

# The Need for a Science of Logic

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## 1 Categorialism

**Categorialism:** existence or being has a structure, and the categories delineate that structure

- Q: Why do we need a new theory of categories?
- A: Because prior theories have been inadequate
  1. Unsystematic in their delineation of the categories
  2. Subjective in their derivation of the categories

## 2 Hegel's Criticism of Kant

- Hegel rejects Kant's derivation of the categories in two ways:
  1. The specification of *which* concepts designate or express categories is historical/empirical/unscientific – a science of logic must be *presuppositionless*

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 (SL 23; 21:27)

2. The origin/derivation/basis of the categories results in a kind of subjectivism or skepticism

The *critique of the forms of the understanding* [i.e. the categories] 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. (SL 26; 21:30)

### 2.1 Which Categories?

- Kant rejects Aristotle's presentation of the categories because it is "rhapsodic" in its method of specifying which concepts express or refer to categories – what is needed

is a principle that specifies *all* the categories (completeness) and *only* the categories (exclusiveness)

[we need an account of the categories that] has not arisen rhapsodically from a haphazard search for pure concepts, of the completeness of which one could never be certain, since one would only infer it through induction, without reflecting that in this way one would never see why just these and not other concepts should inhabit the pure understanding. (A81/B106-7)

- Kant argues that we need a principled account based on reflection on the forms of judgment

Transcendental philosophy has the advantage but also the obligation to seek its concepts in accordance with a principle, since they spring pure and unmixed from the understanding, as absolute unity, and must therefore be connected among themselves in accordance with a concept or idea. Such a connection, however, provides a rule by means of which the place of each pure concept of the understanding and the completeness of all of them together can be determined a priori, which would otherwise depend upon whim or chance. (A67/B92)

- Hegel rejects Kant's solution (viz. reflection on the forms of judgment) for being equally unsystematic

It is well known that the Kantian philosophy made it very easy for itself in locating the categories. The *I*, the unity of self-consciousness, is quite abstract and entirely indeterminate. How is one then to arrive at the *determinations* of the *I*, the categories? Fortunately, the *various forms of judgment* are already listed empirically in ordinary logic. Now to judge is to *think* a determinate object. The various forms of judgment that had already been enumerated thus provide the various *determinations of thought*. (EL Â§42A)

- Hegel's position suggests that he thinks Kant faces a dilemma:
  1. The reflected nature of the categories is merely historical in its reception of commonly accepted logical forms

2. The reflected nature of the categories is experiential in that it requires a kind of intellectual experience of acts of the mind to which one attends and then from which one abstracts to form the relevant concepts

## 2.2 On What Basis?

- Hegel's second criticism concerns the *origin* of the categories in the subject's judgmental activity

When Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (p. 83)[A58/B82], in connection with logic comes to discuss the old and famous question: *What is truth?*, he starts by *passing off* as a triviality the nominal definition that it is the agreement of cognition with its subject matter – a definition which is of great, indeed of supreme value. If we recall this definition together with the fundamental thesis of transcendental idealism, namely that *rational cognition* is incapable of comprehending *things in themselves*, that *reality* lies *absolutely* outside *the concept*, it is then at once evident that such a *reason*, one which is incapable of *setting itself in agreement* with its subject matter, and the *things in themselves*, such as are not in agreement with the rational concept – a concept that does not agree with reality and a reality that does not agree with the concept – that these are *untrue conceptions*. If Kant had measured the idea of an *intuitive understanding* against that first definition of truth, he would have treated that idea which expresses the required agreement, not as a figment of thought but rather as truth. (SL 523; 12:26)

- This is an objection to Kant's position that is *internal* or “immanent” to Kant's position itself
- Relies on Kant's twin commitments regarding truth as agreement & God's intuitive intellect
  - ✱ The problem: the conception of the intuitive intellect entails that our categories may not apply to being as it fundamentally is (i.e. that the categories aren't really categories of *being* but rather merely being for *us*)

## 2.3 Reconstructing Hegel's Argument

1. God's intuitive intellect represents non-discursively, and thus non-categorially (definition)
2. God's intellectual intuition is in total/absolute/perfect agreement with its object (definition)
3.  $\therefore$  God's non-categorial intellectual intuition constitutes an ultimate standard for truth (as agreement of a representation with its object) (1-2)
4. God's intellect perfectly comprehends all things from their grounds (definition)
5.  $\therefore$  God truly or perfectly accurately *non*-categorially represents what is metaphysically fundamental about all things (3-4)
6. If (5) then it is possible that the intuited ways of being are not identical to those ways of being picked out by the discursive categories (assumption)
7.  $\therefore$  It is possible that the categories, even when applied correctly, do not pick out the necessarily fundamental ways of being (5, 6)
8. It cannot be possible that the categories, when correctly applied, do not pick out the necessarily fundamental ways of being (assumption)
9. Contradiction (7, 8)
10. Therefore ...