externalization of the concept that lies ahead of us.

Taken in their first, only immediate determination, the infinite is the *transcending* of the *finite*; according to its determination, it is the negation of the finite; the finite, for its part, is only that which must be transcended, the negation in it of itself, and this is the infinite. *In each*, therefore, there is *the determinateness of the other*, whereas, according to the viewpoint of the infinite progression, the two should be mutually excluded and would have to follow one another only alternately; neither can be posited and grasped without the other, the infinite without the finite, the finite without the infinite. In *saying* what the infinite is, namely the negation of the *finite*, the finite itself is *said* also; it cannot be *avoided* in the determination of the infinite. One need only *know what is being said* in order to find the determination of the finite in the infinite. Regarding the finite, it is readily conceded that it is the null; this very nothingness is however the infinite from which it is inseparable. – Understood in this way, they may seem to be taken according to the way each *refers* to its *other*. Taken *without this connecting reference*, and thus joined only through an “and,” they subsist independently, each only an existent over against the other. We have to examine how they would be constituted in this way. The infinite, thus positioned, is *one of the two*; but, as *only* one of them, it is itself finite, it is not the whole but only one side; it has its limit in that which stands over against it; and so it is the *finite infinite*. We have before us only *two finites*. The finitude of the infinite, and therefore its unity with the finite, lies in the very fact that it is *separated* from the finite and placed, consequently, *on one side*. – The finite, for its part, removed from the infinite and positioned for itself, is *this self-reference* in which the relativity, its dependence and transitoriness, are removed; it is the same self-subsistence and self-affirmation which the infinite is presumed to be.

The two pathways of consideration, even though they seem at first to have each a different determinateness for their point of departure – the former inasmuch as it assumes it to be only the *reference* of infinite and finite to each other, of each to the other; and the latter their complete separation from each other – yield one and the same result. The infinite and the finite, taken together as *referring* to each other in a connection which is presumed external but is in fact essential to them (for without it, neither is what it is), each contains its other in its own determination, just as, when each is taken *for itself*, when looked at *on its terms*, each has the other present in it as its own moment.

21.132

This yields, then, the scandalous unity of the finite and the infinite – the unity which is itself the infinite that embraces both itself and the finite – the infinite, therefore, understood in a sense other than when the finite is separated from it and placed on the other side from it. Since they must now also be distinguished, each is within it, as just shown, itself the unity of both; there are thus two such unities. The common element, the unity of both determinacies, as such a unity, posits them at first as negated, for each is to be what it is in being distinguished; in their unity, therefore, they lose their qualitative nature – an important reflection for countering the incorrigible habit of representing the infinite and the finite, in their unity, as still holding on to the quality that they would have when taken apart from each other; of seeing in that unity, therefore, nothing except contradiction, and not also the resolution of the contradiction by the negation of the qualitative determinateness of each. And so is the unity of the infinite and the finite, at first simple and universal, falsified.

But further, since the two are now to be taken also as distinguished, the unity of the infinite which is itself both of these moments is determined differently in each. The infinite, determined as such, has in it the finitude which is distinct from it; in this unity, the infinite is the *in-itself* while the finite is only determinateness, the limit in the infinite. But such a limit is the absolute other of the infinite, its opposite. The infinite's determination, which is the in-itself as such, is corrupted by being saddled with a quality of this sort; the infinite is thus a *finitized infinite*. Likewise, since the finite is as such only the non-in-itself but equally has its opposite in it by virtue of the said unity, it is elevated above its worth and, so to speak, infinitely elevated; it is posited as the *infinitized finite*.

Likewise, just as the simple unity of infinite and finite was falsified before by the understanding, so too is the double unity. Here also this happens because the infinite is taken in one of the two unities not as negated but, rather, as the in-itself in which, therefore, determinateness and restriction

21.133

should not be posited, for they would debase and corrupt it. Conversely, the finite is equally held fixed as not negated, although null in itself; so that, in combination with the infinite, it is elevated to what it *is* not and is thereby infinitized notwithstanding its determination that has not vanished but is rather perpetuated.

The falsification that the understanding perpetrates with respect to the finite and the infinite, of holding their reciprocal reference fixed as qualitative differentiation, of maintaining that their determination is separate, indeed, absolutely separate, comes from forgetting what for the understanding itself is the concept of these moments. According to this concept, the unity of the finite and the infinite is not an external bringing together of them, nor an incongruous combination that goes against their nature, one in which inherently separate and opposed terms that exist independently and are consequently incompatible, would be knotted together. Rather, each is itself this unity, and this only as a *sublating* of itself in which neither would have an advantage over the other in in-itselfness and affirmative existence. As has earlier been shown, finitude is only as a transcending of itself; it is therefore within it that the infinite, the other of itself, is contained. Similarly, the infinite is only as the transcending of the finite; it therefore contains its other essentially, and it is thus within it that it is the other of itself. The finite is not sublated by the infinite as by a power present outside it; its infinity consists rather in sublating itself.

This sublating is not, consequently, alteration or otherness in general, not the sublating of *something*. That into which the finite is sublated is the infinite as the negating of finitude. But the latter has long since been only existence, determined as a *non-being*. It is only the *negation*, therefore, that in the negation sublates itself. Thus infinity is determined on its side as the negative of the finite and thereby of determinateness in general, as an empty beyond; its sublating of itself into the finite is a return from an empty flight, the *negation* of the beyond which is inherently a *negative*.

21.134

Present in both, therefore, is the same negation of negation. But this negation of negation is *in itself* self-reference, affirmation but as turning back to itself, that is, through the *mediation* that the negation of negation is. These are the determinations that it is essential to bring to view; the second point, however, is that in the infinite progression they are also *posited*, and how they are posited therein, namely, not in their ultimate truth.

First, both are negated in that progression, the infinite as well as the finite; both are equally transcended. Second, they are also posited as distinct, one after the other, each positive for itself. We sort out these two determinations while comparing them, just as in the comparison (in an external comparing)

we have separated the two ways of considering them: the finite and the infinite as referring to one another, and each taken for itself. The infinite progression, however, says more than this. Also posited in it, though at first still only as transition and alternation, is the *connectedness* of the terms being *distinguished*. We now only need to see, in one simple reflection, what is in fact present in it.

In the first place, the negation of the finite and the infinite which is posited in the infinite progression can be taken as simple, and hence as mutual externality, only a following of one upon the other. Starting from the finite, the limit is thus transcended, the finite negated. We now have its beyond, the infinite, but in this the limit *risés up* again; so we have the transcending of the infinite. This twofold sublation is nonetheless partly only an external event and an alternating of moments in general, and partly still not posited as *one unity*; each of these moves beyond is an independent starting point, a fresh act, so that the two fall apart. – But, in addition, their *connection* is also present in the infinite progression. The *finite* comes *first*; *then* there is the transcending of it, and this negative, or this beyond of the finite, is the infinite; *third*, this negation is transcended in turn, a new limit comes up, a *finite* again. – This is the complete, self-closing movement that has arrived at that which made the beginning; what emerges is *the same* as that *from which the departure was made*, that is, the finite is restored; the latter has therefore *rejoined itself*, in *its beyond* has only *found itself again*.

The same is the case regarding the infinite. In the infinite, in the beyond of the limit, only a new limit arises which has the same fate, namely, that as finite it must be negated. Thus what is again at hand is the *same* infinite that just now disappeared in the new limit; by being sublated, by traversing the new limit, the infinite has not therefore advanced one jot further: it has distanced itself neither from the finite (for the finite is just this, to pass over into the infinite), nor from itself, for it has *arrived at itself*.

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Thus the finite and the infinite are both this *movement* of each returning to itself through its negation; they are only as implicit *mediation*, and the affirmative of each contains the negative of each, and is the negation of the negation. – They are thus a *result* and, as such, not in the determination that they had at the *beginning*: neither is the finite an *existence* on its side nor the infinite an *existence* or a *being-in-itself* beyond that existence, that is, beyond existence in the determination of finitude. The understanding strongly resists the unity of the finite and the infinite only because it presupposes restriction and finitude to remain, like being-in-itself, *constants*. It thereby *overlooks* the negation of both which is in fact present in the infinite progression, just as it equally overlooks that the two occur in this

progression only as moments of a whole – that each emerges only through the mediation of its opposite but, essentially, equally by means of the sublation of its opposite.

If this immanent turning back has for the moment been reckoned to be just as much the turning back of the finite to itself and of the infinite to itself, noticeable in this very result is an error connected with the one-sidedness just criticized: the finite and then the infinite is each taken as the *starting point*, and only in this way *two* results ensue. But it is a matter of total indifference which is taken as the starting point and, with this, the distinction caused by the *duality* of results dissolves of itself. This is likewise posited in the line of the infinite progression, open-ended on both sides, wherein each of the moments recurs in equal alternation, and it is totally extraneous at which position the progression is arrested and taken as beginning. – The moments are distinguished in the progression but each is equally only moment of the other. Since both, the finite and the infinite, are themselves moments of the progress, they are *jointly the finite*, and, since they are equally jointly negated in it and in the result, this result as the negation of their joint finitude is called with truth the infinite. Their distinction is thus the *double meaning* which they both have. The finite has the double meaning, first, of being the finite *over against* the infinite which stands over against it, and, second, of being *at the same time* the finite and the infinite over against the infinite. Also the infinite has the double meaning of being *one* of the two moments (it is then the bad infinite) and of being the infinite in which the two moments, itself and its other, are only moments. Therefore, as in fact we now have it, the nature of the infinite is that it is the process in which it lowers itself to be only *one* of its determinations over against the finite and therefore itself only one of the finites, and elevates this distinction of itself and itself to be self-affirmation and, through this mediation, the *true infinite*.

This determination of the true infinite cannot be captured in the already criticized *formula* of a *unity* of the finite and the infinite; *unity* is abstract, motionless self-sameness, and the moments are likewise unmoved beings. But, like both its moments, the infinite is rather essentially only as *becoming*, though a becoming now *further determined* in its moments. Becoming has for its determinations, first, abstract being and nothing; as alteration, it has existence, something and other; now as infinite, it has finite and infinite, these two themselves as in becoming.

This infinite, as being-turned-back-onto-itself, as reference of itself to itself, is *being* – but not indeterminate, abstract being, for it is posited as negating the negation; consequently, it is also *existence* or

“*thereness*,”⁶² for it contains negation in general and consequently determinateness. It *is*, and *is there*, present, before us. Only the bad infinite is the *beyond*, since it is *only* the negation of the finite posited as *real* and, as such, it is abstract first negation; thus determined *only* as negative, it does not have the affirmation of *existence* in it; held fast only as something negative, it *ought not to be there*, it ought to be unattainable. However, to be thus unattainable is not its grandeur but rather its defect, which is at bottom the result of holding fast to the finite as such, *as existent*. It is the untrue which is the unattainable, and what must be recognized is that such an infinite is the untrue. – The image of the progression in infinity is the straight *line*; the infinite is only at the two limits of this line, and always only is where the latter (which is existence) is not but *transcends itself*, in its non-existence, that is, in the indeterminate. As true infinite, bent back upon itself, its image becomes the *circle*, the line that has reached itself, closed and wholly present, without *beginning* and *end*.

True infinity, thus taken in general as *existence* posited as *affirmative* in contrast to abstract negation, is *reality* in a higher sense than it was earlier as *simply* determined; it has now obtained a concrete content. It is not the finite which is the real, but rather the infinite. Thus reality is further determined as essence, concept, idea, and so forth. In connection with the more concrete, it is however superfluous to repeat such earlier and more abstract categories as reality, and to use them for determinations more concrete than they are by themselves. Such a repetition, as when it is said that essence, or that the concept, is real, has its origin in the fact that to uneducated thought the most abstract categories such as being, existence, reality, finitude, are the most familiar.

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The more immediate occasion, however, for recalling here the categories of reality is that the negation, against which reality is the affirmative, is here the negation of negation, and consequently itself posited over against that reality which finite existence is. – Negation is thus determined as ideality; the idealized^h is the finite as it is in the true infinite – as a determination, a content, a distinct but not *a subsistent existent*, a *moment* rather. Ideality has this more concrete signification which is not fully expressed through the negation of finite existence. – As regards reality and ideality, the opposition

^h The *ideal* [*das Ideale*] has a broader meaning (such as of the beautiful and its associations) than the *idealized* [*das Ideelle*]. The former does not belong here yet, and for this reason the expression *idealized* is being used. There is no such distinction made in language usage for “reality”; in German *reelle* and *reale* are used as roughly synonymous and no interest is served in nuancing the two in some sort of opposition.

⁶² I am glossing in “thereness” in order to retain Hegel’s subsequent play on words.

of finite and infinite is, however, so grasped that the finite assumes the value of “the real,” whereas the infinite that of “the idealized”; in the same way, further on, also the concept is regarded as an idealization, that is, as a *mere* idealization, in contrast to existence in general, which is regarded as “the real.” When contrasted in this way, it is of course of no use to have reserved for the said concrete determination of negation the distinctive expression of “idealization”; in that opposition of finite and infinite, we are back to the one-sidedness of the abstract negative characteristic of the bad infinite and still fixed in the affirmative existence of the finite.

Transition

Ideality can be called the *quality* of the infinite; but it is essentially the process of *becoming*, and hence a transition – like the transition of becoming into existence. We must now explicate this transition. This immanent turning back, as the sublation of finitude – that is, of finitude as such and equally of the negative finitude that only stands opposite to it, is only negative finitude – is self-reference, *being*. Since there is negation in this being, the latter is *existence*; but, further, since the negation is essentially negation of the negation, self-referring negation, it is the existence that carries the name of *being-for-itself*.

Remark 1

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The infinite – in the usual sense of the bad infinite – and the *progression to infinity*, such as the ought, are the expression of a *contradiction* that pretends to be itself a *solution* and an *ultimate*. This infinite is a first elevation of sense representation above the finite to thought, but to a thought which, for content, has only a nothing, that is, a non-existent *explicitly* posited as such: it is a flight beyond restrictions that fails to gather itself together within and is unable to bring the negative back to the positive. This *unfulfilled reflection* has before it both the determinations of the true infinite (namely the *opposition* of the finite and the infinite, and the *unity* of the finite and the infinite) but fails to bring the *two thoughts together*; the thought of one unavoidably brings the other along, but this reflection lets them only *alternate*. The spectacle of this alternation, this infinite progression, occurs wherever one remains fixated on the contradiction of the *unity* of two determinations and of their *opposition*. The finite is the sublation of itself; it holds its negation, the infinity, in itself: *unity* of the two. It is the movement *beyond* the finite into the infinite as the beyond of the finite: *separation* of the two. But over and beyond the infinite there is another finite; the beyond, the infinite, holds finitude: *unity* of the two. But this

finite is also a negative of the infinite: *separation* of the two, and so forth. – Thus, in the relation of causality, cause and effect are inseparable; a cause that would have no effect is not a cause, just as an effect that had no cause would no longer be effect. This relation yields, therefore, the infinite progression of *causes* and *effects*; something is determined as cause, but, as something finite (and it is finite just because of its separation from the effect), it has itself a cause, that is, it is also effect; consequently, the *same thing* that was determined as cause is also determined as effect (unity of cause and effect); what is now determined as effect has in turn a cause, that is, the cause is to be *separated* from its effect and to be posited as a different something; this new cause is however itself only an effect (*unity* of cause and effect); it has an other for its cause; separation of the two determinations, and so forth, into *infinity*.

We can thus restate the progression in this more appropriate form. The claim is made that the finite and the infinite are one unity. This is a false claim that needs correction by its opposite: the two are absolutely different and opposed. This claim is in turn to be corrected to the effect that the two are inseparable; that in the one determination there lies the other by virtue of the claim to unity; and so forth to infinity. – It is easy enough to see into the nature of the infinite: one must recognize that the infinite progression, the developed infinity of the understanding, is constituted by the *alternation* of the two determinations, of the *unity* and the *separation* of the two moments; and then further recognize that this unity and this separation are inseparable.

The resolution of this contradiction is not the acknowledgment of the *equal correctness*, and of the equal incorrectness, of both claims – this would only be another shape of the still abiding contradiction – but the *ideality* of both, in the sense that in their distinction, as reciprocal negations, they are only moments. That monotonous alternation of the infinite progression is in fact the negation of both their *unity* and their *separation*. What was demonstrated above is just as much present in it *de facto*: namely, that the finite, over and beyond itself, falls into the infinite, but that, over and beyond this infinite, it equally finds itself born anew; hence, that it rejoins itself there, as is also the case for the infinite – so that this same negation of negation results in *affirmation*, a result that thereby proves itself to be their truth and point of origin. In this being which is thus the *ideality* of the distinct moments, the contradiction has not vanished abstractly,⁶³ but is resolved and reconciled, and the thoughts, while left intact, are

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⁶³ i.e. by abstracting from the differences that give rise to the contradiction.

also *brought together*. Here we have, in a graphic example, the nature of speculative thought displayed in its determining feature: it consists solely in grasping the opposed moments in their unity. Inasmuch as each moment shows, as a matter of fact, that it has its opposite in it, and that in this opposite it rejoins itself, the affirmative truth is this internally self-moving unity, the grasping together of both thoughts, their infinity – the reference to oneself which is not immediate but infinite.

The essence of philosophy has often been located by those already adept in the things of thought in the task of answering the question: *How does the infinite go forth out of itself and come to finitude?* – This, as opinion would have it, escapes *conceptual comprehension*. In the course of this exposition, the infinite at whose concept we have arrived will *further determine* itself, and the desideratum – *how* the infinite (if one can so express oneself) *comes to finitude* – will be manifested in it in the full manifold of forms. Here we are considering this question only in its immediacy and in view of the just mentioned sense which the infinite usually carries.

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It is above all on the answer to this question that *whether there is a philosophy* is taken to depend, and people believe, while still professing willingness to let the matter rest on it, that they also possess in the question itself a sort of puzzle, an invincible talisman, that firmly secures them against the answer, and consequently against philosophy and the attainment of it. In order to understand *questions*, a certain education is required also in other subject matters, and this is all the more the case for things philosophical if more of an answer is to be had than that the question is an idle one. – It is fair to expect in these questions, as is normally done, that the point at issue would not depend on words but would rather be made intelligible through some form or other of expression. Figurative expressions of sense representation that are used in the question regarding the infinite, like “going forth” and suchlike, arouse the suspicion that the question stemmed from the terrain of vulgar representation, and that the answer is also expected to be in representations current in everyday life and in the shape of a sensuous simile.

Take being in general, instead of the infinite. The *determining of it*, its having a negation or finitude in it, seems easier to comprehend. Being is indeed the indeterminate, but it is not immediately said in it that it is the opposite of anything determinate. The infinite, on the contrary, contains this note expressly; it is the *non-finite*. The unity of the finite and the infinite thus appears excluded from the start; incomplete reflection is most stubbornly opposed to this unity for precisely this reason.

But it has been shown, and it is immediately evident without expanding further on the determination of the finite and the infinite, that the infinite,

in the sense in which it is taken by that incomplete reflection, namely as standing opposite the finite, has its other in it precisely because it stands opposed to it, and is therefore already limited and itself finite. It is the bad infinite. The answer to the question, "how does the infinite become finite?" is therefore this: *There is not an infinite which is infinite beforehand, and only afterwards does it find it necessary to become finite, to go forth into finitude*; the infinite is rather for itself just as much finite as infinite. Inasmuch as the question assumes that the infinite is by itself on the one side, and that the finite which has gone forth from it (or from wherever it might have come) into the divide is truly real as thus separated from the infinite, one should say rather that it is this divide which is *conceptually incomprehensible*. Neither such a finite nor such an infinite has truth; that which has no truth, however, cannot be conceptually grasped. Yet it must be granted that they are conceptually comprehensible. To consider them even as they are in representation with the determination of each implicit in the other; to have a simple insight into this inseparability which is theirs, means that we comprehend them conceptually. *This inseparability is their concept*. — In the self-subsistence of that infinite and finite, the question sets up a false content instead; it presupposes a false connection between them. For this reason, the question is not to be answered, but the false presuppositions contained in it, in effect the question itself, are rather to be denied. By thus questioning the truth of such finite and infinite, the standpoint is altered, and this change will turn the embarrassment which the question was supposed to cause back on the question itself. To the reflection from which the question originated, our own *question* is something *new*, for that reflecting lacks the speculative interest that would lead it to ascertain for its own sake, and before it draws connections between determinations, whether such determinations are anything true as presupposed. To the extent, however, that the untruth of that abstract infinite is recognized, and of the finite which is equally supposed to stand unmoved on its side, there is this to be said of the procession of the finite out of the infinite: the infinite goes *out of itself* into the finite because, in the way it is grasped as abstract unity, it has no truth in it, no standing; and, conversely, the finite goes *forth* into the infinite for the same reason. Or it is rather to be said that the infinite proceeded to finitude from all eternity; that, just as much as pure *being*, it absolutely *is* not by itself alone, without having its other *in it*.

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The question how the infinite proceeds to the finite can harbor a further presupposition still, namely that the infinite includes the finite *within itself*, and consequently that it is the unity of itself and its other, so that the

difficulty has to do essentially with the *separating*, for this is in opposition to the presupposed unity. On this presupposition, the opposition insisted upon only assumes a different form; the *unity* and the *distinguishing* are separated from each other and held isolated. If, however, the unity is not taken abstractly and indeterminately, but rather, as in the presupposition, as the determinate unity of the *finite* and the *infinite*, the distinguishing of these two is also present in it. And this distinguishing is not one that would also let them go loose, each subsisting separately, but it rather leaves them in the unity as *idealized*. This *unity* of the infinite and the finite, and the *distinguishing* of them, are inseparable, in the same way as the finite and the infinite.

Remark 2

The claim that the *finite is an idealization* defines *idealism*. The idealism of philosophy consists in nothing else than in the recognition that the finite is not truly an existent. Every philosophy is essentially idealism or at least has idealism for its principle, and the question then is only how far this principle is carried out. This applies to philosophy just as much as to religion, for religion also, no less than philosophy, will not admit finitude as a true being, an ultimate, an absolute, or as something non-positing, uncreated, eternal. The opposition between idealistic and realistic philosophy is therefore without meaning. A philosophy that attributes to finite existence, as such, true, ultimate, absolute being, does not deserve the name of philosophy. The principles of ancient as well as more recent philosophies – whether “water,” “matter,” or “atoms” – are universals, idealizations, not things as given immediately, that is, in sensuous singularity. Not even the “water” of Thales is that, for, although also empirical water, it is besides that the *in-itself* or *essence* of all other things, and these things do not stand on their own, self-grounded, but are *posited* on the basis of an other, of “water,” that is, they are idealized. In thus calling the principle or the universal an *idealization* as we have just done (and the concept, the idea, spirit, deserve the name even more), and in saying then that the singular things of the senses are *idealizations* in principle, or in their concept, and even more so when sublated in the spirit, we must note, in passing, the same double-sidedness that transpired in the infinite, namely that an idealization is on the one hand something concrete, a true existent, but, on the other hand, that its moments are no less idealizations, sublated in it; in fact, however, there is only one concrete whole from which the moments are inseparable.

By an idealization is normally meant the form of *representation*. Whatever is in any of my representations, whether in the concept, the idea,

the imagination, and so forth, goes by the name of *idealization*, so that the "idealized" stands in general also for imaginary constructs – for representations that are not only distinguished from anything real but should essentially *not* be taken as real. In point of fact, spirit is above all the true *idealist*; in spirit, even as spirit senses and represents but still more as it thinks and conceptualizes, the content is not *real existence*, as so called; in the simplicity of the I, any such external being is only sublated, it is *for me*, it is in me *idealized*. This subjective idealism, whether it is the unconscious idealism of consciousness in general or is consciously declared and installed as principle, extends only to the *form* of representation according to which a content is mine. In the systematized idealism of subjectivity, this form is declared to be the only true form, one that excludes the form of the objectivity or reality of that content, of its *external existence*. Such an idealism is formal, since it does not take into consideration the *content* of representation or thought, and therefore does not go past its finitude. Nothing is lost by this idealism, both because the reality of this finite content (the existence filled with finitude) is retained, and because, if one abstracts from it, *in itself* nothing of much consequence is to be made of it. Nor is anything gained by it, for the same reason that nothing is lost, since the "I" remains representation, spirit still filled with the same content of finitude. The opposition of the forms of subjectivity and objectivity is of course itself one of finitudes; but the *content*, as taken up in sensation, intuition, or also in the more abstract element of representation and thought, contains such finitudes in full, and these, by the exclusion of that one mode of finitude alone (of the form of subjective and objective), are still not done away with, and even less have they fallen off on their own.