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Hegel's grounding of philosophy

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Hegel's grounding of philosophy

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An abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies
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Abstract
Hegel's grounding of
philosophy
By Ana Vieyra

The present dissertation defends an interpretation of G.W.F. Hegel's project in the *Science of logic* as having a foundational role within his concept of philosophy. Hegel understands philosophy as the activity of truth-aiming cognition. In line with Immanuel Kant's 'critical' turn, which centers on the requirement of demonstrating the very possibility of metaphysics, I argue that Hegel's *Logic* offers a grounding for the appropriate categories for the kind of thinking at stake in philosophy: *speculative* cognition. Since *logic* is the discipline of thinking, the exhibition of legitimate categories for philosophy falls within the project of a 'reformed' logic.

I argue that Logic's grounding rests on an expository and an evaluative function. Its expository function is to provide an *immanent* derivation exhausting the possibilities of intelligibility. The 'immanence' derives from the requirement to examine thought's pure content in terms of itself. Thus, the Logic aims to offer a 'true critique' of the determinations of thinking by exhausting the formal possibilities of the logical space through a categorical evaluation that considers the content of such determinations. This expository function is subservient to the evaluative function: the determination of categories which are true 'in and for themselves' –*inherently true categories*. Through a reading of the Doctrine of the Concept, I show how the inherently true category of the idea grounds the philosophies of reality by demonstrating the possibility of a categorically adequate cognition of nature and spirit as forms of *realized purposiveness*.

My dissertation proposes an alternative to both 'transcendental' and 'metaphysical' accounts of categorical justification. Under my reading, a category's claim to inherent truth can rely neither on its being the ultimate condition of possibility or the intelligibility of reality or experience, nor on its claim to a 'mind-independent' standing. To argue for the sense of 'objectivity' at stake in the Logic, I provide a reading of the Subjective Logic where (1) conceptual thinking stands at the ground of the truth-functional engagement with reality; (2) concepts concretize themselves by modifying externality through purposive activity, which answers the problem of how pure thinking can be categorically adequate for the cognition of certain real structures.

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Abbreviations

G.W.F. Hegel
I mostly cite works by Hegel by referring to the volume and page number of the Meiner edition of Hegel's *Gesammelte Werke*. For the *Encyclopedia*, I have also consulted the Suhrkamp edition, which includes the additions by students (*Zusätze*). I occasionally modify the translation. When no translation is available, the translation is my own.

GW   *Gesammelte Werke*, Hamburg: Meiner, 1968ff. Translations consulted:

            (GW vols 29.1, 29.2, 17, 18) *Lectures on the philosophy of religion*, ed.
            Peter Hodgson, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California
            Press, 1984.
            (GW vols 23.1-3) *Lectures on Logic Berlin 1831*, trans Clark Butler,
            Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008.
            (GW vol 9) *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Terry Pinkard, Cambridge:
            Cambridge University Press, 2018
            (GW vols 21, 11, 12) *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. George di Giovanni.
            Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

V   *Vorlesungen. Ausgewählte Manuskripte und Nachschriften*, Hamburg:
            Meiner, 1983ff.

PR   *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*. (GW vol 14,1). Cited by the
            section number (§) A for the Anmerkungen (remarks); Z for the Zusätze
            (additions from student lectures). *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans.
            H. Nisbet, ed. A. Wood, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

E   *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*.
            (References to the third edition (1830), GW vol 20). Cited by the section
            number (§) A for the Anmerkungen (remarks); Z for the Zusätze (additions
            from student lectures). Translations consulted:

            *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline. Part 1,
            Science of Logic*, trans. Klaus Brinkmann and Daniel Dahlstrom,
            Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
            Philosophy of Nature, trans. M. J. Petry, 3 vols. London: George Allen and
            Unwin, 1970.
            *The Philosophy of Mind: Part Three of the Encyclopedia of the
            Philosophical Sciences*, trans. W. Wallace and A. V. Miller, revisions M. J.
            Inwood, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007.

W   *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*. Edited by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus
            Michel. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970.

Other works

CPR   Kant, Immanuel, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974 (*Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), cited according to the standard A/B pagination of the first and second editions.

AA   Kant, Immanuel, *Gesammelte Schriften.* Berlin: Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1910–. (*Cambridge* translations consulted.)

GA   Fichte, Johann Gottlieb, *Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, ed. Reinhard Lauth et al., Stuttgart-Bad Cannstadt: FrommannHolzboog, 1964–. (*Foundation of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre and Related Writings*, 1794-95, trans. Daniel Breazeale, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021)

General introduction

The present dissertation defends a reading of G.W.F. Hegel's *Science of Logic* as having a foundational role within his concept of philosophy.[1] This conception of philosophy departs from its ambition: truth. It is well-known that Kant's *Critique of pure reason* aims to answer the question: how is metaphysics possible? I consider Hegel's Logic is structured around answering the question: how is philosophy, as the form of thinking that satisfies truth, justified? To do so, I argue, requires the justification of properly philosophical categories.[2] Its justification hinges on the exhibition and evaluation of the formal possibilities of thinking. As *logic* is the discipline of thinking, the exhibition of legitimate categories for philosophy falls within the project of a 'reformed' logic. Thus, it is not only the case that, as a recent interpreter aptly puts it, we ought to understand the basic project of the Logic as 'involving the evaluation of logical thought-determinations as themselves true or untrue'[3], but I furthermore argue precisely such a function of the Logic is subservient to the task of grounding philosophy itself.

In this introduction, I set the stage and make my argument explicit. That philosophy is defined by its ambition, truth, in Hegel's view, sets it apart from other 'scientific' forms of cognition. Hegel thus views philosophy as an exceptional form of engaging with reality. Hegel's view is that philosophy is indeed an exceptional activity (or 'science',

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[1] I use 'Logic' for the logical project in *Science of Logic*, as well as the corresponding part of his *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (E), or the Encyclopedia Logic.

[2] 'Categories' after Aristotle refer to the 'highest genera of entities' in the widest sense of the term, such that a system of categories is 'a complete list of highest kinds or genera'. Thomasson, "Categories." For the Hegelian view of categories vis-à-vis Aristotle and Kant, see Lau, "The Aristotelian-Kantian and Hegelian Approaches to Categories."

[3] Alznauer, "Untrue Concepts in Hegel's Logic", 109.

Wissenschaft): it 'is a peculiar way of thinking' (*eigentümliche Weise des Denkens*) (E §2),
but one which must 'prove' (*erweisen*) its capacity to know '*truth* generally', and by its
'own light' (*von sich aus*) (E §4). Appealing to the term 'truth', as appealing to the term
'God' (both of which Hegel uses when defining philosophy, starting from the one we find
in §1 of the *Encyclopedia*), inevitably brings in a sense of embarrassment. It strikes
contemporary sensibilities as outdated and romantic at best, arrogant at worst. We might
rather want to consider philosophy's task as a more modest one –to clarify concepts, to
explore the depths of experience, to provide insight, 'shed light' or critique the concepts we
already use, or perhaps, if we are feeling especially ambitious, to *improve* or *dismantle*
already existing frameworks. In any case, philosophy is *one* among other equally legitimate
epistemic activities –it does not have a privileged claim to 'truth'. Furthermore, its inability
to demonstrate a similar progress to that commonly attributed to the empirical and
mathematical sciences ought to give any reasonable person grounds for skepticism
regarding a conception of philosophy such as Hegel's.[4] Indeed, Hegel's conception of
philosophy stands at odds with the contemporary view rejecting the exceptionality of
philosophy.[5] It stands further at odds with the contemporary 'naturalist' position, seeking to
establish the legitimacy or value of philosophy as derivative from what makes it
'continuous' with the natural sciences rather than any privileged access to truth.

 Even more to the point, having truth as what characterizes philosophy raises the
question: *what even is truth*? And: can a conception of truth as the object of philosophy be

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[4] Even among professional philosophers, the population one would think has the biggest pro-philosophy bias, there is no consensus that philosophy has made 'a lot' of progress, at least considering the results of the 2020 PhilPapers survey. To the question: 'Philosophical progress (is there any?): none, a little, or a lot?' Only 41.69% of participants answered 'a lot'. Bourget and Chalmers, "Philosophers on Philosophy: The 2020 PhilPapers Survey." But of course, how we can evaluate the relative 'progress' of philosophy depends on what we even take philosophy to be –what it is supposed to be making progress 'towards'.
[5] For example, Williamson, *The Philosophy of Philosophy*, 2–3.

presupposed in advance? Given the nature of its object, Hegel claims, philosophy 'lacks the advantage from which other sciences benefit, namely the ability to *presuppose* both its *objects*' as well as possessing an 'acknowledged *method* of knowing'. (E §1) Yet, it seems, if philosophy has truth as its object, then we must have a preconceived notion of what this 'truth' amounts to. Either there is a preliminary conception or a minimal 'sense' to the concept 'truth' making this aspirational definition of philosophy intelligible, or we do not have such a conception, and then philosophy's characterization as seeking 'truth' appears rather vacuous. For *what* do we aspire when we aspire for something we do not have a conception of in advance? If the aspiration is meaningful, then at least we must have an idea of what *would* satisfy it, and, if we possess some guiding idea of what would satisfy it, this idea would in turn have to have some minimal *content*. But what is the *content* of such an aspiration, or, if we reject that we can presuppose the content of 'truth', how could an aspiration which is empty of content be expected to be satisfied? Understanding philosophy as truth-aiming cognition, without a determinate conception of what truth amounts to nor what *would* satisfy it, turns out to be a significantly difficult task. Hegel's further qualification of the 'truth' at stake in philosophy to be truth 'in the highest sense, in the sense that *God* and God *alone* is the true' (E §1), seems to do little to appease the worries.

Thus, to legitimize its claim to truth-aiming cognition and provide a sense to the notion of *truth*, the kind of epistemic activity Hegel has in mind, following the results of Kant's first *Critique*, required a justification –or, to use my chosen terminology, a *grounding*. (Cf. E §10)[6] I use the term 'grounding' in this context to signal Hegel's

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[6] I acknowledge that using the term 'grounding' is problematic for (at least) two reasons. The first reason is that '*Grund'* is a technical term for Hegel –*Grund* is a category which we encounter within the Doctrine of Essence (GW 11:291). The Doctrine of Essence deals with *reflective* categories, not with the categories appropriate for philosophical cognition –those appearing in the Doctrine of the Concept. Thus, what I mean by 'grounding' in

ambition for the Logic to constitute the *Berechtigung*, the rectification providing the 'sense and value' (*Sinn und Werth*) for the formal categories for cognition (GW 21:207). The formal categories for cognition constitute the 'thought-determinations' (*Denkbestimmungen*), which Hegel examines within the Logic.

The question of the 'grounding' role of the Logic vis-à-vis the philosophies of reality, or a philosophy of 'concrete' subject matters (such as nature, spirit, the state, art, religion, history) has been recognized by defenders of the so-called 'systematic' interpretation of Hegel's philosophy.[7] Nonetheless, these interpretations often understand the Logic's foundational status to imply the revindication of a 'metaphysical' reading of the philosophies of reality. The implication tends to be: *if* the Logic is a form of metaphysics, which the defenders take to mean an exhibition of the categories constituting not *merely* the form of thought *but also* how reality is independently of our thinking, and if the philosophies of reality are grounded through the Logic, then these philosophies constitute Hegel's metaphysical view of reality –his attempt to exhaustively render the mind-independent, objective structure of the world.

Against this form of interpreting the primacy of the Logic, I believe the evaluative element of the Logic as an attempt to determine the truth or untruth of thought-determinations rather exhibits Hegel's post-Kantian credentials in a way that makes it

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this context is not what Hegel means by the category of *Grund*. The second reason is that 'grounding' has also become a technical term within analytic metaphysics. In recent years, analytic metaphysicians have argued for the need to shift from questions regarding existence (roughly: what is there?) to questions of metaphysical priority, fundamentality, or grounding (roughly: what grounds what?). In this sense, we might take 'grounding' as roughly referring to 'a form of constitutive (as opposed to causal or probabilistic) determination or explanation.' Bliss and Kelly Trogdon, "Metaphysical Grounding." Although this proposed definition of 'metaphysics of grounding' is broad enough that I could make a case for the applicability of my sense here, my interest is not to locate my interpretation of Hegel within these debates.

[7] For an overview of these debates, see the introduction and contributions in Stein and Brooks, *Hegel's Political Philosophy On the Normative Significance of Method and System*.

incompatible with certain 'metaphysical' readings. The evaluative component of the Logic, under my reading, is modelled after the requirement to 'deduce' categories appropriate for a properly *philosophical* form of cognition: a form of cognition which would itself be the 'truth-maker' of the object it attempts to cognize, such that, in philosophy, 'thinking becomes knowing and a knowing that comprehends things [*begreifindes Erkennen*]' (E §2). Thus, I read Hegel's grounding of philosophy through the Logic as broadly compatible with an *antirealist* understanding. Indeed, if by 'antirealism' we mean a position where truth-claims are relative to the framework of thought, thereby rejecting the postulation of a thought-external truth-maker, then the label 'antirealism', originally adopted by Pippin but later dropped, is suitable to characterize my approach.[8]

The 'grounding' project involves a rearticulation of the notion of *truth* itself. Philosophy is defined by having truth as its object, but if we seek an unbiased examination of the possibilities of thought, we cannot presuppose the content that will satisfy it. Thus, our initial sense of truth is *aspirational*. The Logic aims at providing *content* to the aspirational notion of truth. I argue that such aspiration would be fulfilled through the logical development of a category that displays *self-correspondence* –a correspondence between their content and their concept. Categories that correspond to their concept provide the model for a cognition that internally displays the object as unified under its conceptual

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[8] Pippin understood the sense of Hegel's *antirealism* as 'a relativization of truth claims to the Hegelian (Notional) equivalent of something like warranted assertability, or provability, or membership in an ideal theory. (…) it does indeed seem that Hegel is making both such claims, or stating a fundamentally antirealist, idealist position, as if it could have no realist competitor, and so can be construed as itself constitutive of "reality as it is (could be) in itself.' *Hegel's Idealism*, 99. Pippin's most recent book on Hegel's *Logic* (*Hegel's Realm of Shadow*s) contains no reference to 'antirealism' whatsoever. Another recent interpretation which takes Hegel's idealism as antirealism, albeit a 'metametaphysical' one, is Wolf, for whom metametaphysical antirealism is 'a denial that the subject matter of metaphysics is even ideally knowledge-transcendent', which he further understands as involving the requirement to 'suspend reference to any supposed unit of account' Wolf, "Hegel's Metametaphysical Antirealism," 2. Although I am inspired by Wolf, I am unsure if the difference between metaphysics and metametaphysics is significant enough to merit the introduction of an extra 'meta' layer. See ft. 25 below for my problematization of 'metaphysics'.

demands. By offering an exhibition of appropriate philosophical categories through an appropriate method, Hegel takes himself as offering an avenue for the model of cognition he takes philosophy to be: not a mere 'narrative [*Erzählung*] of what happens', but 'a cognition of *that which is true in what happens*, in order further to comprehend [*begreifen*] based on this truth what in the narrative *appears* as mere happening [*ein blosses Geschehen*].' (GW 12:22, my emphasis).

I offer a series of arguments to support a conclusion: philosophy is justified through a 'derivation' of proper speculative categories, culminating with the category that displays inherent truth, thus providing the *content* for our aspirational sense of truth. The 'derivation' at stake has both a descriptive and an evaluative component. On the one hand, the Logic must exhibit the categories that constitute *one and the same content* as that which is cognizable in things, through an 'appropriate' derivation. This descriptive element is not for its own sake. Rather, it is subservient to a more fundamental normative or evaluative task: the determination of which categories are *true* in and for themselves, the exhibition of what we might call *inherently true categories*. If, as I argue, a successful cognition requires an understanding and adherence to the formal requirements of the objects (what I call *categorical adequacy*), and if reason's speculative objects can be cognized, then their adequate cognition demands appropriate, inherently true categories. Inherently true categories are the categories for philosophy.

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I resume the series of steps to advance this conclusion. The preliminary step is to locate my interpretation in the 'post-Kantian' landscape by showing what Hegel deemed lacking after

the critical turn inaugurated by Immanuel Kant. I do this in the introductory chapter. Here, I also identify possible alternatives, explored within the secondary literature, for 'overcoming' the 'subjectivism' that Hegel views as a key problem after the critical turn. I outline a 'metaphysical', a 'transcendental' and a 'divine' alternative. Rather than providing conclusive arguments for or against the readings offered by the secondary literature, this chapter serves the purpose to contextualize and motivate my own reading.

The Logic engages with thought's content. This claim implies that thought has *content of its own*. For Hegel, doing philosophy –and specifically the examination of thinking implied in the Logic-- requires overcoming the 'opposition of consciousness'. Overcoming the opposition of consciousness is something *we* are supposed to do –you and I, finite minds thinking. By overcoming the oppositional standpoint, we can understand the Logic's claim to be dealing with 'objective thoughts'. In chapter 2, I focus on the relevance of Hegel's conception of 'mind' (*Geist*) that enables the standpoint from which to identify thought as having content of its own. I appeal to the tripartite model of *Geist* in the *Encyclopedia*: subjective, objective, and absolute.

Having contextualized and motivated my approach and having proposed the relevant standpoint for *Geist* in its capacity to engage with pure thinking, we now require an understanding of how thought-determinations are meant to be evaluated to display 'inherent truth'. I advance this argument in chapter 3. Here, I provide an interpretation of the Logic's requirement for the evaluation of thought-determinations, which involves a critical diagnosis of the categories of past philosophical systems, as well as an exhibition of the mistakes which hindered such systems from developing an adequate philosophical logic. An adequate philosophical logic would be a logic fit to provide an unbiased, unprejudiced examination of the formative possibilities of thought.

The Logic's third and final part, the Doctrine of the Concept, deals with properly philosophical categories. Hegel calls these *concepts*, *Begriffe*. Concepts emerge when thinking identifies itself as thinking. The problem is that thinking that assumes itself as thinking first thinks of itself as 'merely subjective'. If thinking thinks of itself as 'mere form', as 'only thought', then it cannot see how it can have a claim to *objectivity* and *truth*. In contrast to recent 'metaphysical' readings, I provide two arguments for the objectivity of the concept in Hegel, whereby thinking can gain a higher view of itself, each attending to a different sense of the notion of *objectivity*. These arguments are designed to show how it is neither appropriate nor necessary to postulate thought-determinations as the given structure of mind-independent reality to secure thought's claim to objectivity. I argue for the first 'antirealistic' sense of objectivity in chapter 4: when we claim a judgement or representation is 'objective', we mean it has determinate criteria for its validity: it is truth-functional. In this sense, the objectivity of reality relies on a determinate stability which enables truth-functional operations. In chapter 4, by beginning with the narrative that the Doctrine of the Concept has the task of demonstrating thinking that it is not *only* subjective form, *mere* empty schema, I defend that the Subjective Logic accounts for the objectivity of the concept by demonstrating truth-functionality to depend on the 'moments' of the concept, which culminate with the exhibition of the syllogism, as the 'form of the rational', to stand as what enables reality's truth-functionality. If my argument holds, we need not stipulate mind-independent stable concepts 'instantiated' in particulars, nor immutable a priori boundaries to secure the inner differences required for a unit of meaning to be truth-functional. It is the work of the dynamicity of the concept which stabilizes experience and reality.

The second argument, which I develop in chapter 5, attends to a different sense of the notion of objectivity: the relative 'reality' of the concepts unifying real objects. Hegel affirms that concepts are 'real' in purposive structures, like teleological objects (instruments, actions), institutions and living things. Only because concepts are 'real' can the activity of thought which cognizes through concepts (*begreifen*) be the truth of something outside thinking itself. Yet, to remain true to Hegel's understanding of the concept, these claims must be harmonized with the concept's dependence on the activity of thinking. I argue that it is in virtue of *thought's purposive activities* that the concept externalizes itself in a way that generates a teleological order, through the subjugation of the logic of externality as means to the concept's ends. By modifying reality through its purposive activities, thinking can gain a standing in reality by becoming its formative principle. I provide the argument through an interpretation of the Teleology section in the Subjective Logic.

Thus, if successful, my arguments from chapters 4 and 5 exhibit the possibility for an antirealistic reading on how to understand the concept as 'objective' and 'real', thereby providing what I hope to be a strong alternative for neo-metaphysical accounts, such as versions of 'conceptual realism'.[9] But these chapters have deeper significance for the systematic unity of the dissertation argument. First, showing thought not to be a mere empty schema allows us to see how thought can be true in virtue of itself. Since philosophical cognition aims to be self-satisfying, or true by virtue of itself, the argument of chapter 4 advances the defense of how this can be the case. Second, by showing thinking to be the formative principle of real structures via purposiveness, chapter 5 substantiates the

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[9] See 1.4 and 5.1.

claim that thought can be the truth *of* something outside thinking, without predicating the cognition's success on an adequate correspondence with mind-independent content. Only if reality has shapes which require pure thinking for their adequate cognition can a philosophy of reality be justified. Furthermore, by focusing on the transition between Teleology and Realized Purposiveness, chapter 5 displays the inner limitations of Teleology, thereby setting the ground for how to understand the inherently true category of the idea as the purpose that realizes itself through its objectivity.

The final steps for my argument require (i) showing how the idea is the inherently true category; (ii) showing how the three moments of the idea (life, cognition, and the absolute or 'logical' idea) justify philosophical cognition. I argue for these claims in chapter 6. The absolute idea is the inherently true category justifying a novel form of cognition: one whose satisfaction does not rely on a purported correspondence with thought-external content but satisfies itself in the apprehension of conceptual phenomena through a conceptual form. The idea is *absolute* cognition, the unconditional method of philosophy itself.

§§

My interpretation follows several commitments associated with a 'post-Kantian' reading. First, the Logic's content is *thought-determinations* sourced in the activity of thought. This claim is not equivalent to the claim that the 'content' of the Logic is a set of psychological functions, the limits proper to the mind of a finite cognitive agent. Thought, despite having a material dependence on thinkers to 'exist' at all (where 'existence' is broadly understood as taking place in spatiotemporal reality), has a claim to *sui generis* validity. In this, I

follow the spirit of the 'post-Kantian' interpretative line.[10] Without the component that

considers thinking to have a claim to *sui generis* validity, as it will emerge from my

account, the possibility of an *immanent* evaluation of the categories –i.e., an evaluation that

considers themselves as true or untrue in virtue of their own content, rather than in virtue of

how these refer something else—would be unintelligible. And indeed, for many, it appears

to be unintelligible, reason why many take the validity of the categories to rely on how

these are 'not merely' thought, 'but also' fundamental determinations of reality independent

of thought, or 'being'.[11] Without being 'not only' thought 'but also' the mind-independent

determinations of reality, some argue, the logical categories could possess no claim for

objective validity. Insofar as I reject this 'metaphysical'[12] reading of the objective standing

of the categories by claiming thought's content is *one and the same* as the content which

allows for the cognition of anything whatsoever, my interpretation diverges from readings

often labeled 'metaphysical' or 'neo-metaphysical'.

      I will refrain from further locating my dissertation within the relevant scholarship

debates, as I dedicate most of the introductory chapter, as well as several sections and

footnotes, to this purpose. I will only finish putting my cards on the table: I aim at an

inflationary, rather than deflationary reading. The sense in which I take my reading to be

'inflationary', despite rejecting common avenues arguing for the Logic's 'metaphysical'

standing, rests in the ambitions of philosophy: truth 'in the highest sense'. Hegel's

grounding project has the aim not merely to exhibit the thought-determinations in virtue of

which anything can be meaningful or intelligible, but to exhibit the pure form of truth—i.e.,

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[10] See 1.4.

[11] See 1.4.

[12] For the relevant understanding of 'metaphysics' at stake here, see 1.4 and, again, ft. 25.

to give *content* to the formal aspiration. As we shall see, such content is purportedly reached by culminating with a concept exhibiting an inherent form of self-correspondence. This concept is the idea as realized purposiveness. The *nervus probandi* for an inflationary, yet antirealistic interpretation, consists in exhibiting the form of truth entailed by the absolute idea to not simply be, or reduce itself to, something akin to maximal intelligibility. Contrary to (what I call) transcendental readings of the absoluteness of the idea, the ultimate sense of truth validated by the Logic is not equivalent to the claim that the idea stands at the condition of possibility, intelligibility or explainability of (our experience of) reality. This 'transcendental' element would have to be a *consequence of* inherent truth, but not the mark of inherent truth itself.

As I claimed above, and as I establish in chapters 5 and 6, Hegel demonstrates Teleology to be inherently finite. It is thus not Teleology, but *another* form of purposiveness which satisfies the requirements for inherent truth. I spoil the game: that which fulfills the ambitions of truth, for Hegel, is the idea as *realized purposiveness*. By establishing a form of connecting the concept and objectivity where the bond between both is not dissolvable, realized purposiveness exhibits self-correspondence. What guarantees the non-dissolvability of the connection is the concept's existence as a *self-determining becoming*. This novel form of real, non-teleological purposiveness, I consider, is one of Hegel's key philosophical innovations. As others have recognized, we overlook the radical nature of this form of purposiveness if we reduce it to Teleology as finite purposiveness, understood as the fulfillment of an end which is *external* to the means for its realization. Without an adequate understanding of the logical difference between Teleology and the Idea, Hegel's philosophical approach to the 'real' in the philosophies of nature and spirit will be severely misunderstood. In my general conclusion, I emphasize the importance of

taking these claims seriously. Taking seriously the exceptional nature of the inherently true category of realized purposiveness not only illuminates Hegel's philosophical accounts of phenomena such as nature and history, but furthermore, paradoxically, provides an opening for evaluating the success of Hegel's own accounts deriving from his own expressed logical commitments.

If I manage to do what I aim to do, the reader might not be convinced that Hegel 'grounds' philosophy or indeed provides anything close to a contemporarily defensible model for philosophy as the 'exceptional' or 'absolute' science. Yet I would hope Hegel's ambitious project reveals a possibility for the non-instrumental value of a thinking engagement with the world. If philosophy is a form of thinking whose satisfaction is internal to the activity itself, then the sense in which philosophy expresses value, in contrast to conditional activities, does not seem to depend on the degree in which it exhibits 'progress', or how much it arrives at determinate 'results' which might or might not have a practical relevance. At best, if I am understood, there might be some meaning to be found in the efforts of such a useless and unproductive activity, the thinking of thinking as thinking, for some of us, inspires.

Chapter 1

0. Introduction

The main systematic claim of the present dissertation, as it relates to Hegel's 'post-Kantianism', is that Hegel grounds philosophy by exhibiting and developing correct categories for speculative cognition. The grounding enables us to have a criterion of a cognition's satisfaction beyond the standard of empirical adequacy, which still informs Kant's idea of what makes any cognition legitimate and justified. While in the preface I motivated my reading through the question of the legitimacy of philosophy as a sui generis mode of cognition, in this introduction I introduce the problem through the much-debated question regarding the nature of 'post-Kantianism' and a 'post-Kantian' interpretation of Hegel. I argue for the standing of philosophy as an avenue to address the following question: in which sense can Hegel be read as a 'post-Kantian'? This general formulation entails the following, more specific questions: what is the nature of the problem with Kant's transcendental idealism, which Hegel is meant to resolve? What is the nature of this alleged problem and its alleged resolution?

It is not uncommon to understand this problem as one of Kant's alleged 'subjectivism': Hegel, according to this narrative, improves upon Kant by overcoming the 'subjectivist' elements which render Kant and Fichte's idealism 'finite', thereby barring us from the most inflationary claims to truth. If thinking is the vehicle for truth, yet thinking is limited to a parochial standpoint, then thinking's claim to truth also appears parochial. If we agree that Kant does have a 'subjectivism' problem, what is supposed to be problematic

about it? And could the problematic element be overcome without 'falling back' to a pre-critical standpoint? I aim to shift the traditional focus of responses and rather highlight the question of the justification of philosophical cognition. Against the main lines of approaching this problem as concerned with the metaphysical implications of both positions, I argue Hegel is more concerned with the legitimation of the prospects of an 'inflationary', yet purely conceptual, mode of cognition. Hegel's perceived 'advancement' over Kant concerns his attempt to legitimize the categories of reason for cognition of reality without the requirement of a sensible or otherwise thought-external referent. Exhibiting the categories as true 'in and for themselves' is the path towards the legitimation of the concepts for reason, thus, the appropriate philosophical categories. Such legitimation would confer such categories their applicability as the proper vehicle for disclosing what is true in reality.

While stated at this level of generality, both the problem and the solution might appear too abstract. I hope this introductory chapter will provide depth and content to the 'post-Kantian' question. But a reader might object to dedicating so much space to Kant and the problem of Hegel's 'post-Kantianism'. For, in the first place, the argument of the dissertation is about Hegel, not Kant. In the second place, 'post-Kantianism' is a contemporary label, not one Hegel ever used –it might thus seem to involve an anachronism. Indeed, an important contribution of the 'metaphysical' turn in Hegel scholarship has rested in aiming to de-emphasize the role of Kant for a correct understanding of Hegel's philosophy, and rather claim other figures (such as Spinoza, Aristotle, Parmenides) ought to be taken as equally, if not more, relevant for understanding

Hegel's philosophy. The move away from Kant has produced many valuable studies.[13] Yet I believe there are non-trivial reasons to emphasize Kant above other possible figures, which is why I find the question regarding Hegel's 'post-Kantianism' pressing enough to merit central attention. The question of 'post-Kantianism' is not about how Hegel understood *himself* according to *our* contemporary categories, but rather how *we* can coherently understand Hegel's philosophy as a philosophy that takes seriously the results of Kant's critical project. Hegel takes seriously the results of Kant's *Critique*, for non-trivial reasons. We need not speculate too deeply about what the non-trivial reasons to emphasize Kant above other figures might be. Hegel himself clarifies them in a footnote to the greater *Logic*, which exhibits his characteristic ambivalence towards the Kantian inheritance. He explains:

> 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 [*ausmachen*] the foundation and the starting point of the new German philosophy [*die Grundlage und den Ausgangspunkt der neuem deutschen Philosophie*], and this is a merit [*Verdienst*] 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 logical [*das Logischen*], 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 [*daß die Vernunft keinen wahren Gehalt erkennen könne*], and that, when it comes to absolute truth, it must be directed to faith. 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. (GW 21:46-7, note c)

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[13] See, for example, Bowman, *Hegel Metaphys. Absol. Negativity*; Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle*; Dangel, *Hegel Und Die Geistmetaphysik Des Aristoteles*.

Hegel describes Kantian philosophy as the 'foundation and the starting point of the new German philosophy' (which justifies, in my view, understanding the 'new German philosophers' as *post-Kantians*) and that Kant has provided a 'more specific' treatment of logic than some of Hegel's contemporaries. Hegel's protest regarding his contemporaries, as we read from the last sentences of the paragraph, is not that they were 'too Kantian', but *not Kantian* enough, as they stay assured with Kant's results, rather than follow his 'more specific' conception of logic, which demands a true critique of the categories.

Besides delving into the Kantian background, the introductory chapter shall also serve the function of situating my approach within the relevant interpretative landscape. I thus dedicate this introductory chapter to Kant and the secondary literature to (i) locate my approach of Hegel's philosophy within the context of Kant's transcendental idealism; (ii) argue for Hegel's 'post-Kantianism' as emerging from considerations regarding the proper form of cognition which philosophy aims to satisfy: a truth-aiming cognition.

1.1

Kant's *Critique of pure reason* (CPR) examines the limitations of the human mind and our possible experience to pave the way for the determination of the legitimate scope of our possible knowledge.[14] This examination, in turn, is intended to set the path towards the *positive* project of metaphysics (traditional philosophy) as *science*, standing on the secure

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[14] In recent years, a prominent line of interpreters has emphasized the need to distinguish between cognition and knowledge in Kant, motivated by the worry that Kant's epistemic project is conflated with his theory of the human mind. See Tolley, "Kant on the Place of Cognition in the Progression of Our Representations"; Willaschek and Watkins, "Kant on Cognition and Knowledge"; Chignell, "Kant's Concepts of Justification." Yet, as it is clear from Kant's claims on his overall 'critical' project, these two elements were for him intrinsically connected such that the results of the theory of mind directly affect the prospects of epistemology.

footing of synthetic a priori judgments: apodictically true judgements such as those of

mathematics and 'pure natural science' (paradigmatically, for Kant, Newtonian mechanics).

The negative project of determining the proper limits of the mind Kant calls philosophy as

critique. For philosophy as critique, Kant develops a novel method of philosophical

argumentation: the *transcendental* method, which proceeds by means of examining the a

priori ('transcendental') conditions of possibility necessary for any experience and

knowledge of objects. These are not abstract features that condition reality in general; they

are dependent on the nature of the human mind.[15]

The limits of experience will be elucidated by an a priori examination of the

functions and concepts of the faculties and powers of our mind. For Kant, the human mind

is characterized by a *receptive*, as well as a *spontaneous* component: the 'receptivity' is

given through the faculty of *sensibility*, which determines that (i) the 'matter' of cognition

(or an indetermined something) *must be given to us* for any thinking to take place; (ii) that

such 'matter' becomes thinkable content by becoming a *representation* (*Vorstellung*)

through the a priori forms of sensibility: the pure forms of *external* intuition (space) and

that of *internal* intuition (time) as treated in the 'Transcendental Aesthetic'. In turn, when

such representations are related to *objects*, Kant calls such a representation a *cognition*

(*Erkenntnis*). As Kant claims in the famous '*Stufenleiter'* passage describing the

'stepladder' of representations, the species of object-related representation called

'intuitions' are *immediate* as well as *singular* (CPR A19/B33; Cf. A68/B93) and stand at

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[15] Certain lines of interpretation attempt to dissociate the transcendental results of the first critique from its necessary tie to the 'human subject'. Yet, despite the important contributions of such interpretations, they do not follow Kant's own view of his project as essentially tied to the a priori faculties of the human mind. For Kant, the critique of pure reason is the critique of the subjective 'capacities' of 'human reason' (A viii), here understood as the totality of the subjective, properly human and therefore necessarily sensible, faculties.

the basis of Kant's account of experience as 'cognition through connected perceptions' (B161).[16]

For proper experience, the faculty of sensibility is insufficient. Sensibility merely provides a spatiotemporally differentiated manifold. In the 'Transcendental Analytic', Kant introduces the *understanding* (*Verstand*) as the faculty which orders the representations of intuition under concepts, thereby providing the coherence and lawfulness (the general 'form') of experience, beyond the formal aspect added to what is received by space and time as the a priori forms of sensible intuition.[17] The form in which the understanding orders the sensible spatiotemporal manifold is through its pure concepts: the twelve 'a priori' categories which Kant claims to extract from the necessary and exhaustive forms of *judgement* (CPR A79/B105). For our purposes, we need not delve into the details of Kant's account of the collaboration between sensibility and understanding that constitutes experience a priori, much less the significant interpretative controversies surrounding this alleged collaboration.[18] Suffice it to highlight the following: for Kant, the understanding has the function of providing the unity of experience by means of concepts. And, as it is well known, Kant considers it indispensable for the project of the critique that the subjective conditions of thinking have 'objective validity, i.e., yield conditions for the possibility of all cognition of objects' (A89/B122). He attempts to prove this objective

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[16] The *Stufenleiter* passage reads: 'The genus is representation (*representatio*) in general. Under it stand representations with consciousness (*perceptio*). A perception [*Wahrnehmung*], that relates solely to a subject as a modification of its state, is sensation (*sensatio*). An objective perception is cognition (*cognitio*). This is either intuition or concept (*intuitus vel conceptus*). The first relates immediately to the object and is singular; the second is mediate, conveyed by a mark, which can be common to many things. A concept is either an empirical or a pure concept, and the pure concept, insofar as it has its origin solely in the understanding (not in a pure image of sensibility), is called *notio*. A concept made up of notions, which goes beyond the possibility of experience, is an idea or a concept of reason.' (A320/B376–7).

[17] Cf. Anderson, "Transcendental Idealism as Formal Idealism."

[18] Cf. McLear, "The Kantian (Non)-Conceptualism Debate."

validity through what he calls a *transcendental deduction*, where he finds the necessity of a combination of the manifold for the application of the rules of the understanding. This combination cannot be a 'given', in contrast to the givenness of the sensory manifold. It is rather the product of a pure activity which Kant calls 'synthesis' (B130). 'Synthesis' is an *act* in contrast to a *passive reception*: 'among all representations, *combination* is the only one that is not given through objects but can be executed only by the subject itself, since it is an act of its self-activity.' (B130) The pure self-relating activity of synthesis is apperception, that 'the I think must *be able* to accompany all my representations', the 'I think' being a 'form of self-consciousness' whereby anything can be an object *for me*. (B132) The form of this original synthetic activity Kant calls the 'synthetic unity of apperception', and differentiates it from the *analytic* unity which derives from it.

For Kant, there is no thinking properly without this form of active self-relation. Synthesis stands at the basis of thought. Furthermore, since the constitution of objects depends on the a priori categories, neither can there be determinate objects without the possibility of the 'I think'. So, self-consciousness must stand as the formal ground for the coherence of anything to be apprehended as an object. And this self-consciousness is an *activity* of combination: the manifold does not order itself, nor does it possess an a priori unity before being passively taken up by thought. The coherence of reality, which we call experience, requires the combinatorial act, the synthetic unity of apperception.

Yet for Kant, neither is there *thought* without sensation: 'all thought, whether straightaway (*directe*) or through a detour (*indirecte*), must ultimately be related to intuitions, thus, *in our case*, to sensibility, since there is no other way objects can be given to us.' (CPR A19/B33) The *receptive* nature of 'our' mind (the human mind, or whichever mind falls into the rubric of discursive cognition) does not permit us to understand the

synthesis as 'productive' in terms of bringing forth new *matter* for cognition. It determines the form of the given as an intelligible (rule-abiding) unity: an *object* proper (A92/B125). This pure synthetic activity, *thought*, provides the unity and coherence to the manifold received *externally* by the senses.

1.2.

From the perspective of Hegel's eventual critique of Kant, the claims above should be relatively uncontroversial. Less often acknowledged from such a perspective is that Kant devotes a large part of the first *Critique*, the Transcendental Dialectic, to a second spontaneous power of our mind alongside the understanding. This faculty is *reason* (*Vernunft),* the 'supreme faculty of cognition' (CPR A298/B355), the 'faculty of principles' characterized by the internal drive to *seek* a self-sufficient, 'unconditional' totality of conditions for any object of possible experience. Kant univocally associates reason with the 'highest' possibilities of the human mind: it provides 'the highest unity of thinking', and 'nothing higher' can be found in 'us' (A298/B355). Given that reason operates by bringing the cognitions of the understanding under principles, it does not itself relate *directly* or *immediately* to the objects of sensible experience. Reason cannot cognize objects *in concreto*: it is not directed towards objects, but rather towards the functions of the understanding. Furthermore, reason's natural drive towards ever 'higher' unity produces an inevitable illusion which, for Kant, is to blame for the excesses of rationalist metaphysics: the illusion that the unconditioned is an object that can be *given* for our form of cognition, the illusion that we can 'have' the unconditioned totality in the form of a *concrete representation*, in the form of *an object*. The illusion arises when 'the subjective necessity

of a certain connection of the objects on behalf of the understanding is taken for an objective necessity, the determination of things in themselves.' (A297/B353) This illusion must be kept in check by critical philosophy, as the results from the Transcendental Analytic determined that we can only cognize by reference to sensibility. Without a possible or actual reference to sensibility, there are no 'objects' proper to legitimately cognize.

But the Transcendental Dialectic is not purely negative. Here, Kant also leaves room for a positive use of reason. A recent wave of commentators has rightly emphasized the centrality of the positive role of reason for Kant, as well as its essential continuity with Hegel's philosophy.[19] The investigations into the positive role of reason are crucial, not least given that Kant himself has an ambivalent characterization of such a positive role. It is not clear if, for example, reason's concepts and principles are *necessary conditions* for possible experience at a level analogous to the constitutive import of the concepts of the understanding. While some commentators defend this claim, it appears at odds with the requirement for any possible objects to be necessarily related to sensibility, and thus any legitimate cognition of objects. What is clear from the first *Critique* is that Kant's 'transcendental idealism' implies a *restriction* of the theoretical role of reason –reason will ultimately turn out to be a primarily *practical* power. Kant claims, for example, that, in contrast to the categories of the understanding, the 'principles of pure reason cannot be constitutive even regarding empirical *concepts*, because for them no corresponding schema of sensibility can be given, and therefore they can have no object *in concreto*.' (CPR

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[19] See Ferrarin, The Powers of Pure Reason: Kant and the Idea of Cosmic Philosophy; Ferrarin, "Reason in Kant and Hegel"; Kreines, *Reason in the World*, (esp. chapters 4 and 5); Hamid, "Reason in Kant's Theory of Cognition"; Kreines, "For a Dialectic-First Approach to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason." Grier, *Kant's Doctrine of Transcendental Illusion*.

A664/B692) Even in their 'positive' use, the concepts of reason have only 'regulative'

validity: they are not concepts of *real* objects, or any object which can be given in

experience, thus no object that can be legitimately known. In the case of the ideas of

reason, the pure concepts produced by reason's inferential activity seeking for higher

unities, 'their reality should hold only as that of a schema of the regulative principle for the

systematic unity of all cognitions of nature; hence they should be grounded only as

analogues of real things, but not as things in themselves.' (A674/B702, my emphasis)

The relative restriction of reason for knowledge of reality is what I call Kant's

'restrictivism' as an aspect of what commentators call his 'subjectivism'. It follows, I

consider, from the centrality Kant places on the limitations of cognition to appearances as

sensibly conditioned representations. For our purposes (and without aiming to advance

ground on the contentious issue of which interpretation is closest to Kant), we can

differentiate between a *weaker* and a *stronger* version of restrictivism. In the weak version,

since cognition is limited to possible experience, and since reason's demands necessarily

transcend possible experience, reason's demands can never be satisfied for consciousness at

the level of possible representation. The level of representation is the only mode in which

the subject can legitimately cognize objects. Strong restrictivism goes a step further by

claiming that, since there is no possible connection to the conditions of sensibility, no

determination of objects through reason can possess any verifiable form of epistemic

legitimacy whatsoever. In this stronger version, all knowledge of objective reality is bound

to the form of experience, and, since the concepts of reason have no concrete object, it is

illegitimate to use concepts of reason for the cognition of reality, despite reason's inherent

and natural desire. (Cf. CPR A308/B365)[20] The restrictions of the form of our mind prohibit us to claim the 'objective reality' for the ideas of reason, and it likewise establishes limits to the theoretical legitimacy of any epistemic accomplishment determined through rational ideas or principles.

For strong restrictivism, the nature of our human mind, in other words, forbids the 'absolute knowledge' intimated by the systematic demands of reason, at least within the theoretical field.[21] As Hegel sees it, if it holds, this prohibition would be at least paradoxical, considering Kant's above-cited remarks seemingly praising reason as the 'supreme', the 'highest' faculty of cognition.

1.3

Subjectivism as restrictivism is a thesis about what we can have legitimate epistemic access to. There are several forms of epistemic access for Kant, as we can gather from the *Stufenleiter* passage. A key point is that although reason is the 'highest' faculty of cognition, we cannot cognize reality directly through reason. Pure reason works based on inferences from cognitions, and inferences imply going 'beyond' the sensible manifold, any possible object given *in concreto*. The pure concepts produced by reason's inferential activity are speculative and dialectical. To be speculative and dialectical, for Kant, has a

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[20] For Kant, reason proper cannot directly represent objects *in concreto*, but merely use its ideas to direct the use of the understanding regulatively, as a 'mere' as if, in a manner which is 'undetermined' and 'problematic'. This negative way Kant speaks of the possibilities of 'cognition' of objects through reason offers further support for the interpretation that rational concepts and principles have no objective reality, thus suggesting strong restrictivism.

[21] Kant clearly saw the *practical* role of reason as not bound by these same restrictions, which has led some commentators to read the regulative role of reason in theory as ultimately justified by his claim of the primacy of the *practical*. See, for example, Mudd, "Rethinking the Priority of Practical Reason in Kant."

negative connotation at least in the following sense: no theoretically valid cognitions are possible regarding the matters of the ideas of reason (the soul, the world as a whole, God).

Where, in Hegel's view, does this leave philosophy as a 'science'? Can philosophy still claim to provide pure knowledge of objects, or is all philosophy meant to have a 'critical' function, delivering results regarding what can or cannot be known, but no positive knowledge itself?[22]

Hegel agrees with Kant that the objects of reason's highest cognitive aspirations are not to be found within sensible experience. But, for Hegel, a philosophy that cannot adequately satisfy the 'highest aspiration' of thinking might just as well not call itself philosophy (Cf. E §11). If cognition of what is highest is 'barred' from any possible scientific legitimacy, then philosophy is unrealizable as a science. To satisfy the highest demands of reason, Hegel follows Kant, would be impossible if we are forced to mobilize exclusively sensibility-bound cognition, the 'finite' forms of the understanding. Jacobi, in Hegel's view, correctly identifies that the aspirations of philosophy could never be met under the framework of Kant's claim of 'mediated knowledge', thinking as understanding (*verständiges Denken*, E §11). Jacobi, identifying the limitations of the categories of the understanding for the apprehension of higher objects, aims to return to these objects through '*immediate knowing, faith* [Glaube].' (E §63) Hegel proposes another avenue. The avenue is the scientific legitimation of the categories for 'absolute' cognition. Indeed, I

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[22] Kant provides somewhat of an answer to the question regarding the status of philosophy in the Third Chapter of the Transcendental Doctrine of Method, "The architectonic of pure reason". There are only two modes of 'rational cognition': 'cognition from concepts or cognition from the construction of concepts' (CPR A837/B865). The first is philosophical (which Kant here equates with 'metaphysics'), the second mathematical. Philosophy itself is defined as 'the system of all philosophical cognition.' (A838/B866) But philosophy, in this sense, is only an idea, and an idea grounded on a further one: that of the *cosmic concept* of philosophy, philosophy as 'the science of the relation of all cognition to the essential ends of human reason' (A839/B867). We need not delve too deeply into Kant's distinctions. Yet it is significant that Kant indeed affirms the possibility of philosophical cognition beyond the propaedeutic (thus broadly negative) aspect of the critique.

argue this is *the* crucial aim of the Logic: to provide the proper categories for the infinite cognition of infinite objects. This demand for adequate categories for speculative subject matters is a consequence of the doctrine I call *categorical adequacy*. I explain the meaning of such a function in chapter 3. For now, I provide textual support.

In the Introduction to the *SL*, Hegel objects that prior logics have *limited* conceptual resources. Hegel claims that such limitation rests on a 'disproportion' between our current historical reality and the forms, functions, and determinations which the discipline of Logic offers us for thinking about it. Hegel claims, when justifying the need for a 'renovation' (*Umarbeitung*) of logic, that comparing 'the shapes to which the spirit of the practical and the religious world, and of science in every form of real or idealized consciousness' with the resources of logic at the time reveals 'too wide a difference that one would not be struck, even on the most superficial observation, by how disproportionate [*unangemessen*] and unworthy [*unwürdig*] the latter consciousness is as contrasted with spirit's other elevations.' (GW 21:35-6). A similar sentiment appears in an addition to the *Encyclopedia* Logic: 'The need to understand logic in a deeper sense than that of the science of merely formal thinking is prompted by the interest we take in religion, the state, the law, and ethical life.' (E §19 Z3) Traditional logical forms are too impoverished to capture the logical core of spiritual objects, those from the practical world, in the religious realm, and even in the case of the advancements of science. (Cf. 21:11) Categories such as cause and effect, parts and whole, identity and difference, simply do not afford the means for grasping these aspects of reality in their concreteness. Given the limitations of the categories that past philosophical and metaphysical systems have provided, these subject matters have been deemed outside the possibilities of a 'pure' scientific cognition. Rather than abandoning the ambition of a pure scientific cognition of these objects, a renewed logic

would supply the proper form for understanding the logical core of the 'highest' shapes of our practical, religious, and scientific world. The requirement to reform logic so that it is proportional to the elevations achieved by spirit, and can thereby satisfy reason's highest ambitions, thus informs Hegel's project.

So, I claim a basic aim of the Logic is the justification of the 'highest' categories, those that would serve for the cognition of the objects proper to the aspirations of reason to know speculative objects and the historical shape spiritual reality has obtained. I further claim the requirement for these kinds of categories comes hand in hand with Hegel's acceptance of Kant's view of the understanding's categories as inadequate for precisely such subject matters. With these claims in mind, we can turn to the examination of some common lines of reading Hegel's 'overcoming' of the Kantian 'subjectivism'.

1.4

Reading Hegel as a post-Kantian often assumes the form of considering something is lacking within the Kantian picture, which tends to be related, as I claimed, to an alleged 'subjectivism'. Hegel is meant to *correct* or *overcome* subjectivism. Thus, where interpreters locate the problem of subjectivism informs, and in some cases determines, their reading of Hegel. As suggested above, I locate the primary focus of Hegel's 'anti-subjectivist' concerns to lie in the project of justifying philosophy as the truth-aiming activity of cognition through reason (comprehension, *begreifen*), which shall inform my reading of the role of the Logic and the manner in how it grounds the applicability of a properly philosophical mode of engaging with real subject-matters, i.e., Hegel's broader

project in the *Realphilosophie*.[23] The reading I will propose, like most things in Hegel, will not be uncontroversial. For this reason, I rehearse and evaluate the main lines of interpretation of Hegel as a post-Kantian with a special focus on the question of where Kant's theoretical philosophy allegedly 'goes wrong' –where the problem of subjectivism is supposed to lie.[24]

As a first indication, all interpretations are broadly in agreement with the subjectivism claim: Hegel thought the deficiencies of Kant's philosophy rested on its restrictive character on what can be legitimately known, given the 'subjective' character of thinking. The textual evidence is clear on this point, and we shall pursue Hegel's claims appropriately in due course (in chapter 5). The issue is then not *if* Hegel thinks there is something objectionably subjective in Kant's conception of philosophy and knowledge in general, but *what* is problematic about such a claim, and *how* Hegel's philosophy is meant to overcome the purported deficiency.

(a) Via *metaphysics*

By a *metaphysical* reading, I understand a reading which claims the overcoming of subjectivism obtains in virtue of the status of the forms of thought as standing *prior* to the thinking activity by which they would be cognized.[25] Using problematic contemporary

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[23] The activity of cognition supplied by philosophy would not be properly 'practical' nor 'theoretical', but 'speculative'. I outline the meaning of this in the final chapter.

[24] I here focus on the theoretical philosophy, but, as it is well-known, there are many elements of Kant's practical philosophy which Hegel finds objectionable. See Sedgwick, "Hegel's Critique of the Subjective Idealism of Kant's Ethics"; Stern, "On Hegel's Critique of Kant's Ethics: Beyond the Empty Formalism Objection." For a recent account, see García Mills, "Realizing the Good: Hegel's Critique of Kantian Morality."

[25] In his 2006 paper "Hegel's Metaphysics: Changing the Debate", Kreines argues against framing the debate on the nature of Hegel's idealism in terms of a 'metaphysical' and 'non-metaphysical' view (as traditionally framed after Klaus Hartmann proposes understanding the Logic not as a metaphysical project, but as a 'category theory', cf. Hartmann, "Hegel: A Non-Metaphysical View"), and, given that, according to Kreines, a 'non-metaphysical' interpretation of Hegel is 'simply unconvincing' (466) productively shifting the debate towards *which* version of metaphysics Hegel endorses. Kreines argument has been influential, at least among

contemporary anglophone scholarship, as evidenced in that few interpreters (including those broadly sympathetic with the original 'non-metaphysical' project, such as Pippin) seem willing to claim Hegel's idealism does not involve, in some sense or another, a 'metaphysics'. Indeed, in *Hegel's realm of shadows*, Pippin himself distinguished between 'old' and 'new' metaphysics, and claims Hegel is committed to this latter, which Pippin characterizes in line with Aristotle: an explanation of conceptual intelligibility, which coincides with what it means for anything to be determinate. (Cf. 60ff)

The matter is very complicated and has been extensively debated within the literature. Settling the question of the 'status' of Hegel's philosophy vis-à-vis metaphysics relies on how we answer: i) what is metaphysics? (which definition to prefer, and why) ii) what is Hegel's understanding of metaphysics? (if there is a single or primary one) iii) if these two descriptions of metaphysics differ (i.e., our preferred definition of metaphysics, and what Hegel takes metaphysics to be), which of the two ought we use to classify Hegel's theoretical philosophy? iv) for our determination of Hegel's project as a metaphysics, are we considering exclusively the Logic, or the whole of his philosophical 'system', including whatever Hegel takes himself to be doing in the philosophies of reality?

Many contemporary philosophers depart from A.W. Moore's definition, under which metaphysics is 'the most general attempt to make sense of things.' *The Evolution of Modern Metaphysics*, 1ff. Baumann, in 'Hegelianismen Im Englischsprachigen Raum' provides a critical overview of anglophone Hegelianism. Here, she proposes three possible definitions of 'metaphysics' to serve as an exegetical basis for the approaches to Hegel's idealism. She firstly considers (1) 'Metaphysik in Form von Aussagen über die grundlegende Verfasstheit der denkunabhängigen Welt' (368), where she classifies, for example, the rationalist metaphysics of Spinoza; (2) ,Metaphysik im Sinne notwendiger Denkbestimmungen' (ibid), where, following Kant, it involves a commitment to the impossibility of positive knowledge regarding the mind-independent world; (3) metaphysics as the search (*Suche*) for the first kind of metaphysics, where she tentatively locates Adorno, Heidegger, Tarski and A.W. Moore himself, when pursuing the question of the possibility for us as finite beings to encounter 'what is there anyway' (369). Ficara provides a valuable overview to answer question ii) above, by examining Hegel's often conflicting remarks regarding 'metaphysics' and the relation between (his conception of) logic and metaphysics, which he often characterizes as logic 'containing' or 'including' metaphysics as in, for example, Hegel's 1812 letter to Niethammer where he claims metaphysics 'falls entirely within logic.' (W 4:406-7) See Ficara, "The Interplay Between Logic and Metaphysics." Ultimately, though, Ficara opts for a metaphysically-realistic interpretation where 'the forms analyzed in logic are not only determinations of thought (and not of things), they are also determinations of the essence of things.' (115)

I believe it is natural to associate 'metaphysics' with Baumann's first description: a project which takes itself as making claims, or proposing a theory, about the 'fundamental' mind-independent structure of reality. And herein lies my problem with the label 'metaphysics'. When we use it to describe something, say Hegel's project in the Logic, what is usually represented is *not* Moore's very broad idea of the attempt at comprehensive sense-making, but an attempt to describe or reflect the *real* structure of the world, 'carving' reality 'at its joints'. This common understanding implied by characterizing something as '*a* metaphysics' (as in one among other competing alternative 'theories' 'about' the fundamental structure of reality or the world) *already* involves the prejudice that reality indeed has a 'mind-independent' structure, pre-given 'joints'. Thus, our usual understanding of x as a metaphysical project already includes within it a certain implicit commitment to a form of realism and the prejudice of a correspondence theory of truth, both of which I see as anathema to Hegel's philosophical project, as I attempt to substantiate in the present dissertation. I do not think this is the fault of the concept 'metaphysics' per se, nor most interpreters who choose to use such a label. But these association seems ubiquitous and a problem. Seeing that 'metaphysics' involves these associations, and given that I view Hegel as refusing the prejudices of correspondence theory and realism, and given that adequately defining what I would take as 'Hegel's metaphysics' such that it does not conflict with these commitments would involve a significant amount of qualifications and pedantic throat-clearing (like this footnote), and, finally, given that Hegel consciously chooses the notion of *logic* for his project in the Logic, not 'metaphysics', I remain reluctant to use such label for characterizing my approach. I shall thus restrict my use of 'metaphysics' to (a) Hegel's understanding of pre-critical philosophy (the 'old' metaphysics); (b) my understanding of approaches to Hegel's categorical justification or the objectivity of categories/idealism/thinking itself as relying on the primacy of a thought-external truth-maker, such as those described in the next footnote.

terminology, we might claim the determinations of thought are objective because they are 'mind-independent', 'out there'.[26] There are many alternative ways of outlining how this metaphysical legitimation is meant to work. In the literature, avenues such as substance monism, rationalist theology, or, more recently, conceptual realism have been proposed.[27] Another (although compatible) avenue rests in claiming that the logical categories are necessarily instantiated or otherwise a priori secured as belonging to not only the mind, but also being: as one interpreter puts it, the (or at least some) categories are 'necessarily instantiated'.[28] Hegel's Logic is thereby read as an ontology in the traditional sense of the term.

To make my definition more precise, I call any reading that posits the primacy of a truth-maker for the making-true of a cognition a *metaphysical* reading: something (a concept, a thought, a cognition) is true in virtue of its truth-maker. The truth-maker is meant to, in some sense, have an asymmetrical claim to priority over the cognition which is true in virtue of it. The attractiveness of metaphysical readings rests in their securing objectivity in a manner that can be reappropriated for debates within contemporary philosophy. The Logic's categories are true because they are the categories that exist prior to any thinking of them by 'us. Kant, given the requirement of reference to sensibility, claims that only *appearances* are appropriate objects for cognition. Hegel, in contrast,

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[26] Houlgate claims that the *Logic* 'does, indeed, disclose the true character of what is "out there"', 'Thought and Being in Hegel's Logic Reflections on Hegel, Kant and Pippin,' 103. In Stern's reading, Hegel's idealism is fundamentally about the affirmation of the world containing an *ideal* structure independently of the cognizing activity, rather than about 'whether the subject constitutes the world', thereby being able to affirm Hegel's idealism as a version of contemporary metaphysical realism. Stern, 'Hegel's Idealism,' 169. DeVries' explanation of how the Logic is metaphysics by disclosing the 'categorical structure' of being would similarly fall along these lines, DeVries, 'Hegel's Logic and Philosophy of Mind,' 218.

[27] For a substantial classification and references, see section 2.2-4 of Redding, "Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel."

[28] McNulty, *Hegel's Logic and Metaphysics*, x; 98; 132; 162. See 6.2.

grants reality to the concepts such that these are meant as the structure of reality 'in itself'. In this sense, through the categories, we know the 'in itself' of things, not merely how these appear to us, or how we cannot but think about them, given the structure of our cognitive faculties. To know them 'in themselves' means knowing how they are, or would be, independently of our knowledge of them. Thus, philosophy, insofar as it provides the mind-independent structure of reality, is justified given its metaphysical claim to objectivity via correspondence with a thought-external truth-maker.

Further, these readings seem textually supported by Hegel's seemingly reifying language surrounding 'the concept' as the 'in itself' of things, its 'substantial essence' (Cf. GW 21:15), and the existence of 'reason in the world'. We will later see how the passages at stake do not support the metaphysical reading (in chapter 4). I focus on the more general philosophical issues, which offer some reasons to be initially skeptical of the metaphysical reading. The first problem faced by such interpretations is Hegel's relative acceptance of the negative, critical results of Kant vis-à-vis traditional metaphysics. Despite placing value and worth on such metaphysics in virtue of seeing thought-determinations as 'the fundamental determinations of things' (E §28), Hegel agrees with Kant's critique of the 'dogmatic' character of former rationalistic metaphysics, as these presuppose the need for correspondence with a purportedly self-sufficient content for truth to obtain. Insofar as former metaphysics takes the content given, there is still an opposition between thought as *the activity of form* and its purported target. The 'target' has the truth self-sufficiently, and thought must 'capture' such truth. This point holds independently of how 'material' ('real' in the sense of a concrete appearance) or 'rational' (for example: an 'essence') the truth-maker is supposed to be. (Cf. E §§28-32) Insofar as we presuppose the priority of a truth-

maker for the making true of all forms of legitimate cognition, the theory is 'taking us back to a standard other than the nature of thought itself.' (E §31 A)[29]

As a second but related problem, as I will show in chapter 3, is Hegel's philosophical commitment to the thesis that the validity of the categories requires showing them to be true 'in and for themselves'. Hegel is clear on this point: the Logic requires investigating if the content of the categories is true '*in and for itself'* (E §28 A; Cf. §28 Z; §19 Z1), rather than in virtue of their applicability or correspondence to a presupposed ready-made reality. This seems to suggest that the categories of pure thinking are meant to be validated independently of the claim of their being, somehow, 'in the world'. If, as I argue, the test for the categories needs to be done in terms of their own logical content, and such a test is how we can determine the categories' 'truth' and 'worth', it then seems that the instantiation or existential import of the logical categories plays *no role whatsoever* in their proper deduction or legitimation. As Hegel is reported to claim: 'that things merely *are* does not by itself help them'. (E §42 Z3)

A possible response to these preliminary objections could be that I have not understood the point, since I remain on a 'meta-level' discourse: a discourse which retains the distinction between itself and what it is *about*.[30] Yet what is at stake in the objectivity of thought is the overcoming of meta-level discursiveness, such that what is being cognized *simply is* such cognition. If I understand these points correctly, I believe the objection does not hold. I would provisionally reply that Hegel is clear in that the Logic is *pure form*, the pure form of thinking. So, when we consider the logical categories such as 'being', we are

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[29] This critique is defended in 3.2.

[30] Along these lines, Kreines mobilizes the 'swimming objection' to argue against semantic-first or 'meta-level' approaches. Cf. Kreines, *Reason in the World*, ch. 5.2.

not claiming to cognize something which is different from what 'being' is, in itself. For

there is nothing *to being itself* beyond its formal content: these, the logical determination

and what would be cognizable in the thing, are *one and the same content*. In the case of the

pure logical determinations under investigation in the Logic, there is simply no 'that'

beyond the 'what'. (The same does not hold for empirical concepts.) When we understand

what 'being' is, in itself, we understand *its logical content*, what is logically implied to

support the intelligibility of the category. Unlike empirical concepts, there is nothing to the

category 'being' beyond how it is apprehended and articulated in thought.[31] The crucial

point is that the categories' lack of 'material existence', or necessary reference to 'the real',

would not make thought, at the logical level, any less 'true'. This claim is very different

from the claim that we secure the objectivity of the concept of being because being is

'instantiated by definition, or through the 'conjunctivist' claim that categories are 'not only'

categories of thought, 'but also' categories of being.

(b) Via *the unboundedness of the conceptual*

A developed line of readings, often described under the label 'post-Kantian' or (more

problematically) 'non-metaphysical', takes seriously the requirement to understand thought

as fundamentally *activity*. For these interpreters, Hegel agrees with Kant that thinking is not

passive or receptive, and the truth of objects is not obtained by immediate receptivity of a

purported 'given' content, be it empirical or rational. The so-called 'post-Kantian' readings

of Hegel's Logic have in common the requirement to reject any appeal to a brute 'given'

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[31] Cf. De Boer's claim: 'Nothing remains of reality insofar as it can be thought but the concept as such. The concept as such, in its turn, is nothing but the principle of the objectifying activity that produces the pure concepts constitutive of both knowledge and the objects of knowledge.' de Boer, *On Hegel: The Sway of the Negative*, 52.

for the legitimation of thought's objectivity.[32] If we aim to demonstrate the validity of the

categories of reason, such a demonstration cannot be done in virtue of their applicability or

reference to a thought-external content, some purported form of givenness.

As these interpretations accept that thought is fundamentally activity, and the

activity which characterizes 'us' (qua minded beings), their strategy to 'overcome

subjectivism' cannot rest on claiming the primacy of given 'concepts' (or 'the concept') as

the cognition's truth-maker. Emerging from such a post-Kantian background, McDowell's

proposal on how to understand conceptuality has been influential for understanding Hegel's

overcoming of subjectivism. According to McDowell, Kant was mistaken in his strict

separation between sensibility and understanding. Such a move makes the forms of

intuition (space and time) 'brute facts' about us; facts which cannot be given as reasons in

an account. They are, therefore, not legitimate epistemic conditions.[33] The solution

proposed is elegant: all experiential content is conceptually constituted; it is the kind of

content that can be incorporated into our accounts of the world. After McDowell, this claim

is known as 'the unboundedness of the conceptual' as the 'Hegelian image'[34] renouncing

the 'parochialism' of Kant's appeal to the a priori forms of intuition.

Hegel is supposed to 'overcome subjectivism' by making intelligibility not

constrained by the fixed a priori structure of the human subject, and specifically our

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[32] Among others, loosely following Redding's classification: Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism;* Pippin, *Hegel's Realm of Shadows*; Pinkard, *Hegel's Phenomenology*; Brandom, *A Spirit of Trust;* Sedgwick, *Hegel's Critique of Kant*.
[33] McDowell takes this difference between epistemic and natural facts from W. Sellars. 'So "epistemic", in Sellars's usage, acquires a sense that cuts loose from its etymological connection with knowledge. In the wider sense epistemic facts relate to world–directed thought as such, whether knowledge–involving or not. When he implies that states or episodes of looking are epistemic, his point is that visual experiences are "thoughts" in the sense he explains towards the end of the paper (…). By then he is focusing on episodes rather than states, and "thoughts" are "inner" episodes that possess conceptual content, in a way that is to be understood by modelling them on overt linguistic performances.' McDowell, "Sellars and the Space of Reasons," 3.
[34] McDowell, *Mind and World*, 83.

'sensible' mode of intuition. Intelligibility is rather simply what it is to be something determinate. All determinateness is conceptually structured, because being determinate is what it means for something to be. In Pippin's Aristotelian turn, 'to be is to be intelligible'. Further, our accounts of the world are not individual, but based on social and historical practices. The unintelligible cannot be a part of a coherent experience, not because it does not 'exist', but since it plays no role in our normative, social, justificatory practices of giving and asking for reasons.

The account can make sense of the 'objectivity' of the forms of thought: the forms of thought are not 'simply' the forms of being, but what it means for anything to be determinate. Everything which can be an object for us needs to be determinate, and determination implies the forms of thinking, which have at their basis the characteristic judgmental activity that thinking fundamentally is. That all determination has judgmental activity at its basis grants thought (understood as the apperceptive, judgmental activity of subjects exchanging reasons in a social world) its non-parochial, non-arbitrary status.

But, as Pippin himself recognizes, the aim of the Logic ultimately is the pure form of *truth*, not simply the exhibition of all forms of being determinate. And (as I have claimed), by exhibiting the pure form of truth, the Logic shall legitimize philosophy's form of cognition: comprehension (*begreifen*). The question then arises regarding what renders comprehension its claim to be the 'truth' of the matter, and the 'highest' possible form of cognition, the kind of cognition which can fulfill the most ambitious, or 'speculative' aspirations of reason. What is the meaning of these at least prima facie inflationary claims regarding the 'highness' of reason, truth, and ultimately philosophy itself as truth-aiming cognition? In Pippin's paradigmatic case, the answer seems to be that such an account would represent something like the 'highest mode of intelligibility, the concept's self-

explication'[35]. What we have here is something akin to a revised transcendental understanding of the inner validity of the categories of thought: the categories of philosophy are justified insofar as they exhibit what is logically implied in any attempt at sense-making.[36] The ultimate categories are ultimate because they display the 'highest' degree of possible intelligibility as the implicit condition for experience and cognition. Then the 'truth' at stake in philosophy's mode of cognition, the truth it is supposed to attain, is the display of implicit logical entailments, 'the self-conscious and self-determining conceptual moments necessary for anything to be the determinate thing it is'.[37] The ultimate achievement of the self-determining logical concept does not consist in exhaustive knowledge of *what is*, but in providing the form for the intelligibility of anything insofar as it can be something intelligible: 'in knowing itself, thought knows of all things what it is to be anything.'[38]

Under this line of reading, whatever the highest determination turns out to be, will be so in virtue of exhibiting the maximal 'degree' of intelligibility. At the end, it turns out to be some kind of purposive internal necessity displayed through the final category in the Logic: the concept as the absolute idea.[39] Thought's 'high' and 'absolute' status, its capacity to satisfy the ultimate ambitions of thinking, here amounts to its capacity to account for what is logically presupposed in any determinate normative experience or

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[35] Pippin, *Hegel's Realm of Shadows*, 258; Cf. 52, footnote 30.

[36] By 'transcendental', I understand a reading where validity derives from being shown to be a condition of possibility for (in this case) the always-already conceptually mediated experience. Significantly, Kreines' interpretation of the idea or the true as the 'complete explainer' also involves this form of transcendental account of truth insofar as the absolute idea turns out to be true in virtue of satisfying reason's demand for a 'complete explanation'. Cf. *Reason in the world*, 205.

[37] Pippin, *Hegel's Realm of Shadows*, 257.

[38] Pippin, 266.

[39] Pippin, 300. The highest determination is the idea, but I take Pippin's point to be that the concept represents the highest doctrine of the Logic.

account. This decisively transcendental claim implies reading the claim that 'God' (in the 'pure form' arrived at by the end of the Logic, the absolute idea) is 'truth' *because* it is the form of intelligibility *implicitly* supporting any determinate self-conscious, social-normative experience or account. The absolute idea is True in virtue of its maximal intelligibility.

It seems implausible to me that Hegel would affirm that the 'highness' of the logical content proper to the absolute idea rests on its being the condition of intelligibility, implicitly supporting our cognitive acts, or even the very possibility of our meaningful experience of reality. The meaning of 'God' would seem to be deflated, made into a version of Kant's supreme transcendental principle. To state the problem clearly, although I agree with the emphasis on thought as mind's activity, I am unsure if we can harmonize Hegel's inflationary claims of the task of philosophy with the 'unboundedness' of the conceptual and the transcendental interpretation of the Logic. I am likewise unsure how this reading could provide a *grounding* for speculative cognition as applied to reality, which, as I expose below (section 1.5), is a core function of the project of the Logic. Indeed, transcendentally inspired commentators tend to downplay the significance of the 'concrete' sciences of philosophy for Hegel, especially when it comes to the philosophy of nature.[40]

The reading is further troubled by the fact that there is a crucial realist commitment in Hegel: the existence of *externality*, irrational, contingent, and finite elements in both reality *and* our experience of it. Such an externality is what is constitutive of the realm of the *natural*, in contrast to the logical and the spiritual: absolute externality refers to that

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[40] For an overview of the reception of Hegel's Philosophy of nature, see Ferrini, "From Disparagement To Appreciation: Shifting Paradigms and Interdisciplinary Openings in Interpreting Hegel'S Philosophy of Nature." A notable exception to this trend is Rand, "The Importance and Relevance of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Nature'"; See also the recent Pinkard, "The Prospects for an Idealist Natural Philosophy."

which is neither thought nor constituted by thinking; it is not inherently conceptual.[41] Hegel

emphasizes the connection between such an externality and the 'sensible' mode of

apprehension, or through indeed intuition (*Anschauung*): 'The being that is solely for itself,

a being that is not that of the idea, is the sensory, finite being of the world.' (E §70) Indeed,

the sensory provides non-rational experiential content, and furthermore, the cognitive form

of *representation* (*Vorstellung*) 'has such sensory material [*Stoff*] for its content'. (E §20 A)

The existence of externality, and its bearing upon our experience through sensibility,

disturbs the claim of the unboundedness of the conceptual, for it affirms that there is

content which is not properly conceptual, and that such content does have a bearing on our

experience qua sensible beings. Intelligibility does not exhaust all there is. If this is the

case, then to be is not necessarily to be rationally intelligible, and rational intelligibility is

rather a higher achievement of thinking, not what (transcendentally) characterizes

experience or reality *as such*. The fact that aspects of (our experience of) reality do not

make rational sense ought not undermine the true objectivity of thought, its claim to be able

to grasp what is true in the highest sense.

The existence of externality disturbs the 'unboundedness of the conceptual', but it

would not trouble a reading where rational cognition is justified not in virtue of exhibiting

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[41] Hegel's philosophical use of 'externality' comprises at least two interrelated senses, one we might call *absolute*, the other *relative*. The relative use of externality is *relative to* what is being talked about: for example, when discussing a category, a category can retain *externality* insofar as it does not logically support itself, but requires something *external* to it for its complete intelligibility –for example, to understand the pure content of 'cause', we require appealing to its effect, which is a different category, initially appearing as 'external' in relation to cause (see chapter 3). The *absolute* use of externality is the externality that characterizes the natural as *such*: that which is constitutively thought-external. In considering one of the senses of nature to be the thought-external, or 'the real', I follow Martin's claim that there is a distinction between thought and the real, such that the real is not constituted by thinking, and yet can be made intelligible. As Martin remarks: '[nature's] distinctively non-logical mode of being is more aptly expressed by Hegels claim that nature exhibits the "form of otherness" or "externality". While pure thoughts are characterized by 'internality' insofar each of them is both distinct from the others and systematically interrelated with them, 'otherness' or 'externality' means that nature is a realm that allows for things that are independent of and thus external to each other.' Martin, *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*.

the always already somehow present conditions of intelligibility. Such a form of cognition

is justified not in virtue of what (implicitly?) happens in experience and cognition, *but what*

is true in what happens, even if this truth were to play no role in the articulation of our

minimal sense of experience.[42] For philosophy is not a 'narrative [*Erzählung*] of what

happens', but 'a cognition of *that which is true in what happens*, in order further to

comprehend on the basis of this truth what in the narrative *appears* as mere happening [*ein*

blosses Geschehen]." (GW 12:22, my emphasis).

(c) Via the divine status of thinking

Overcoming Kantian 'subjectivism' cannot therefore depend on an identity with a

metaphysically prior content, nor in virtue of the claim that conceptual intelligibility

exhausts reality. But what secures the non-subjective status of thinking, if neither

metaphysical correspondence, nor a transcendental claim regarding the implicitly

conceptual structure of all experience and cognition? A proposal of what could confer such

'high' status to thinking relies on rendering thought as 'divine'. Such a proposal has been

argued by Tolley.[43] The divinity of thought is entailed or demonstrated through Hegel's

display of absolute form: 'because thinking in its absolute form would consist in the

complete and total 'agreement' or 'harmony' of the whole of what is thought with the

whole of what there is – i.e. it would be the whole 'truth [*Wahrheit*]' – Hegel concludes

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[42] This is not to claim that there is no 'transcendental' aspect in the Logic, the *PS*, or even Hegel's 'theoretical' philosophy more generally. My reading is compatible with the claim that it might turn out that indeed the idea is the condition of possibility or intelligibility of experience and reality. But this would not be *why* it is true.
[43] Tolley, "Hegel on the Relation between Logos and the Science of Logic"; Tolley, "The Subject in Hegel's Absolute Idea"; Tolley, "Hegel's Conception of Thinking in His Logics." For a more traditional interpretation of Hegel's idealism as inherently theological, see Williams, *Hegel on the Proofs and the Personhood of God*.

that we ought to recognize that thinking, and with it, the subject matter of logic itself, has shown itself to have the shape of something divine.'[44]

The divine status of thinking is indeed an important element of the story, if correctly understood. It illuminates why thinking would be the means for truth, that Hegel is not deflating the significance of truth by making assertions such as that 'the true nature of the object is a product of *Geist*'.[45] It consequently illuminates why a form of cognition whose satisfaction is not given via a 'correspondence' with external facts can nonetheless have a claim to display the truth-content of reality. Thus, it amends an important element of the transcendental readings: thinking's claim to validity and truth does not stand or fall on experience possessing a conceptual structure. That all experience is conceptually articulated, or 'presupposes' a teleological-conceptual form, is not what grants thought its dignity. Thought is true in virtue of itself.

Yet, Tolley shifts between two articulations of the meaning of the divinity of thinking. On the one hand, he (correctly, in my view) emphasizes that the Logic is supposed to be the science of *the truth*, such as the culmination of the Logic exhibits the divinity of thinking by providing the fully mediated, most internally developed thought-determination: that which exhibits truth in terms of a coincidence between the concept and objectivity (as we shall see in detail in chapters 3, 5 and 6). Thought is not valid in virtue of corresponding to some other content, nor in virtue of supplying the conditions of intelligibility for every experience or 'account-giving'. Thought *is* the means of the truth: in the most 'purified' sense, thought is the activity by which things are displayed *in truth*.

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[44] Tolley, "Hegel's Conception of Thinking in His Logics," 73.

[45] Hegel, *Lectures on Logic, Berlin,* 1831; E §19 Z2: 'Only in thinking and as thinking is this content, God himself, in its truth'.'

(Whatever this means.) With the culmination of the Logic, pure thinking has internally determined the categorical framework for comprehension, things as exhibited from a 'divine', self-satisfying perspective. Other living beings cannot relate to reality in a truth-tracking way, not because they do not engage with reality, but because they cannot engage with reality with an awareness of the truth-disclosive mediation of thinking. (Cf. E §2)

But, on the other hand, Tolley seems to backtrack to a metaphysical interpretation of the divinity of thought by making thought's objectivity conditional upon God's creation. For example, Tolley claims that 'for Hegel, rather than being about something 'in' our accounts of the world, or 'in' our accounts of our accounts, the subject-matter of logic is said to be 'in' the world itself […], in both spirit and in nature, as its divine creative-productive form, as providing its very being (essence, existence).'[46] While one might in principle agree with the topic-neutrality of the Logic, Tolley interprets Hegel's universal requirement for Logic as expressing an ultimate coincidence with something standing as the thought-external truth-maker: 'it is necessary to ascribe a kind of active causality to thinking' as what 'produces' the world.'[47] These claims, as well as his most recently defended 'spirit-neutral' reading, suggest that the primary sense of thinking is the thinking of an external artificer who produces reality through an efficient causality: the logical is 'in' the world because (or insofar as) God has 'provided' the essence, existence of all things. If this form of justifying the objectivity of pure thinking is correct, then the divinity of thinking is derivative upon its correspondence with the true being of things as caused by

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[46] Tolley ,"The Subject in Hegel's Absolute Idea," 166

[47] Tolley, "Hegel's Conception of Thinking in His Logics," 98. As I show, this model of teleological objectivity relies on the logical form of *external purposiveness*, which, although important for the articulation of conceptuality, is not the form appropriate for speculative objects. On the limitations of external purposiveness, see chapters 5-6.

God's creative act. It thereby involves a regression to a metaphysical interpretation: the cognition is true in virtue of its correspondence to a metaphysically prior truth-maker. It is not self-satisfying.

The metaphysical implication of such an understanding of thought's divinity, in my view, cannot account for the fact that the concern of Hegel in Logic is not to 'deduce' the God-provided determinations of reality, but to ground and develop the science which cognizes reality following the intangible demands of thought. Thought determinations are not true in virtue of being 'in' the world as 'produced' by a divine intelligence. As we shall see (chapters 2 and 6), philosophy's intimacy to religion does not derive from the fact that they share the common prejudice that reality is in itself structured following God's imposed design, and thinking is how we unveil or discover it. Thought does not need to 'produce' the world to be its *Prinzip* and *Grundlage*, because thought's divinity rests in its capacity of an 'inner' form of self-satisfaction. In its 'universality', thought 'finds satisfaction within itself.' (E §12 A)[48] This form of satisfaction could not be the case if thought's divinity were conditional upon grasping a pre-determined, God-imposed form.

The divinity of thought ought not be understood 'metaphysically'. For a metaphysical interpretation, as I describe it, undermines the possibility of self-satisfaction and thus unconditionality (and, along with it, an important sense of *freedom*): it makes thought's truth conditional upon its correspondence to some other thing.

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[48] 'This struggling with the finite, the overcoming of the limit, constitutes the stamp of the divine in the human mind and forms a necessary stage of the eternal spirit.' (E §441 Z)

1.5.

These are the reasons why the avenues presented appear to me insufficient for a complete

understanding of Hegel's 'overcoming of subjectivism' and, in turn, his proper break with

Kant. The objections presented serve the function of motivating the requirement for a

different reading. The dissertation has the task of providing conclusive support beyond

superficial objections. I reject the attempt to justify the form of cognition which philosophy

obtains ('truth') in virtue of metaphysical correspondence. Truth can only be satisfied by

'absolute' form –it is not a relation which obtains in virtue of a coincidence with a

presupposed object or content, external to thinking. If this claim is accurate, then it is

necessary to rethink the meaning of truth away from traditional correspondence. If this

implication is, in turn, correct, and if traditional correspondence stands at the basis of

metaphysically positing the primacy of a truth-maker for the making true of a cognition,

then the traditional metaphysical picture will likewise be inadequate. As I argue in chapter

3 (anticipated in the textual support presented in this chapter), thinking must be true *in*

terms of itself, and we must be able to show so. Providing such a demonstration is the task

of the Logic. It is likewise important that our reading of Hegel is compatible with the

existence of 'externality', provisionally understood as content which is intelligible, but

irrational, not inherently conceptual, and which nonetheless plays a role in experience and

is furthermore essential in the case of properly empirical forms of cognition.

The overcoming of subjectivism, as I understand it, amounts to the complete

justification of philosophy, which, in Hegel's view, Kant was incapable of securing: the

possibility of a cognitive activity which has Truth as the proper form of its epistemic

satisfaction. Truth is obtained in virtue of a comprehension of reality in terms of the highest

possible categories. The meaning and demonstration of the 'highness' of the categories is not stipulated, but scientifically derived and thus justified by the nature of the necessary movement of thought. In virtue of the highness of its categories, philosophy can satisfy the demands of 'absolute' objects: God, nature as a whole, and the realm of spiritual (ethical, historical) reality. The understanding of philosophy as cognition from the highest categories ('concepts') means, on the one hand, that philosophy possesses the proper framework to cognize 'absolute' subject matters (those proper to religion and spirit). (Cf. E §8) But philosophy implies, on the other hand, a certain notion of the epistemic subject as having achieved a certain *standpoint*: the overcoming of the opposition of consciousness.

In line with these results, I believe overcoming subjectivism has two necessary aspects: (a) overcoming the opposition of consciousness and (b) the justification of concepts for the comprehension of speculative subject matters. The logical project has as its aim to 'deduce' the logical categories in virtue of them being true 'in and for themselves', in virtue of their own logical content. Such an aim makes no sense unless we grant a certain status to thinking. Overcoming the opposition of consciousness is a condition of intelligibility for the logical project: that we understand, and grant thought the capacity to satisfy itself by means of itself. Thus, the first step must be accomplished *before* entering the Logic. It is the first step that I am to explain by tracing important moments within the tripartite notion of *Geist* in chapter 2.

Ultimately, the derivation would supply the pure form of truth, the realization of self-satisfying thinking, which would complete the exhibition of (b), the appropriate sense of objectivity of thought, which would ground the philosophical science. Such a grounding will entail the derivation of proper conceptual categories for absolute cognition. Before closing the chapter, I need to justify two key claims: (1) my claim that Hegel views the

Logic as having the function of grounding the philosophical science in the terms I have

described; (2) my claim that overcoming the opposition of consciousness is a prerequisite

for understanding the Logic. I turn to textual support to justify my claims. When

considering the limitations of symbolic representation as a method for philosophy, Hegel

claims:

> In its concrete sciences, philosophy must take its logical element from logic, not from mathematics; it can only be an expedient of philosophical incapacity to resort for the logical element of philosophy to the shapes which it assumes in other sciences, many of which are only adumbrations of this element and others even perversions of it. Besides, the mere application of such borrowed formulas is an external operation; the application [*Anwendung*] itself must be preceded by the awareness of both their value [*Wert*] and their meaning [*Bedeutung*], and *only the consideration of thought* [die denkende Betrachtung,], not any authority drawn from mathematics, yields this awareness. Logic itself is this awareness regarding such formulas. It strips them of their particular form, rendering it superfluous and useless*; it rectifies them and alone procures for them their justification, their sense and value.*[*Solches Bewußtseyn über sie ist die Logik selbst, und diß Bewußtseyn streifft ihre particuläre Form ab, macht diese überflüssig und unnütz, berichtigt sie und verschafft ihnen allein ihre Berechtigung, Sinn und Werth.*] (GW 21:207, emphasis mine)

Only the Logic 'rectifies' and provides the 'justification' of the categories to be mobilized

for the 'concrete sciences' of philosophy. Similarly, when considering the concrete

philosophical sciences concerning the Logic, he claims:

> These [concrete] sciences, just as they had the logic as their prototype, hold on to its logical principle or the concept as in them their formative factor [*Vorbildner*]. As contrasted with them, the logic is of course the *formal* science, yet the science of the *absolute form* which is implicit totality and contains *the pure idea of truth itself* [*reine Idee der Wahrheit selbst*]. (GW 12:25)

In his Lectures, Hegel is reported to claim that the other philosophical sciences are to be

considered as 'applied' Logic: 'by contrast the other philosophical sciences, the philosophy

of nature and the philosophy of spirit appear as a kind of *applied logic, for logic is their*

animating soul. In this respect, these other sciences are concerned simply with *recognizing the logical form*s in the formations of nature and of spirit'. (E §24 Z2, my emphasis) He writes that the project of a Philosophy of Right 'presupposes' the Logic as providing the true method for philosophy. (PR §2 A, Cf. PR §6, §31)[49] These remarks suggest that the Logic has an exceptional role in Hegel's conception of philosophy: it has a *grounding* function. Logic grounds the philosophical sciences by justifying the pure determinations of thought, enabling comprehension, thereby supplying the method for speculative (philosophical) cognition. The Logic is thus *first philosophy*: the philosophical justification of philosophy. If my interpretation is correct, the grounding function of the Logic accomplishes the task which Hegel considers Kant left open: to expose the theoretical legitimacy of the concepts of reason, the pure concepts which would be adequate for comprehension, and which Kant deemed unjustified based on his epistemic restrictivism.

I turn to the second claim. It is textually clear that Hegel takes 'the overcoming of the opposition of consciousness' to be a *prerequisite* for understanding the Logic. In the introduction to the greater *Logic*, he claims:

> 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 [die Trennung *des Gegenstandes von der Gewißheit seiner selbst vollkommen sich aufgelöst hat, und die Wahrheit, dieser Gewißheit, so wie diese Gewißheit, der Wahrheit gleich geworden ist*.]
> The pure science thus presupposes the liberation [*Befreyung*] from the opposition of consciousness. It contains *thought in so far as this thought is equally the fact* [die Sache] *as it is in itself; or the fact in itself in so far as this is equally pure thought*. As science, truth

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[49] For contributions surrounding the debates on the 'systematicity' of Hegel's political philosophy (i.e., the question of the relevance of the logical method, its 'metaphysical' or 'methodological' role, and the Logic itself for understanding Hegel's philosophy of spirit), see Stein and Brooks, *Hegel's Political Philosophy On the Normative Significance of Method and System*.

is pure self-consciousness as it develops itself and has the shape of the self [*die Gestalt des Selbt*s], so that that which exists in and for itself is the conscious concept [*das an und für sich seyende gewußter Begriff*] and the concept as such is that which exists in and for itself. This objective thinking is thus the content of pure science. (GW 21:33-34)

The quote makes clear: the mode of consciousness which has been 'deduced' in the *PS* is 'absolute knowledge'. Although we do not yet have the resources to know what 'absolute knowledge' entails, we know it must bring about the complete resolution of the opposition of consciousness, understood as 'the separation of the *subject matter* from the *certainty of itself*': truth from certainty. Absolute knowledge enables 'objective thinking': the certainty that the forms under examination are in themselves what they are in pure thought. These assertions, under my reading, do not support a metaphysical thesis according to which thought is a priori secured to be equal to being, or that by examining pure thinking we are disclosing reality as it is 'mind-independently'. These rather refer to the proper *epistemic standpoint* for the philosophical subject: one which grants thinking a claim to sui generis validity. Absolute knowing is the standpoint from which we can understand the fact itself as equal to the certainty of the fact; that what is cognizable about reality is how it displays itself in the form of thought. Thought does not need to be 'outside' itself, demonstrating that it 'exists' as material objects 'exist', to be taken as true. We have, of course, yet to see what such pure thinking develops, and which are the forms that, within such development, prove to be true *in and for themselves*, in contrast to being 'true' in virtue of their correct application, or some other form of conditionality. But the very possibility of the logical deduction rests in that we understand the objectivity of thinking: that thinking can be true in its terms. But, as the above quote suggests, consciousness recognizes such a possibility only after the annihilation of the claims of ultimacy of an external source of epistemic authority. It requires going through a *learning experience*.

1.6. Conclusion

In this introductory chapter, I motivated my reading of Hegel considering the question of Hegel's 'post-Kantianism'. I explained the relevant Kantian background (section 1). I claimed Hegel agrees with Kant in the inadequacy of the categories of the understanding to meet the 'highest aspirations' of thinking. But, contrary to Kant, as shown in section 2, the task is to *justify* higher categories. With such claims in mind, in section 3, I presented an overview of three lines of reading Hegel's 'overcoming' of Kantian 'subjectivism'. I displayed their positive aspects as well as their shortcomings and motivated a reading where Hegel's post-Kantianism ought to be understood, at its core, as a legitimizing task: to provide an adequate grounding for philosophy as absolute cognition.

I hold the most appropriate path for understanding Hegel's move 'beyond' Kant is neither primarily metaphysical nor epistemological (although it shall incorporate elements of both), but rather it concerns the relevant conception of philosophy. Overcoming subjectivism is a necessary moment for justifying an 'unconditional' science. My reading is thus meant to amend the shortcomings identified in the interpretative proposals outlined in 3. Against the metaphysical reading, thought is not 'objective' in virtue of concepts existing independently of the activity of thinking. The objectivity of conceptual categories is to be obtained via a *pure logical examination*. Against the transcendental reading, the pure logical examination does not show the True categories to be such in virtue of being the ultimate condition for the intelligibility of experience and cognition. Their truth must emerge from *their own logical content*, independently of the supporting role this content plays (or not) in our experience and attempts at sense-making. Finally, the highness of

thinking as the activity by which truth can be satisfied can be rendered as 'divine'. But pace Tolley, the meaning of thought's divinity is lost if we make thought's inner satisfaction conditional upon corresponding to a prior, God-imposed order.

In my reading, the overcoming of subjectivism is twofold. We require (a) the preparatory 'overcoming of the opposition of consciousness' and (b) the justificatory deduction of the pure form of truth via the derivation of categories proper to reason, which amounts to the demonstration of the validity of speculative cognition. (a) guarantees the epistemic standpoint where we no longer understand truth to be satisfied exclusively via correspondence with a purported intelligible externality. Within such a standpoint, we understand what it would mean to confer a claim to sui generis validity to thinking: a worth and 'dignity' which is not conditional upon its 'explanatory' value vis-à-vis the real, or another presupposed realm of objects. (b) exhibits pure thinking to have the adequate means for the cognition of reason's speculative aspirations, thereby justifying philosophy as truth-aiming conceptual cognition. Such an exhibition amounts to Hegel's 'true critique' of the categories, the demonstration of the validity of the categories by means of exposing and evaluating their logical content.

Although the most difficult argumentative step would appear to be granting sui generis or 'divine' validity to thinking, it is actually (b) where Hegel locates the most significant philosophical requirements: the exhaustive development of thought's determinations based on thinking's own activity. Hegel takes (a) to be rather a result of a revolution in the possibilities of our thinking, a revolution which can be broadly philosophically and even historically reconstructed. At some points, Hegel almost even seems to take this aspect for granted –when claiming, for example, that a condition of philosophizing is to give up the view regarding 'the given material of intuition and the

manifold of representation as the real' and claiming that 'religion, moreover, presupposes as having already been given up.' (GW 12:21; Cf. GW 21:142; E §50 A) The next chapter is dedicated to an attempt to read the overcoming of the opposition of consciousness as the epistemic standpoint gained by *Geist*. The rest of the dissertation focuses on (b).

Chapter 2

0. Introduction

In chapter 1, I established some preliminary criteria for how to read Hegel's philosophy as 'overcoming' of subjectivism vis-à-vis Kant's transcendental idealism. It involves two different moments. The first moment 'overcomes' the 'opposition of consciousness' by providing a determinate epistemic perspective. The second moment exhibits the form of truth as an achievement of pure thinking. The two moments are related in the following manner. The argument for the objectivity of thinking requires exposing thought to achieve the highest form of truth available for the cognition of things. But meeting these two conditions implies that there is a standard for its form of epistemic satisfaction: the standard satisfied by philosophy. The standard of epistemic satisfaction can only be understood when having achieved a certain perspective. The idea of this perspective, or the idea of 'absolute knowledge', is the overcoming of the opposition of consciousness. Thus, the argument for the overcoming of the opposition of consciousness is different in nature from the demonstration or exhibition of the objectivity of thought: this latter *presupposes* a standpoint reached by the cognizing subject, while the former brings about the standpoint itself.

Understood in this manner, the overcoming of the opposition of consciousness is a condition of intelligibility of the logical project. And if the results of the Logic justify and ground philosophy as speculative cognition (*begreifen*), then understanding such an overcoming is necessary for understanding Hegel's grounding of philosophy.

In this chapter, I aim to show how overcoming the opposition of consciousness is a standpoint available for 'us', such that we understand the meaning and possibility of 'absolute' knowing. I propose understanding this step through Hegel's tripartite notion of *Geist* as a concept of mind which unites the Kantian import of the active role of the subject with two necessary mediations: the constitutive import of thinking through the objectivization of spirit, and the 'elevation' of mind above the finite in absolute spirit.

The argument is as follows. First, I supply evidence on the importance of overcoming the opposition of consciousness. Hegel took this overcoming to be 'deduced' by showing the possibility of a certain *epistemic standpoint*. Such an epistemic standpoint can be best understood in line with Kant's idea of a cognition from *reason*, a form of cognition with an ambivalent status within Kant's theoretical philosophy. As established in chapter 1, unlike Kant, Hegel believed cognition from reason could be epistemically satisfied: Hegel thus rejects a 'strong restrictivism'. In sections 2, 3, and 4, I argue Hegel's tripartite concept of *Geist* illuminates how a reason-based criterion of truth is a possibility for 'us'. While there are other avenues for understanding the achievement of 'absolute spirit' (for example, by centering on the role of the *Phenomenology*), I focus on how Hegel's understanding of 'mind' incorporates the conditions for legitimizing an activity that takes its form of satisfaction to depend on pure thinking. If the argument is sound, there is no need to appeal to metaphysical realism, a foundationalist first principle, nor a function of intellectual intuition of the whole for entering the standpoint required from philosophy as 'absolute cognition'. We must rather understand (i) the meaning of thought and its essential relation to mindedness; (ii) the constitutive force of thought in the world as responsive to reason, and (iii) the form of cognitive engagement not based on conditions standing 'outside' the pure process of thinking itself.

2.1

The question of overcoming the opposition of consciousness is different from the question of demonstrating the complete 'truth' of thought, although these are related. I take the question of the truth of thought to ask what makes the *thinking* which is at stake in the *Science of logic* somehow identical to "truth", or what is true 'in and for itself'. The challenge for the truth question is to explain how, or in which way, the forms of thought are not merely the forms in which a subject must experience reality, but that the logical is "objective thinking", the realm of "*truth unveiled, truth as it is in and for itself*". (GW 21:34) In contrast, the challenge here is to understand how a non-oppositional epistemic perspective is possible for the cognizing subject.

The textual evidence supports the interpretation of the overcoming of the opposition of consciousness, where it constitutes a determinate standpoint, as it reflects a perspective the subject must assume regarding thought. As a standpoint, it is to be contrasted with a 'first principle' or some other first-order claim regarding the nature of reality. It is a perspective *Geist* gains, a standpoint which philosophy 'shares with religion': that it will not 'admit finitude as a true being, an ultimate, an absolute, or as something non-posited, uncreated, eternal' (GW 12:142). The standpoint enables us to not regard 'the given material of intuition and the manifold of representation as the real', but rather 'what is thought and the concept' (12:21). It is then not an understanding of being, but an epistemic standpoint insofar as it is concerned with what subjects take as acceptable criteria for the validity of a cognition. If the activity (philosophy) is to make sense, it can only make sense by granting pure thinking a truth-disclosive status.

This perspective is not natural for 'ordinary consciousness'. Hegel clarifies the requirement of such epistemic standpoint in the introductory remarks to his Logics: that 'ordinary consciousness' presupposes a 'separation' between 'the *content* of knowledge and its *form*, or of *truth* and *certainty'* (GW 21:28). According to this separation, the material of knowledge comes to thinking from outside; thought is empty form and its matter is a 'ready-made world' which thinking, to 'fill itself' with content, must apprehend. (21:28)[50] Truth, according to the separation of consciousness, obtains when thought adequates itself to the presupposed external object: 'thought is expected to be subservient and responsive to the subject matter.' (21:28) After outlining the forms of how thought takes itself to be separate from its object, Hegel claims:

> 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 [*so sind sie die Irrthümer, deren durch alle Theile des Geistigen und natürlichen Universums durchgeführte Widerlegung die Philosophie ist*]; or rather, since they block the entrance to philosophy, they are the errors that must be removed before one can enter it. (21:29)

Thus, there is a natural standpoint that must be refuted by showing the implausibility of ordinary consciousness' epistemic presupposition. The implausibility, according to Hegel, has been demonstrated in the *PS*: philosophy, as a form of absolute knowledge, thus rests on the 'true base' of the results of the *PS*.[51] As we saw in chapter 1, Hegel calls the *PS*

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[50] ‚Es wird erstens vorausgesetzt, daß der Stoff des Erkennens, als eine fertige Welt ausserhalb dem Denken, an und für sich vorhanden, daß das Denken für sich leer sey, als eine Form äusserlich zu jener Materie hinzutrete, sich damit erfülle, erst daran einen Inhalt gewinne und dadurch ein reales Erkennen werde.‘

[51] Cf. GW 21:32: 'This reflection brings us to a statement of the standpoint [*Standpunkt*] 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* 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.

'nothing other than' the 'deduction' of the 'concept of pure science'. (GW 21:32) It deduces the concept of pure science by showing how immediate consciousness, the 'simplest appearance of spirit', 'develops its dialectic up to the standpoint of the philosophical science' (E §25 A). The overcoming of the opposition of consciousness is, in this sense, preliminary. It constitutes the valid 'presupposition' for 'pure science'. (21:33) Only from such a standpoint can we do 'pure science', meaning the science that can examine and evaluate thought as such, and, when carried over to the 'concrete', can comprehend the concrete based on what is true therein.

2.2.

As outlined in chapter 1, Hegel praises and recuperates Kant's account of 'rational comprehension' as required for any account giving. Comprehension has truth 'in the highest sense', rather than correctness, as the standard for epistemic satisfaction. But Hegel rejects Kant's restrictivism concerning the possibility of rational comprehension as an epistemic achievement available for 'us'. I suggest this uptake of Kant's notion of 'comprehension' as reason's proper epistemic achievement is how we ought to understand what Hegel took to be the form for the highest cognitive activity.

I suggest we depart from the notion of mind or *Geist*. If Hegel rejects strong restrictivism, and strong restrictivism relies on a determinate understanding of mind, then Hegel must have a different understanding of 'mind'. The relevant concept of mind shall legitimate cognition from reason. I take my cue from Hegel's description of the overcoming of the finitude of mind in the *Encyclopedia*:

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.'

> In the absolute truth of this liberation [of *Geist* from its finite shapes] the three stages-[1] *finding* a world before it as a presupposed world [*das* Vorfinden *einer Welt al seiner vorausgesetzen*], [2] *generating* a world as posited by itself [*das* Erzeugen *derselben al seines von ihm gesetzen*], and [3] gaining freedom [*Befreiung*] from it and in it- are one and the same. To the infinite form of this truth the semblance purifies itself to become knowledge of it. (E §386)

These three stages (that in the 'absolute truth' prove to be 'the same') are the epistemic process by which the mind reaches the standpoint proper to philosophy. For understanding the overcoming of the opposition of consciousness, I examine the epistemic conditions enabled by Hegel's tripartite notion of *Geist*. I care about tracing a continuity between the most subjective and singular moment of *Geist* and the 'absolute *Geist*' which has overcome the opposition of consciousness, such that we can understand what is at stake in absolute knowing. This account is not a 'theory of mind', but rather an articulation of the relevant stages of thought's process of self-actualization in *Geist*, such that the subjects who think (without which there would otherwise not be any thought) can take thinking itself as the object in a determinate cognition. Being able to take thought as the means for truth is a function to which we might refer as the 'elevation' (*Erhebung*) or 'liberation' (*Befreiung*) of consciousness, whose result is 'objective thinking'.

In the *Encyclopedia*, *Geist* has three 'moments': *subjective*, *objective,* and *absolute*. I consider these mirror significant distinctions from Hegel's 1807 *Phenomenology of spirit* (henceforth *PS*), despite the discontinuity between the aims of each text. Considering *Geist* in general, (i) it has an essential connection to real, natural, embodied human beings and history; (ii) it has an essential connection to *thought* –what is true in and of itself (*Wahrhaften and und für sich*). (E §377)

First, mindedness has the concrete existence of a kind of natural being as its basis. Hegel claims that '*for us,* mind has *nature* as its *presupposition*'. (*E* §381) Despite this "presupposition", from the philosophical perspective, *Geist* must be understood as having primacy, being "absolutely first", with respect to nature.[52] But in time, nature is first. On the side of the continuity between spirit and nature, the death of the animal organism marks the transition from nature to *Geist*, and the progress of spirit occurs in the *Encyclopedia* by breaking free of natural immediacy. "Breaking free" must be understood in the context of Hegel's characterization of mind by the inner opposition between its *freedom* and its *determinism*: 'of the free agency of the soul in contrast to the bodiliness external to it, and again the intimate connection between the two.' (*E* §379) One could read these claims as indicating that nature conditions human behavior at the level of mindedness. Against this, in my view, that the mind has nature as 'presupposition' suggests that the kind of activity which the mind realizes cannot be realized without beings doing the realizing.[53] The being realizing the activity is the human being.

Thought needs the mind because thought is activity. Hegel is reported to claim: 'As human beings we are the activation of thinking. I am this very activation.'[54] Hegel understands *thought* as the free activity of *form*, or the activity of "self-equality". (GW 9:39) By apprehending externality in a determinate form, thought 'appropriates' what is

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[52] The kind of primacy enjoyed by *Geist* with respect to nature is analogous to the kind of primacy enjoyed by the Logic with respect to the real. But this does not mean that *for us* (for the standpoint of the conscious subject) pointing towards the Logic's indifference for finite thinkers will be a satisfactory explanation of what is going on in absolute knowledge. There is an incongruity, in my view, between the problem of what often comes first in the order of explanation ('for us'), and what *has primacy* at the level of 'the concept' ('for itself').

[53] Since my aim is not to provide an interpretation of the *PS*, I will be glossing over many essential distinctions for the project of the *PS*, such as that between the shapes of *consciousness* and *self-consciousness* proper, as well as themes which are quite well known in the literature, as the role of central notions such as *desire* and *recognition*.

[54] Hegel, *Lectures on Logic, Berlin, 1831*, 3.

other from itself and changes it into something meaningful. The negativity is productive in two ways. First, it changes the matter into something intelligible. Second, negativity allows thought to 'move' beyond anything given. So, Hegel: "Mind is not an inert entity but is rather what is absolutely restless, pure activity, the negating or the ideality of every fixed determination of the understanding". (*E* §378 Z) Accordingly, as the negativity of thinking enables thought to move beyond anything given, thought is the capacity of transcending anything posited as an ultimate for it, or even retreating fully into itself. This constitutes a basic aspect of thought's freedom.

If we are consistent with the basic claims of *Geist* (that thinking is mind's characteristic activity, and that such an activity requires an embodied realization), we obtain the implication that the activity of thought requires beings who realize it. There is no thinking without mind, and there is no mind without individuals. The claim does not entail that the *validity* of the logical categories, or the determinations of thought, will depend on some given factor such as the 'form' of the human mind, whatever that might be. It is the claim that thought needs to take place to exist, for its form of existence is as activity, and activity cannot exist unless it is exercised.[55]

In its immediacy, mind is consciousness. As sensible, consciousness is beholden to externality. But Hegel also claims consciousness is capable of 'freeing itself' from its epistemic dependency on such immediacy. So Hegel:

> Consciousness is spirit as concrete, self-aware knowledge – to be sure, a knowledge bound to externality, but the progression of this subject matter [*Gegenstand*], like the development of all natural and spiritual life, rests exclusively on the nature of *the pure essentialities*

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[55] Pippin, *Hegel's realm of shadows*, 129: 'That is, given what Hegel has said about the temporal dimensions of the "movement" of the SL, for example that it even parallels the history of philosophy, it would be odd for Hegel to defend a position according to which such conceptual content is fixed and eternal, à la Frege. Fixed and eternal is exactly what he most of all does not want.'

[reinen Wesenheiten] that constitute [*ausmachen*] 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. (GW 21:8)

Thinking is the essence of mind. It is a productive activity of negation. But how could mind recognize thought as objective, such that it can take thought's 'essentialities' for its subject matter 'as they are in and for themselves'? Subjective mind –consciousness-- does not have the resources to do so. Given consciousness' dependence on externality for its basic cognitive acts, it assumes the form of "*representational thought" --Vorstellung*. (GW 9:26) Representation is the vehicle of thought by which the subject matter appears in the form of a purported self-sufficient object. It arises naturally from the oppositional nature of consciousness itself: that consciousness, in its natural and sensible immediacy, is burdened by an object which it takes to be determined in and for itself.[56] Since the finite form of consciousness relies on the form of representation, it is not transparently aware of thought's necessary contribution to the constitution of the unity of the object in its conceptual intelligibility. It takes the external side of the object as if self-sufficient, and as what is true.[57] Because it takes the object as self-sufficient, it takes correspondence with presupposed externality as the proper modality of epistemic satisfaction.

2.3

For these reasons, if consciousness were all there was to mindedness, and if a requirement for absolute science is granting a certain status to thinking, then the demands for absolute

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[56] See Brinkmann, *Idealism without Limits,* chapter 3.

[57] See the following critical remarks leveled by Hegel against Fichte: "But this deed [thinking thinking] should no longer be called consciousness; for consciousness holds [*schliesst*] within itself the opposition of the 'I' and its object which is not to be found in that original deed. 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*." (GW 21:47-8)

knowledge could not be met by us. The cognition would be burdened by conditionality: assuming validity to depend on its capacity to represent a given. But "subjective mind" is only the immediate moment of *Geist*. That there are further levels allows Hegel to accept the necessity of thinkers for intelligibility, the "limits" of thought at the level of consciousness, and nonetheless reject strong restrictivism.

In the *PS*, Hegel argues that comprehension begins with abandoning the notion of immediate consciousness as the sole modality of thinking. The abandonment occurs in the transitions from self-consciousness to reason, and from reason to *Geist*. (Cf. GW 9:135) Here, the introduction of *Geist* marks a new moment in mind's self-understanding: the realization that "the world" is a historical achievement of "us", of the collective workings of self-conscious beings. If we speak rightly when we identify the collective attainments of human history with "us", then there must be a manner to characterize the "us" as the form of mindedness which is both irreducible to individual consciousness, and nonetheless, by providing the conceptual coherence and stability to reality, must be given objective existence and purpose. This "collective" moment enables an understanding of reality as the product of a process which has the self-determination proper to thinking as its underlying unity. Hegel, in the *Encyclopedia*, labels this moment "objective *Geist*": mind "in the form of *reality*, as a *world* produced and to be produced by it; in this world, freedom is present as necessity." (E §385)

I focus on the epistemic contribution of objective *Geist* for the elucidation on how to understand overcoming the opposition of consciousness. The epistemic contribution of objective *Geist* occurs along the following lines. Through its practical activities, objective *Geist* shows the efficacy and power of thought over externality to constitute a world such that it answers to the proper logic of thinking. It introduces into reality the order of

universality. By constituting reality in such a way, reality itself becomes an expression of the power of thought, an expression that commands some form of recognition. By expressing the power of thought, objective spirit provides us with an assurance of the force of the principle of thought. Such an assurance is immediate, and shall prove to be an insufficient, yet nonetheless necessary step, for the complete overcoming of the opposition of consciousness.

Mind introduces the order of conceptuality into reality through the purposive activities of individuals.[58] That objective spirit requires individuals helps avoid an interpretation where the teleological structure of reality (its display of *purposiveness*) becomes is 'reified', granted a presupposed givenness independently from the active role of minds thinking and acting. If individual thinkers were no longer necessary, then this might suggest a version of metaphysical realism granting self-subsistence to structures of intelligibility. Or it could suggest an idea of *Geist* as a supra-historical subject, constituting itself in an eternal process where individuals are contingent. Furthermore, the introduction of objective *Geist* where "freedom is necessity" might seem to be in line with Hegel's infamous reputation as an "authoritarian" thinker, such that individuals remain within objective *Geist* as the dispensable tools for the realization of a hidden historical purpose.[59]

I believe we can avoid these implications, at least in the case of the notion of *Geist*. Objective *Geist* is conditioned by its *reciprocal relation* with "individuals" at the level of empirical consciousness, since the very existence of the historical structures of

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[58] Organic life is purposive, too. But only *Geist* introduces purposiveness *for itself*: i.e., has behavior which is *explicitly* (self-consciously) goal-oriented. See 6.3.

[59] For recent interpretations of Hegel on the basis of these problems, see Novakovic, "Human Beings as Ends-in-Themselves in Hegel's Philosophy of History,"; Baumann, "Was Hegel an Authoritarian Thinker? Reading Hegel's Philosophy of History on the Basis of His Metaphysics". Baumann argues from a 'metaphysical' perspective, which I reject.

intelligibility depends on the individuals continuing to uphold them as the conceptual resources from the network of objectivized meaning. Hegel claims the moment of individuals, the "doings of each and the self of each" constitute the "*movement and soul of the* [spiritual] substance, and it is the effectuated universal spiritual essence [*das bewirkte allgemeine Wesen*]. Precisely therein that it is 'being' dissolved in the self, the substance is not the dead essence, but rather is *actual* and *alive* [wirklich *und* lebendig]." (GW 9:239) The historical structures of objective spirit conditioning individual consciousness in the moment of universality require singularity realized by a thinking consciousness. This immediate level enlivens intelligibility. The "work" of the singularity of each is what keeps objective *Geist* "alive": "This substance is just as much the universal work, which as a result *engenders itself through the doing of each* and all as their unity and equality, for this substance is *being-for-itself*, or the self, *doing*." (9:239) Hegel claims *Geist* comes to be through the practical element of the "doing of each.' (9:239)

The practical and collective element is central throughout the *PS*. Hegel argues for integrating productive, practical activities into our conception of the becoming and self-determining of the intelligibility proper to the spiritualized world. As interpreters are keen to point out, the determinations of *Geist* are not contingently social, but essentially so.[60] Through these practical cultural and instrumental activities, reality is rendered not as an underdetermined "not-I", but a *world* responsive to reason.[61] Substance gains the 'shape' of the subject.

If there could be no actuality without the active participation of the thinking and willing subjects 'enlivening' the spiritual substance, then the implication is that objective

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[60] See Pinkard, *Hegel's Phenomenology*, 7; Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism*, 158–59.
[61] Cf. GW 9:25-6; 9:239-40, 9:268.

Geist requires individuals. Thought is not reifiable, even if the products of thinking (Pyramids, aqueducts, tools, genetically modified crops, works of art, etc.) survive the death of thinkers. Hegel's preservation of the subjective moment assures, on the one hand, that the semantic world of *Geist* is not a realist projection of a premade intelligible world. On the other hand, it assures that historical forms are remembered, expanded, and dissipated through the taking up of meanings and concepts by the thinking and doing of spatiotemporally located living individuals.

The role of objective spirit has been emphasized by 'social-pragmatic' readings, which associate *Geist* with the Sellarsian notion of an intersubjective 'space of reasons'[62], introduced as a contrast to the order of natural causes. The association, in my view, has both advantages and limitations. On the one hand, centering the relative 'spatiality' of mindedness approximates the reading to a correct understanding of the objective moment of mind –not the property of a natural entity (the human being), but the effective existence of meaning through thought's self-externalizing, self-actualizing activities. Yet, in my view, often lost in these reconstructions is that *Geist* contains a variety of nondiscursive meanings, forms which go beyond the possibilities of the 'game' of giving and asking for reasons. For example, a specific set of steps coordinating the activity of a factory line is part of the world as shaped by *Geist*, and so is the fact that a trained dog responds to specific linguistic commands. Surely, these forms of intelligibility *can* in principle become *reasons* for a self-conscious subject, and furthermore, we can reconstruct them as having an *intention* or *reason* as their principle. But, by emphasizing the discursive activity of giving and asking for reasons, or acting in a consciously purposive fashion, we run the risk of

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[62] Cf. Redding, *Analytic Philosophy and the Return of Hegelian Thought*; Lumsden, "The Rise of the Non-Metaphysical Hegel."

over-intellectualizing structures which are properly spiritual, have the concept at their basis, yet do not serve a primarily discursive function.

The second limitation of the social-pragmatic reading is commonly pointed out in the literature –in my view, rightly. It rests on the neglect of the most important moment of *Geist* for understanding the overcoming of the opposition of consciousness: absolute spirit. Social-pragmatic readers tend to downplay the significance of this final moment along with its religious resonances, giving the impression that the *PS* culminates with collective-historical *Geist*.[63] We encounter claims such as: '[w]hat the *Phenomenology* calls 'spirit' is in the end precisely this ongoing, intersubjective negotiating of those norms or 'notions' (*Begriffe*) that are to be taken as binding, communal 'reality'.'[64] The claim could be correct *insofar as* it pertains to the finite moments of *Geist*, but remains inadequate for the form of mindedness enabling 'absolute knowledge', to which we now turn.

2.4

I have so far sketched a reading where we can harmonize the requirement for conceptual intelligibility to depend on mind, while simultaneously rejecting strong restrictivism. Strong restricitivsm is the claim that 'reason' is illegitimate insofar as its cognitions could not be directly contrasted with content from sensible intuition (here, without reference to externality). The reading relies on (i) an understanding of the meaning of thought as the

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[63] But see Redding, "Hegel, Idealism and God: Philosophy as the Self-Correcting Appropriation of the Norms of Life and Thought."

[64] Pfau, "From Autonomous Subjects to Self-Regulating Structures: Rationality and Development in German Idealism",117. Brandom likewise understands Hegel's *Geist* as being 'Hegel's for the whole normatively articulated realm of discursive activity' where 'concepts (…) have their actual, public existence.' Brandom, *Reason in Philosophy*, 72.

activity which minds realize; (ii) an articulation of *Geist* as irreducible to, yet dependent on, the activity of individuals; (iii) objective spirit as expressing the power of thought to introduce its own formative principle explicitly into reality. Because of its intrinsic dependence on sensation and externality, subjective mind (consciousness, self-consciousness) remains *finite*. Its finitude limits thought to the form of representation: assuming the external element as self-sufficient, thereby taking it as the criterion of the truth of cognition. Objective *Geist* shows the impossibility of fixing the system of concepts to the representational capacities of individuals. Through our purposive activities, *Geist* 'gives' the world the form of a subject, a form which is responsive to reason.

But objective spirit too remains finite. (Cf. E §386 Z) To see why objective spirit is insufficient, we can once more appeal to the requirements for the standpoint of absolute knowing. Let us remember: in line with Hegel's critical uptake of Kant's view of the "highness" of reason, absolute knowledge would be the form of cognition that is no longer conditioned by the presupposition of the standard of truth to depend on what falls outside thinking; '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.' From this standpoint, consciousness can understand its pure thought of the fact as 'equally the fact in itself'. (GW 21:33-34)

Objective spirit does not provide such an absolute ground. Objective spirit shows the 'power' of thinking: "*generating* a world as posited by itself" (E §386): it introduces into the world an explicitly teleological causality by the creation of purposeful objects and institutions. But we still require "*gaining freedom from it and in it* [the world]" (E §386). Spirit expresses the constitutive force of thought, but insofar as the individuals remain within the relations of utility, it places the expectation that satisfaction (practical and

theoretical) obtains insofar as there is a tangible result. The trust we place in thought is conditional or derivative upon how thought has demonstrated its might by making the world rational. But, as we have seen, comprehension as the cognitive achievement proper to reason 'transcends' possible experience –this cognition's satisfaction cannot be articulated as conditional upon its 'predictive power' nor the possible practical benefits we would obtain for thinking and acting in the world in a certain way. Even the 'theoretical' cognitions of the empirical sciences confirm their correctness via their predictive power. Thought is still measured by something outside itself. Thus, were we to remain at the standpoint of objective spirit, reason would be conditional upon what it could possibly effectuate.

To overcome conditional utility and reach the elevation that would enable comprehension as reason's cognition, we require a mode of relating to reality freed from the conditionality placed upon thinking in the moment of objective spirit. A first approach to understand this form of freedom is by thinking of the demands of religion.[65]

Religion, as a moment of *Geist*, has many significant aspects. The moment we care about is how religion illuminates overcoming the expectation of a mode of satisfaction where externality has the upper hand. According to my reconstruction, dependence on the efficacy of thought for its full validation constitutes the 'finitude' proper to objective spirit. Objective *Geist* has passed through the historical experience of religion. Religion attempts

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[65] And, more specifically, Christianity as the revealed religion. Against a commonplace reading of the *PS*, Wilford emphasizes the religious dimension (with focus on forgiveness as a theological concept) for understanding how consciousness achieves its full satisfaction in *Geist* within the *PS*. Wilford, "The Theological Dimension of Agency: Forgiveness, Recognition, and Responsibility in Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit." For a defense of the centrality of the notion of the Trinity for overcoming the problem of subjectivism, see Paolo Diego Bubbio, "Hegel, the Trinity, and the 'I'.

to make consistent sense of the highest form of perfection, and how such a perfection could likewise be compatible with the world as it appears.[66]

The relevant function of religion is delegitimizing the authority of finite conditionality. Finite conditionality burdens mind's engagement with reality in both immediate consciousness (subjective spirit) and the social-communal world (objective spirit). The delegitimizing takes place by showing the inner limitation of finite conditionality when it comes to the attempt to think the 'divine', the higher aspiration of reason. Hegel puts it well in lecture manuscripts, where he considers the death of God in Christ, the 'highest *pinnacle of finitude* [*höchste* Spitze der Endlichkeit]' (GW 17:269). The attempt is to understand not only how 'God' can die, but how God can die as a criminal under the law, how he can die in civil dishonor. For God signifies what is highest. Death and civil condemnation are not the kind of things a God would be subjected to. These do not only seem unworthy of a God, but they seem to be what would happen to the lowest, most worthless human being. How can it be that the highest is subject to the finitude of the human body *and* the public condemnation by the social sphere? Thinking then either renounces the idea that Christ could be God, or it is forced to think a new thought.[67] Following the new thought, if Christ is God, then his divinity cannot be captured in virtue of what has hitherto been held as valid--our claim *over* the natural, the legitimacy of civil laws to *impose* punishment.

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[66] Religion is supposed to be the 'substantial basis' for ethical life, and thus for the state. Cf. E §552 +A.

[67] An important sense how this account is not 'transcendental' rests in that thought is perfectly free to remain within the first option: the progression is not compelled or necessitated, but is dependent on determinate object and ambitions. It is perfectly conceivable that a mind would be satisfied with the 'finite' account and never desire to move beyond it. For Kant and Hegel, the ambitions to reach 'what is highest' are somehow natural to reason. But I am not sure of the status or meaning of this claim, if it is supposed to be an a priori claim regarding 'reason', or a quasi-empirical claim based on the observation that 'human beings' desire to know.

In a natural death finitude as a natural condition [is] at the same time transfigured [by civil honor]; but here (civil) dishonor, [death on] the cross, [is] transfigured. That which is represented as the lowest and which the state uses as an instrument of dishonor is here converted into what is highest. [*in dem natürlichen Tode die Endlichkeit als bloss natürliche zugleich verklärt - aber hier auch die bürgerliche Entehrung, das Kreutz - verklärt, das in der Vorstellung niedrigste, das was der Staat zum entehren hat, dieses verkehrt zum Höchsten*] (GW 17:269)

These two elements (death as natural, death as civic humiliation) are not only supposed to be compatible with the divinity of Christ. Even further, they are supposed to be *necessary aspects* of divinity. But to understand how this could be so, thought needs to conceive of both death and complete civil dishonor as possible *expressions* of divinity. Then the claims of ultimacy of nature and civil life need to be seen as void, as something which can be reduced to nothing. Reducing them to nothing cannot be done in their own terms --by, say, making Christ physically immortal, or making Christ change the law of the land to dispel his condemnation as a criminal. In the reduction, their reality must be preserved. The reduction to nothing needs to be done by thinking. Thought is forced to cognize the outward expression of something (death, humiliation) as the opposite of what it is in its 'truth', and to reinterpret such expression as truth's own willed manifestation, its own necessary moment. We are required to cognize what is lowest, to die in public shame, as what is highest: the ultimate expression of a divine subject. But to do so, to achieve the comprehension of the death of God, would express the power of thinking of negating all it has hitherto recognized as valid, and generate a pure 'internal' standard, suspended from thought's finite interests. Hegel claims, in Christ's death we find 'the direct expression of a complete revolution against all that is established and regarded as valuable.' [*der vollkommenen Revolution gegen das Bestehende in der Meinung geltende*] (GW17:269)

The negation is meant to be affirmative, in the sense that death and civic humiliation *are*,
but they are nothing. (Cf. 21:118)

The point is not that we need to endorse determinate religious content to enter
philosophy. Rather, consciousness has learned an epistemic possibility: religion, as a
necessary moment in the experience of consciousness, demands from spirit a devaluation of
externality for the understanding of certain phenomena, which generates novel possibilities
for intelligibility.[68] Because the new thought refuses to grant authority to externality, it
expresses the utmost worth of inwardness. In this new form of consciousness introduced by
the requirement to think divinity, 'the world is given a totally different shape.' (GW
17:268-9) The standpoint gained through spirit's educational experience in its nullification
of the world is thought's 'power' over the finite, not only to constitute a world in the shape
of the self, but to 'free' itself from externally imposed conditions.

Although controversial, the necessity of the mediation of 'religion' and 'faith' for a
novel standard of truth enabling absolute knowing has significant textual support. The
spiritual function enabled by religion first appears in the form of *faith*: 'certainty
[*Gewissheit*] of absolute truth'; it is faith 'neither in authority nor [as a consequence of]
what [has been] seen and heard; rather it is the eternal, substantial nature of spirit of
consciousness here, exists for consciousness, [so] that what is truth in and for itself has
certainty for me. [*was die Wahrheit an und für sich ist - mir die Gewißheit hat*].' (GW
17:289) If we turn back to the *PS*, "Religion" stands as the chapter before the culmination

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[68] For a related, yet alternative reading of the need for religion in Absolute Spirit, see Redding, "Hegel, Idealism and God: Philosophy as the Self-Correcting Appropriation of the Norms of Life and Thought." I think Redding's reading is too deflationary. It is not only that religion enables us to conceive of God as immanent in the world as the norms of thought objectified in social life and community. (Cf. 30) I believe the claim is stronger: mind has learned that the cognition of the divine is predicated upon the nullification of fine conditionality. It has learned the possibility 'higher' form of apprehension.

of the account in "Absolute Knowing". As quoted before, Hegel writes in the last volume

of the *SL* that "to regard the given material of intuition and the manifold of representation

as the real (…) is precisely the view that must be given up as condition of philosophizing,

and that religion, moreover, presupposes as having already been given up." (12:21)[69] Hegel

is not here denying the existence of "the given material of intuition and the manifold of

representation", which would amount to a rejection of the weak restriction thesis. Rather,

he is claiming we as philosophers ought not regard *that* as an ultimate. In another notorious

passage, Hegel claims:

> The idealism of philosophy consists in nothing else than in the recognition that the finite is
> not truly an existent. (…) 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-posited, uncreated, eternal. (GW 21:143)

But spirit cannot remain in faith. For faith only provides truth in the form of immediacy.

And an immediate cognition, by virtue of its form, is not adequate for the purported

'highness' of the subject matter. Even if faith has truth as its object, it does a disservice to

truth by its own failure to comprehend it as such, to be able to provide a systematic account

of it. Without such an account, mind itself does not know what it knows when it claims to

have the insight that truth is certainty, that the fact is the certainty of the fact, that God is

the highest being. It does not know that what it has gained is pure knowledge of itself. Such

immediacy of faith leads 'the essence of faith' to 'descend' from thought into

representation, the supersensible which is '*other* to self-consciousness.' (GW 9:289) The

essence of faith runs the risk of opening once more the opposition of consciousness by

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[69] Cf. E §163 Z1: "in its true and encompassing meaning, the universal is a thought, of which it has to be said
that it cost millennia before entering into human consciousness and which attained full recognition only through
Christendom. The Greeks, who were otherwise so highly cultivated, knew neither God in his true universality
nor even the human being. The Greek gods were only the particular powers of the spirit, and the universal God,
the God of nations, was still the hidden God for the Athenians."

objectifying its subject matter and representing it as the image of an object 'beyond'. But our philosophical sense of truth ought not lie elsewhere; it is supposed to be what is disclosed through the activity which gives humanity its 'absolute worth in inwardness' (17:257): thinking.[70] Religious mediation must be transformed into science, since 'it is science alone which is spirit's true knowing of itself.' (9:289; Cf. 12:253.)[71].

Mind's gained standpoint regarding thinking requires a scientific basis.[72] Such a scientific basis in turn requires the exposition of the form of truth. This form of knowledge articulates the matter at hand (*die Sache*) on the basis of the concept.[73] Conceptual cognition, comprehension (*begreifen*) expresses a systematic inner connection, so that the form of necessity is recognizable.[74]

Given the requirement of comprehension for the truth of absolute spirit, we might here question if Absolute *Geist* too 'requires' individuals. It cannot require them in the

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[70] 'Die Lehre kann für sich nur das Allgemeine enthalten, - den allgem einen Boden - weil sie für die subjective Vorstellung Gedanken, ist - um gekehrt das Allgemeine als solches kann nur im Innern Gedanken seyn nicht als aüssere Wirklichkeit und das Innerliche ist das Subjective der Idee - Dieser allgem eine Boden ist das Element, die Welt in der der *Geist* seine Heymath wissen muß - der Boden, daß der Mensch seinen Werth, seine Unendlichkeit - und einen absoluten Werth in der Innerlichkeit - im *Geist*e als solchem überhaupt.' ('By itself, the teaching can contain only the universal, the universal soil, since it exists for subjective representation, (for thoughts. Conversely, the universal as such can be only in inwardness, only in thought, not as an external reality;) inwardness is the subjectivity of the idea. This universal soil is the element, the world, in which spirit must find its homeland; it is by virtue of this that humanity [has] its worth, its infinitude, an absolute worth in inwardness, in the spirit as such.'), GW 17:257.

[71] The complete quote reads: "nothing is *known* that is not in *experience*, or, as it can be otherwise expressed, nothing is *known* that is not available as *felt truth*, *as the eternal which is inwardly revealed*, as the holy which is the object of *faith*, or whatever expressions are otherwise put to this use."

[72] On the limits of faith, see GW 9:209-210, 235, 266-7; 286ff.

[73] Martin, "Hegel on Truth and Absolute Spirit," explains the relative epistemic insufficiency of religion for absoute knowledge insofar as religion requires "imagination", thereby being limited in the requirement of complete self-sufficiency, whereas philosophy can exhibit thought as "the source of its own contents" (208).

[74] As we can see from Hegel's frustrated remarks on the requirement of *mediation* for truth against the impatient insistence of consciousness which demands the "whole" in advance: "as for the truth itself, it resides only in the extended course of mediation and at the end. – To meet the subjective need and the impatience that come with not knowing, one may well provide an overview of the *whole* in advance – by means of a division for reflection that, in the manner of finite cognition, gives the particular of the universal as already there, to be waited for as the science progresses. Yet this affords nothing more than a picture for representation; for the true transition from the universal to the particular and to the whole which is determined in and for itself and in which that first universal is in truth itself again a moment – this transition is alien to the division of reflection and is the exclusive mediation of science itself.", GW 12:252.

shape of an obligation or demand. For, then, it would not be a 'free' relation: the individuals would be compelled by it, so it would appear as an external force.[75] The expectation of reward or gain, the fear of punishment, is sufficient to make an activity conditional. This shape of spirit requires individuals differently from their relation in objective spirit: to engage in the mode of thought that expects and obtains nothing beyond itself, that satisfies itself in being thought, is a 'free decision', a '*resolution*'. (Cf. *E* §17)[76] But, on the other hand, neither does absolute spirit 'exist' without individuals. For thought is activity: insofar as there is thought, thought sustains itself through thinking. Individuals are needed first to witness the reduction of the finite, then (in absolute knowing) to, if they so resolve, apply the standpoint gained through such reduction to provide a science of the absolute.

Spirit's elevation completes the overcoming of the opposition of consciousness. Contrary to the strong restriction thesis, spirit's elevation has as a result the awareness of thought as the principle at play in any experience or cognition. What is revealed is not that thought is the substantial cause of 'the world', nor that 'the world' is always already conceptually articulated. It is the appropriation of the world by thinking that renders it meaningful. And when we aim to cognize, we aim at something meaningful. The epistemic meaning of the nullity of the world is the recognition that it is in virtue of thinking that any claim to truth is recognized as holding; thinking has now been understood as the positing force of legitimacy. Neither the lawfulness of sensory experience ('nature') nor the constructed objectivity of ethical norms has an unconditional claim to value. So, what spirit

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[75] In contrast, in objective *Geist*, individuals understand their participation in spiritual institutions in virtue of the expressive benefits gained by being a member of the political or ethical community.
[76] See 5.4.

knows when it knows is the *thought* of the object, which completes the 'sublation of externality belonging to the concept of mind.' (E §381 Z). Hegel calls this 'objective thoughts', the 'absolute object' of philosophy. (E §25) Insofar as the Logic examines such 'objective thoughts', the intelligibility of the logical project depends on the standpoint where thinking can examine itself.

2.5. Conclusion

The answer to the question, if Hegel follows Kant's claim that subjective mind's resources are insufficient for satisfying the demands of reason ('weak' restrictivism), how can 'we' overcome the opposition of consciousness, such that the standpoint of absolute knowing is intelligible? First, the "us" is not restricted to subjective consciousness. The particular minded subject, conditioned by the expanded conceptuality of objective *Geist*, can *resolve* to use the new standard for truth beyond the adequacy of representation for speculative science. This new standard of truth has been introduced into the world by mind itself in its purposive activities, showing the efficacy of thinking. But it is in its attempt to meet the demands of religion that mind 'liberates' itself from granting conditional appearances the worth of an ultimate.

The overcoming of the opposition of consciousness is meant to render absolute knowledge epistemically legitimate for us. By focusing on absolute knowledge as an epistemic standpoint spirit reaches, we can avoid the interpretation whereby granting objectivity to thought (or: the concept) requires the claim of an a priori, metaphysically secured identity between thinking and being. But furthermore, the example of the attempt to think the death of God has also shown something essential for the possibility of 'pure

science'. By expanding the comprehensive possibilities of thinking beyond the representation of a presupposed givenness, thinking is shown to be not merely (pure) form, but (pure) *content*. Thought has content insofar as it contains *distinct formative possibilities*. Indeed, the content of the form of thinking affects what is disclosed regarding the subject matter. If thought were mere form, not form with content, then the subject matter would determine the form of its apprehension. But the subject matter (think: the death of God, a tool, a living being) can be apprehended in some or other ways depending on the pure formative content of thinking. If the content of thinking is 'finite', the death and humiliation of God is the refutation of God. Hegel will go so far as to claim that if the content of thought is finite, there is nothing properly 'alive' (in a manner that will have to be sufficiently qualified in due time). (Cf. E §246 Z) We shall see the derivation of the logical categories supposes them as having a certain order, an order which is dependent upon the 'truth' of their pure inner content.

Chapter 3

0. Introduction

In this chapter, I argue for a general interpretation of the Logic's function to provide a correct procedure for the evaluation of thought-determinations in virtue of their own content. I have claimed we should center the requirement to 'ground' philosophy as a form of cognition when approaching Hegel's Logic. And I have claimed that such grounding would occur by developing categories which are adequate for the subject matter of the highest aspirations of reason. I now make sense of some core programmatic claims of the Logic with this grounding function in mind. In section 1, I outline the relevance of 'truth' and defend a perspective on the Logic as centered on the function of *categorical adequacy*. In section 2, I explain the shortcomings Hegel identifies within alternative philosophical attempts to develop categories for truth. By showing what Hegel takes to be such shortcomings, there emerges the criteria for a correct examination of the thought-determinations for truth-oriented cognition. In section 3, I propose to read Hegel's version of a categorical examination as answering to an *immanence* requirement met by the presuppositionlessness beginning, and the method of determinate negation (the 'dialectic') as 'mirroring' the actual activity of thinking. I claim the exposition of the categories through the 'correct' means is predicated upon the evaluative function of the Logic: the determination of categories which are inherently true. In section 4, I delve into the meaning of inherent truth and present an interpretation of such a conception that adequately integrates the immanence requirement.

The interpretation of the Logic I defend holds that categorical evaluation must integrate a standard of validity *internal to* the content of thinking. While common interpretative lines assume the validity of logical categories to rely on either a metaphysical (that they are 'not only' thought 'but also' being), or a 'transcendental' standing (as conditions of possibility or intelligibility of experience, cognition or a correct explanation of determinate phenomena, such as objects, living organisms or embodied subjectivity), Hegel's logical set-up forbids a categorical evaluation that would take thought to be validated in virtue of something external to itself.[77] As I argue, neither the ontological-metaphysical nor the 'transcendental' models of categorical critique satisfy the requirement to provide an immanent derivation and evaluation of the pure content of thinking.

3.1.

The first element that needs to be understood is that, while Hegel defines Logic as the 'science of *the pure idea*' (E §19) and the 'science of thinking' (E §19 A) the ultimate subject matter of the Logic, and philosophy as a whole, is *truth*. Hegel makes it quite explicit when introducing the meaning of philosophy:

> It is true that philosophy initially shares its objects [*Gegenstände*] with religion. Both have the *truth* for their object, and more precisely the truth in the highest sense, in the sense that *God* and God *alone* is the truth. Moreover, both treat the sphere of finite things, [*Gebiet*] of *nature* and the *human spirit*, their relation to each other and to God as their truth. (E §1)

> The first question is, what is the object [*Gegenstand*] of our science [the science of logic]? The simplest and most intelligible answer to this question is that the *truth* is its object. Truth is a grand word and an even grander thing. If a person's spirit and mind [*Geist und Gemüt*]

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[77] For two notable exceptions influencing my approach, see Martin, *Ontologie Der Selbstbestimmung*; Alznauer, "Untrue Concepts in Hegel's Logic." Houlgate and Nuzzo likewise emphasize the importance of an 'immanent' method in the Logic, but they primarily focus on how to understand the immanence at play in the transition from being to nothing (to becoming) in line with Hegel's demand for a presuppositionless beginning, which is not my concern. Cf. Nuzzo, "Dialectic, Understanding, and Reason: How Does Hegel's Logic Begin?," 21ff; Houlgate, *Hegel on Being, Vol. 1*, 62ff.

are still healthy, his heart must leap at once at the thought of this word. But then the 'but' immediately surfaces, namely whether we are capable of knowing the truth [*die Wahrheit zu erkennen*]. (E §19 Z1)

The philosophical aim to 'know the truth' is internally entangled with the project of the Logic as one that investigates the forms adequate for truth:

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. (GW 21:19)

Hegel clearly states that the need is to 'purify' the categories of thinking so that they are adequate for 'the attainment of truth, which is the object and purpose of the logic.' (GW 21:16) Although logical determinations permeate all conscious thought, as 'impulses', the categories do the 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.' (21:16) Hegel continues: 'To purify these categories and in them *to elevate spirit to truth and freedom*, this is therefore the loftier *business of logic*.' (21:16, my emphasis) He identifies the untruth of categories with their finitude: when assumed as mere forms, '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.' (21:16)

The association between untruth and finitude will become relevant when we consider Hegel's own model for determining the inherent truth of the categories. Now we can introduce categorical adequacy as it relates to the claim that the subject matter of the Logic is Truth.[78] In chapter 1, I presented textual support for the claim that a central external motivation for the project of the Logic is to supply categories which are adequate

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[78] I capitalize 'Truth' to signal the *aspirational* sense. 'Truth', before achieving the logical deduction of its content, is an aspirational placeholder for the most inflationary demands of reason.

for the cognition of concrete subject matters which involve a certain conceptual complexity

which remains uncapturable through the logical, philosophical or metaphysical resources

Hegel finds in former and contemporary systems. We require a renovation of the science of

logic so that our categories do not fall short 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'. (GW 21:35-6) For Hegel, in contrast to (his reading of) Kant, the highest

speculative objects demand to be recognized as true in terms of the merits of their *logical

content* and properly cognized as such. The ability of certain categories to measure up to

the object we are seeking to cognize through them is what I have called *categorical

adequacy*. Thus, if my analysis holds, the logical project assumes the task of a defense,

through a justification or deduction, of the kind of logical determinations which are

categorically adequate for the cognition of 'absolute' or 'infinite' objects. Such categories

would be the achievement of Truth, the satisfaction of the logical task. As Inwood aptly

claims: 'infinite objects require infinite thoughts'.[79]

Categorical adequacy is a logical demand not only in the case of the objects of

reason's highest ambition. It likewise functions in the case of inherently finite things. Thus,

correctly derived finite categories' ultimate status as 'untrue' is not equivalent to their

being invalid: if the derivation of the categories emerges from comprehending them in their

proper location within the logical whole, then finite, untrue categories can *prima facie* be

just as theoretically valid as infinite, true categories.[80] The caveat, of course, is that

inherently finite categories must remain within their inherently finite fields of influence.

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[79] Inwood, "Hegel," 170.
[80] This point might mark a departure from Alznauer, where there does not seem to be a distinction between categories being *valid* and categories being *true*. Cf. Alznauer, "Untrue Concepts in Hegel's Logic."

When this demand is not met, what obtains is a *categorical inadequacy*: the failure to understand the demands proper to the adequate cognition of the matter at hand, as grounded on its logical form.

As stated in chapter 1, the Logic supplies the method and categorical framework that philosophy is to utilize for the cognition of certain real subject matters. Such is the Logic's *grounding* function. We have already touched upon a suggestion of Hegel's preoccupation with categorical adequacy: his claim that former logical systems did not have the proper categories for elevated spiritual matters, such that a reformed science of logic was required to provide the pure categories for the cognition of the products of spirit (religion, ethical life, history, art, even the advancements of modern theoretical sciences such as chemistry and mathematics). Categorical inadequacy is likewise at play in Hegel's assessment of the Antinomies of Reason in Kant's Transcendental Dialectic. Despite recognizing the contribution to philosophy brought forth in Kant's Antinomies, Hegel considers the results drawn by Kant to be 'inappropriate': the result 'presupposes that cognition has no other forms of thought than finite categories.' (GW 21:180) It is the finitude of the categories themselves, when applied to infinite objects, that produces the antinomial results: 'This is where it is brought up that it is the content itself, namely the categories themselves, that bring about the contradiction' (E §48 A). In Hegel's view, Kant did not move beyond the categories of the understanding, which might be fine for finite 'appearances' or 'the world of subjective spirit', but fell short in cognizing unconditional objects. (E §48 A) This insight led Kant to the 'trivial' resolution claiming the incapacity for reason to affirm the legitimacy of infinite content (Cf. E §55 A; §60 A). The line of criticism demonstrates that, for Hegel, the reason Kant cannot offer a proper 'solution' for the antinomies of reason relies on an unwarranted commitment to the primacy of a

determinate 'finite' categorical framework.[81] Hegel understands Kant as holding these

'finite' categories as the touchstone of truth and the validity of a cognition. (Cf. GW

21:232) Such a commitment hindered the identification of the productive side of the

contradiction, side which would elevate to the demand of 'resolving' the conflict through

the sustaining of contradiction in a *higher* category. In Hegel's diagnosis, Kant's 'trivial'

resolution forecloses the possibility of developing, out of the immanent limitations of lower

categories, a categorically adequate formal framework for what is inherently infinite.

If this holds, the claim of the Logic as having truth for its object and purpose is a

claim that brings forth the requirement of categorically adequate concepts for the cognition

of the speculative subject matters.

3.2.

If categorical adequacy is a central motivation of the Logic, and if the mistake that rendered

the Kantian derivation of the categories inadequate for reason's aspirations was partly a

methodic fault, then the Hegelian justification for the categories would look very different.

It would aim to correct such mistakes. This result raises the questions: what exactly are the

mistakes that hinder the proper development of speculative categories? Which steps should

Hegel's logical project have to take to correct such mistakes, thereby providing adequate

categories for philosophy as cognition aiming for truth 'in the highest sense'? The

following two sections are dedicated to answering these questions.

First, we should note that we have already encountered one such shortcoming. The

preliminary mistake is not to grant thought a determinate status: having content of its own,

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[81] Among other things. Cf. GW 21:180ff; 21:228ff.

and being the *form* for the cognition of things. Not granting thought this status is equivalent to remaining within the 'opposition of consciousness'. For the opposition of consciousness hinders the entrance into science, as it presupposes a fixed opposition between thought and its object. From chapter 2, we have seen that Hegel's notion of mind 'overcomes' the opposition of consciousness by reaching a stage where a new epistemic perspective is opened. Such an epistemic perspective enables us to consider pure thinking as always able to negate and move past anything set up as valid, thereby producing novel formative content. Only by granting pure thinking such a status does it make sense to claim that pure thinking can be examined in terms of itself. Only if pure thinking can be examined in terms of itself can a pure logical examination determine the 'form' of Truth.

But, of course, although remaining within a finite epistemic standpoint hinders the very possibility of a 'pure' examination of thought's formative possibilities, this standpoint is a preliminary step. After the *PS* we have merely deduced the *concept* of philosophy, its plausibility. The task is now to exhibit the proper categories for philosophy: the concepts which are, in fact, truth-disclosive, thus able to provide the form of cognition for the highest aspirations of reason. Before turning to philosophical shortcomings and how Hegel seeks to overcome them in the Logic, more should be said about the meaning of 'pure thinking'.

'Thinking' is what is at stake in Hegel's project in the Logic, as comprised in the *Science of Logic* as well as the *Encyclopedia Logic*. Paradigmatically, we, human beings, *think*. Insofar as we are conscious, we navigate the world through thought-determinations of which we are very often unaware. The manner of how these thought-determinations appear in common experience (the 'unity' implicit in the perception of the glass as glass, the many disunified properties of the objects in the table, the implicit causal connection

between the fire and the melting of the candlewax, all of which operate within my experience) is *not* thinking *in its proper element*. To examine thought in its proper element means 'working with concepts without sensuous substrata' (GW 21:43), being able to strip the 'dispersed manifold of cognitions and sciences' of 'every externality' and in this way being able to 'abstract from them the logical element' (21:43). The logical element is not 'hidden' in experience behind a veil of illusory appearance. For Hegel, such an element is rather what provides form and consistency to all which appears *in concreto*.[82]

The thinking at stake in the Logic is pure thinking: a thinking which has broken free of 'the concrete representations of the senses and ratiocination' (GW 21:41), reason why Hegel famously refers to the system of the Logic as 'the realm of shadows, the world of simple essentialities, freed of all sensuous concretion.' (21:42) We can recognize the common logical patterns within such elements by abstracting from their 'concreteness' and what appears as 'sensible' and 'external' and abstracting from the psychological needs and impulses of the self as a finite subject.

But to simply signal objects to be found within experience and 'extract' the logical forms or categories therein would be, in Hegel's view, an 'unscientific' manner of proceeding. It would not be acceptable to, for example, take my current experience of perceiving a computer and 'extract' from it the implicit logical forms in the thought of the computer, say unity, difference, actuality, etc. The 'extraction' of logical forms from sensible experience would be an improper manner of proceeding if our aim is to examine and evaluate the logical content of thought-determinations. To understand this point, we

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[82] The point is not that a material or supersensible substrate called 'thought' is thinking itself and sustaining the intelligibility of everything, without any finite thinkers doing the thinking. It is rather that for thinking to appear in its *proper element*, we must *observe* the formal *shapes* of determinacy which are present in all aspects of what we call 'reality': sensible awareness, experience, scientific cognition, art, religion, etc.

can turn to a more in-depth examination of improper forms of categorical derivation. There are 'mistakes' permeating past attempts at a philosophical grasp of truth. Hegel exposes his objections to each of such attempts in the introduction to the Encyclopedia Logic. He characterizes these as the three 'positions of thought towards objectivity': (1) 'former' (pre-Kantian) metaphysics; (2) empiricism and critical philosophy (with Hume and Kant in mind); (3) immediate knowing or faith (with Jacobi as the explicit target). Each of these manners of understanding the means for philosophical categorical validation contains an inadequate understanding, which Hegel's Logic is meant to internally correct. We can concentrate on the issue of how each of these positions fails at the project of articulating categories, to understand what would be required from a proper categorical deduction.[83]

'Former' metaphysics are the metaphysics which do not integrate the consciousness of subjectivity in all cognition and knowing –thus, metaphysics before Kant (Hegel explicitly states, Cf. E §27), those which operate without integrating the awareness of the subjective element explicitly introduced into philosophy by Descartes, and most conclusively by Kant's first *Critique*. Although Hegel recognizes in metaphysics the possibility of 'genuine speculative philosophizing' (E §27), the mistake rests in their 'naïve' principle. The naïve principle is the unreflected belief that what 'the objects truly are' is 'brought before consciousness' and that satisfaction is achieved by producing something like a copy of such objects in the form of thinking. (E §26) The determinations found by pre-Kantian metaphysics for the knowledge of the truth were 'taken to be valid *per se* in their abstraction and capable of being *predicates of the true*'. (E §28) The mistake here identified is twofold. First, the determinations encountered as 'predicates of the true'

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[83] Cf. Lau, "The Aristotelian-Kantian and Hegelian Approaches to Categories."

were presupposed as meaningful and valid. This very meaning and validity was not questioned. For example, Hegel remarks, the predicate of 'existence' or infinity is attached to God, and it is claimed as a true cognition that God must be 'the necessary being', or 'the infinite being'. These claims might be correct as far as they go. But, without an adequate elucidation of the logical meaning of determinations such as 'necessary being' or 'infinity', there is no way of determining their adequacy for an absolute object such as God. These formulations *sound* correct, but they have not been *exhibited* to be so, because the meaning of the concepts was not itself examined.

This first point leads to the second shortcoming of metaphysical categories: the reliance on the *form of judgement*. The form of judgement connects the subject to the predicate through the copula: 'God is being', 'the soul is simple', etc. Hegel has many things to say about judgement.[84] Here, the important point is that judgement takes its standard of validity to rely on the predicate term being an attribute of the subject term. In the judgements of metaphysics, the predicate is meant to be taken as an *essential determination* of the subject: the simplicity of God is not an accidental feature of the subject, but constitutive of its essence. If the judgement is the means for the exhibition of the truth of metaphysical objects, this would presuppose we possess a representational criterion in virtue of which the application of such predicates would hold, similar to our (empirically formed) representation of the object 'dog'. In judgements of essence such as 'all dogs are animals', the judgement is correct in virtue of adequately expressing what is contained in the representation of the subject as necessarily belonging to a higher genus

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[84] 'Judgement' is the second chapter of Subjectivity (the first part of the Subjective Logic), the first being 'the Concept', the third being 'the Syllogism'. I examine the role of judgement in chapter 4, as part of the argument regarding the demonstration of the concept's objectivity.

(animals). An analogous procedure is required for the determinations regarding the essence of speculative objects. Yet, the representation of these objects is not meant to be an achievement of empirical reflection. Where then does the representation in virtue of which the judgement could be truth-functional emerge from? If we possess a representation of speculative objects, such a representation is a *presupposition*: a content inherited from *elsewhere,* presupposed as it appears in someone's immediate consciousness. Hegel claims, although pre-critical metaphysics targeted the right objects (soul, world, God), metaphysics, however, 'took [these objects] up from [the sphere of] *representation*, laid them down as *ready-made, given subjects* for the application of the determinations of the understanding to them, and possessed in this representation alone the *criterion* of whether the predicates were adequate and sufficient or not.' (E §30)

Since we take the subject term for judgements from the sphere of representation, and since the presupposed representation of the speculative objects has fixed, 'ready-made' content, the attributes predicated are 'determinations of the understanding': one-sided categories which establish a stable limit to the determinateness of the object. As Brinkmann remarks, 'the understanding itself is that mode of thinking for which the laws of non-contradiction and excluded middle constitute the ultimate criteria of truth.'[85] (Cf. E §20 A) The immediate consequence of the application of determinations of the understanding is 'keeping in isolation the conceptual determinations which nevertheless are held to cohere in one concept.'[86] The 'cognition' of the speculative object arrived at through such a

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[85] Brinkmann, "Hegel's Critique of Kant and Pre-Kantian Metaphysics," 70. For a different diagnosis of the problems of past systems which nonetheless shares the view of these as *logical* problems, see McNulty, *Hegel's Logic and Metaphysics*, chaps. 3–4. On Hegel's assessment of past logical systems, see Ficara, *The Form of Truth*, chap. 4. See also Redding, "The Role of Logic Commonly so Called in Hegel's Science of Logic."
[86] Brinkmann, 70.

procedure is, at best, equivalent to knowing all the mutually compatible predicates of a presupposed subject: 'there is no unity in the concept other than that produced by the identical reference of all the predicates to the subject term.'[87] The unity of the object established through the determinations of the understanding is categorically inadequate for speculative objects: it finitizes the content by illegitimately applying a representational standard based on which the correctness of one-sided predicates is meant to hold.

In brief, metaphysics, by its reliance on *representation* for the determination of the predicates for truth, and by its reliance on *judgement* as the vehicle for the display of the truth of the object, generates an insufficiently substantial concept of the speculative object. Since this content is fixed, and since the judgement is the vehicle for the expression of the 'essence' of the subject, the subject cannot allow for mutually opposing determinations: the soul is *either* simple *or* compound. Reliance on such forms, then, does not allow the content to contain opposition within itself (Cf. E §32). Hegel (following the negative results of Kant's Transcendental Dialectic) identifies the impossibility of thinking beyond mutual opposition as an unjustified limitation for thinking. So metaphysics, understood as the position of thought that takes truth to lie in providing adequate judgements that display the essential attributes of the highest objects, cannot develop a cognition fit for the truth of these objects: it uses an inappropriate standard for validity (a presupposed representation), it has an insufficiently critical view of judgment as the vehicle for speculative truths, and it misconstrues speculative objects by reducing their unity to a formal bond between mutually compatible predicates.

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[87] Brinkmann, 70.

Neither empiricism, critical philosophy, nor the position of immediate knowing fare much better. Scientific or 'consistent' empiricism contains the 'fundamental delusion' in that it cognizes by drawing inferences from metaphysical categories, 'all the while presupposing and applying the forms of syllogistic inference, ignorant that in so doing it itself contains and pursues metaphysics and that it uses those categories and their relationships in a completely uncritical and unconscious fashion.' (E §38 A) Like past metaphysics, empiricism presupposes a realm of validity. But now it is no longer the inherited representations from history or theology, but rather 'the sensory content of nature and finite spirit'. (E §38 Z) Consistent empiricism thereby renounces the attempt to cognize speculative objects, as these objects contain no possible reference to the realm of experience that empiricism takes as uniquely valid. For this reason, since for Hegel philosophy is defined in reference to Truth as reason's aspiration, consistent empiricism, besides having no critical awareness of its own dependence on logical categories, appears to give up on the very project of philosophy (as Hegel understands it).

Critical philosophy correctly posits that experience itself directly depends on the non-sensory formative content, which empiricism took to be unreal, merely inferred from sensory matter, a 'habit' of thought allowing us to function in the chaos of physical reality. Critical philosophy, in Hegel's reconstruction, has a deeper understanding of the meaning of experience as necessarily involving universal functions sourced in pure thinking (specifically, in the apperceptive unity of the I). Furthermore, while empiricism, given its narrow sense of experience limited to the sensory, forecloses the possibility of a cognition of speculative objects, critical philosophy recognizes reason's internal demand for such objects. But the recognition of reason's demand is not enough to provide adequate categories when the philosophical system contains fundamental defects hindering the

development of adequate categories. In Hegel's view, the 'critical philosophy' indeed

contains such fundamental defects:

> the critical philosophy subjects to scrutiny the value of the concepts of the understanding as they are employed in metaphysics (and, incidentally, in the other sciences and in ordinary representation as well). This critique, however, does not address the content and the specific relationship that these thought-determinations have vis-à-vis each other. (…) The specific forms of the a priori, i.e. of thinking, taken as merely subjective activity despite its objectivity, result as follows - a systematization that, by the way; rests on merely psychological-historical foundations. (E §41)

The critique systematizes the forms of the 'a priori', but it does so while considering them

to be 'merely subjective': 'outside' our thinking, there is a reality which has validity in and

for itself, while the forms of the a priori hold only for 'us'. I have addressed the issue of

Hegel's critique of Kant's subjectivism in the introductory chapter. Here, we care about the

specific defects of the transcendental form of categorical legitimation. Hegel claims the

categories in critical philosophy are 'conditioned by the given material'. Thus, they are said

to possess only *conditional* validity: their validity and worth depends upon their reference

to the received matter of sensibility. With respect to themselves, 'the categories are empty'.

(E §43) Critical philosophy, in his view, cannot effectuate a pure critique of the categories

'with respect to themselves', for it does not grant the categories the status of possessing

pure inner content.

Given the presupposition that categorical validity is only obtained by reference to

sensibility, and given that speculative objects in principle do not belong to what can appear

in sensory experience, the categories of critical philosophy (which, for Hegel, are

equivalent to the categories of the understanding) are 'incapable of being determinations of

the absolute' (E §44). As Hegel also remarks, it is a problem that these categories are not

systematized appropriately, but that the appearance of their systematicity as exhibited in

their order 'rests on merely psychological-historical foundations'. A correct systematization

would, in contrast, exhibit the categories in their necessary mutual connection. Otherwise, the principle ruling over the order of the categories would be *external* to the derivation itself. If the principle is external, it is not intrinsically validated. If it is not internally validated, it remains logically unjustified.

What emerges from the discussion on the positions on thought towards objectivity is a very clear requirement: for the criterion of truth and validity to arise from pure thinking itself, once we have recognized that thinking is not empty form, but has content. The *form* of thinking affects the apprehension of the content of the cognition. The result is continuous with what Hegel considers valuable from Kant's 'Copernican' revolution, and with our results from chapter 2 regarding thinking's different formative possibilities. Thought ought not be taken as the empty container through which presupposed content would be adequately grasped.

Once we have seen that thought has content, and that this content is that through which things can be cognized, then the pure content of thought requires an examination. A valid categorical justification requires evaluating the categories in terms of themselves, rather than being valid in virtue of demonstrating they stand at the basis of the formal constitution of experience. To make the point explicit, we can appeal to positive programmatic claims regarding the true justification of categories. In an addition to the *Encyclopedia* Logic, Hegel is reported to claim:

> The contemplation, in and for itself, of these determinations has, in addition, the sense that we derive these determinations from thinking itself and, on the basis of them, see whether they are *true* determinations. [*Das An-und-für-sich-selbst-Betrachten derselben hat den weiteren Sinn, daß wir aus dem Denken selbst diese Bestimmungen ableiten und aus ihnen selbst sehen, ob sie wahrhafte sind*.] We do not pick them up in some external fashion and then define them or demonstrate their value [*Wert*] and their validity [*Gültigkeit*] by comparing them to the way in which they happen to surface in our consciousness. That

would mean that we start from observation and experience and then say, for instance, that we typically use *'force'* for this and that. We then call a definition of this kind correct, if it agrees with what we usually find in our ordinary consciousness of its object.

However, in such a way a concept is not being determined as it is in and for itself, but determined in accordance with a presupposition that thus constitutes the criterion, the standard of correctness. And yet, we do not have to use such a standard but instead let these determinations, alive in themselves, count for themselves. [*Wir haben indes solchen Maßstab nicht zu gebrauchen, sondern die in sich selbst lebendigen Bestimmungen für sich gewähren zu lassen.*] (E §24, Z2)

As we read, pure thinking has content that 'determines itself' in a manner that enables us to allow the content of the categories to 'count for itself', rather than measuring the categories following a criterion standing outside pure thinking's development. Past systems of philosophy could not make adequate progress towards Truth, for they did not give pure thinking its due by recognizing its content. The problem rests on a reliance on a presupposed externality, or a presupposed content, by means of which thought has to be validated. If the content or field of intelligibility presupposed as valid is sensory experience (as in the case of both empiricism and 'critical philosophy'), then even if philosophy could develop categories for the coherent, non-contradictory thought of speculative objects (as in the case of Kant's ideas of reason in the Transcendental Dialectic), these do not possess objective validity. They are not justified categories, because speculative objects are not within the bounds of our experience of objects. So, even when their intelligibility is recognized, they become relegated to an 'ought', a 'merely regulative' status.

Two negative corollaries emerge from Hegel's remarks, which support my rejection of a transcendental or metaphysical understanding of categorical validation. First, the existence, instantiation, or otherwise 'existential import' or lack thereof of the categories does not play a role in *their mode of justification*. Second, the categories being a 'necessary condition' or a 'condition of possibility' for experience, knowledge, or explanation is also

not what gives the categories their inherent worth. As I understand it, a *metaphysical*

categorical derivation validates thought's categories in virtue of 'inheriting' some form of

allegedly mind-independent being, or having some form of immediate reference to mind-

independent reality. The categories are true, or validated, in virtue of their being, or being

the forms of being, understood as 'out there'. But this, as we gather from Hegel's critique

of pre-critical metaphysics, violates the requirement to test the categories in virtue of their

own proper content.[88] *Even if* interpreters are correct in the view that the logical categories

are, in some sense which would need to be significantly qualified, the 'in itself', the

'essence' of reality or existence, it is not by *existing* or *being there* that thought-

determinations are logically justified. Their being justified in such a way presupposes a

realm of validity outside pure thinking (*that* thinking 'has', 'encompasses', or otherwise is

'being'), undermining the claims of logical purity and reintroducing the opposition of

consciousness. In my reading, it is not because thought-determinations are ontologically

vouchsafed from the beginning onwards that they are valid. Rather, *because* they are

exhibited as valid, they can be legitimately mobilized for the cognition of reality –albeit

within their relevant spheres of influence: inherently finite categories for the finite

cognition of the finite, inherently infinite categories for the infinite cognition of the infinite.

If this holds, then the categories 'being instantiated' or not plays no role whatsoever in their

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[88] Further textual support for my claims: 'In the customary treatment of logic, a variety of classifications and species of concepts are adduced. It immediately strikes one as inconsequential that the species are introduced in this way: "There are [*es gibt*], as regards quality, quantity, etc., the following concepts." The "there are" conveys no other justification than that we find the named species and that they *show up in experience* [*Es gibt, drückt keine andere Berechtigung aus, als die, daß man solche Arten vorfindet und sie sich nach der Erfahrung zeigen*.]. What we have in this manner is an empirical logic – an odd science indeed, an *irrational* cognition of the rational. In this the logic sets a very bad precedent for compliance to its own teaching; it allows itself to do the opposite of what it prescribes as a rule, namely, that concepts should be derived, and scientific propositions (therefore also the proposition: "There are such and such species of concepts") demonstrated.' (GW 12:43-4)

logical justification:[89] As quoted in chapter 1: 'That things merely *are* does not by itself help them.' (E §42 Z3)

Similarly, a transcendental interpretation of categorical critique would take the categories to be justified in terms of being necessary conditions for something else –either 'experience', or a determinate representation of the object the category supposedly instantiates (say, actual living organisms in the case of the concept of life, or the norm-governed conceptual awareness of subjects in the case of spirit).[90] This interpretation, too, assumes a content outside thinking in virtue of which thinking is to be conditionally validated. It contradicts the principle that thought thinks through *its own,* more or less inherently true content. Both interpretations would be *conditioning* the validity of the realm of pure thinking, holding thought accountable to a principle outside thought itself.

Thus, neither 'old' metaphysics nor critical philosophy can provide adequate forms of categorical validation. But what about the third position of thought towards objectivity, that of *immediate knowing*? Immediate knowing correctly identifies that categories bound to experience are conditional. It also correctly identifies that, given their conditional status, they cannot be appropriate determinations for the 'highest' object: God as the

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[89] Does this claim not run into conflict with my earlier statement regarding the motivation for categorical adequacy as partly resting on the requirement to supply the discipline of logic (and philosophy as a whole) with categories which can 'measure up' to the achievements in the realm of spirit? I believe not. The lack of categories adequate for the cognition of spiritual subject matters *motivates* the need for a reform in the discipline of logic: it is an *extrinsic* reason for why a new logic would be needed, one which can 'purely' account for the shapes historically attained by spirit. But the adequacy of the categories itself would not constitute what *justifies* the validity of the categories within the logical movement: if we are to follow Hegel, such validation is done immanently, through thinking's own pure resources. It must, thus, be a consequence of their inherent truth, rather than itself the truth-maker.

[90] There will be a sense in which the Logic does have a transcendental dimension: in that the retroactive claim of truth of the highest category is in terms of it being the condition of intelligibility of the whole logical movement. But this claim is different from the claim that the categories are validated in virtue of being a condition of possibility or intelligibility of experience and/or reality. Many interpretations of categorical justification are implicitly or explicitly transcendental in precisely this sense (see 1.4). A paradigmatic case occurs in the discussions on the priority of teleology over mechanism. I present a critique of this move in 5.6.

unconditional, the absolute. (Cf. GW 12:229) If we assume that God is the highest

determination in virtue of not being *dependent* upon anything outside itself for its truth or

validity (say, God being true depends on the world *being* a certain way, that it *exhibits* a

certain order or harmony),[91] then conditional cognition cannot adequately represent God.

Conditional cognition adequately represents equally conditional objects: the object *insofar*

as it is a product or effect of a cause outside itself. God has no cause outside itself –we

cannot *infer* God from something else. Thus, if all cognition is conditional knowing, then

cognition will never reach the unconditional. Jacobi affirms the antecedent and therefore

accepts the consequent. Because of this, Jacobi comes to reject the very idea of a category-

bound cognition of God and rather upholds what Hegel calls the 'principle of immediate

knowing': that God is not revealed via mediated knowledge, but 'as establishing itself in

itself' (E §69), an *immediate* certainty of the very being of God, a form of *faith*. God is

disclosed immediately in our pure awareness of his being as it appears in our

consciousness.

    In chapter 2, I remarked on some of the shortcomings Hegel identifies with the

position of faith, the fact that God is not an impoverished content devoid of determinacy,

but rather the richest content, content which allows and furthermore demands a 'scientific'

treatment. We do not honor the content if we relegate it to the form of immediacy. Here, we

can supplement this critique with a focus on the demand for categorical adequacy.

Immediate knowledge provides a form of subjective certainty: *that* I have a subjective

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[91] This claim can further extend to *all* teleological or so-called 'designer' arguments for the existence of God, including its contemporary iterations such as the 'Cosmological Fine Tuning' argument. See Ratzsch and Koperski, "Teleological Arguments for God's Existence." If I may, the prevalence of these forms of arguments within both the philosophical discussions and popular apologetics is both regrettable and unsurprising. It serves to demonstrate how the commitment to physicalism runs so deep that even God's claim to non-physical existence must be proven in physical terms.

certainty in my consciousness is set up as 'the criterion of truth.' (E §71) This claim renders the criterion of truth contingent and arbitrary, for it is perfectly conceivable that someone does not find the subjective assurance of the certainty of God within her consciousness. If we claim that the validity of the concept's content depends on the immediate awareness of God, then God's truth would rest on an *empirical fact*: a sensus communis, that human beings *in fact* encounter this subjective certainty within their own consciousness. But many of us never 'have' the subjective certainty of God. If one 'finds' the certainty of God within herself is a contingent matter. (Of course, Hegel claims this contingency would have to be overcome through a pure examination of the *content* itself: by exhibiting the content as itself rising above particularity and arbitrariness, which is unintelligible if what is supposed to be the criterion for categorical validity is *that* we have it.) But even more problematically: if the immediacy of the fact in my consciousness is supposed to be the criterion of its truth, then the determinateness of God is reduced to a *that* (*dass*), rather than genuine content, a proper *what* (*was*).[92] It renders the content as the poorest possible determination: a determination of purported sheer immediacy, the mere presence of subjective certainty. Rather than a concrete living spirit, God becomes 'an essence devoid of any determination'. (E §74) Neither religion nor philosophy, according to Hegel, would gain any significant ground if an age were to agree *that* there is a God, without any depth or insight into *what* this God is supposed to be. (Cf. E §73 + A, §74) The principle of immediate knowing would, at best, produce a certainty so poor in determinateness that it would be categorically inadequate for the concreteness purportedly belonging to God.

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[92] The difference between the *was* and the *dass* plays a key role in Schelling's late critique of Hegel's 'negative philosophy', as, for Schelling, the incapacity to incorporate existence was a fault of a purely rational system. See García, "Schelling's Late Negative Philosophy: Crisis and Critique of Pure Reason."

The point of the critique of immediate knowing is the following. Even if a certainty that is immediately equal to the fact were to hold in one's consciousness (which Hegel rightly rejects, as there is no such a thing as proper *knowing* without mediation, Cf. E §75), the content of this certainty would be devoid of determinacy and improvised up to the point that it could not serve as the criterion for the object's truth.[93] Thus, the criterion for the truth of the determinations of thinking, against a certain interpretation of Hegel's endorsement of an ontological argument,[94] would be so indeterminate that it could not count as knowing, much less the knowing of a God as concrete, spirit, alive, as something satisfying the most ambitious demands of reason ('Truth'). We are led once more to Hegel's requirement for a correct critique and deduction of the categories: that it is by examining the *content* itself, not by the manner in how content contingently appears in one's consciousness, that their finitude is to be discerned.

3.3.

Then, by granting thinking the possibility to generate pure content as demonstrated by the fact that thought has formative possibilities that are not conditioned by externality, the task is now to *examine* the forms or determinations of pure thinking to determine *which* among

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[93] Against a reading of Hegel which would take him to endorse a certain kind of 'intellectual intuition' having the form of an *immediate* correspondence between subject and object. For Hegel's early reception of the notion of an 'intuitive intellect', see Förster, "The Significance of 76 and 77 of the Critique of Judgment for the Development of Post-Kantian Philosophy (Part 1)." Although Sedgwick defends the 'intuitive intellect' as a manner of reading Hegel's claim to a 'speculative identity', she mobilizes this concept to make sense of Hegel's overcoming of the dichotomy between intuitions and concepts, rather than claiming the possibility of an immediate coincidence between subject and object. Cf. Sedgwick, *Hegel's Critique of Kant*.

[94] For example, under McNulty's interpretation (*Hegel's Logic and Metaphysics*), Hegel's version of the ontological argument implies that 'God by definition exists' (160), given that God is an infinite category, and infinite categories are instantiated 'by definition', certain concepts, because of their very definition, 'must have instances'. (106) On the relevance of the ontological argument for my account and the contrast with McNulty, see 6.2.

such determinations have truth 'in and for themselves'. The categories which demonstrate this form of truth ('inherent truth') will be adequate for the cognition of speculative objects.

But how is such a validation supposed to take place? First, we need to understand what it means to 'scientifically' examine 'pure thinking'. The justification of categories for truth rests on having a correct method for categorical derivation. Hegel considers that an essential problem that has hindered the development of categories for truth is the reliance on unquestioned *presuppositions*. Reliance on presuppositions is problematic not because of a foundationalist epistemic worry, that thought must generate an indubitable principle to ground a legitimate form of knowing.[95] Rather, presuppositions are problematic insofar as they imply the notion that thought must be justified in terms of something else, something whose validity is not questioned: as we have seen, in the case of metaphysics, thought must be justified by corresponding to presupposed representations, or by standing as the immediate abstract determinations of a presupposed 'being'; in the case of 'critical philosophy' and empiricism, thought must be justified in terms of corresponding, containing or otherwise having a reference to appearances or sensuous experience. Immediate knowing presupposes that a subjective immediate certainty of a fact (were it even possible) would be a sufficient condition to establish the truth of the fact, which renders such validity conditional on *if* we have it: a contingent matter. As we can gather, the presupposition of a validity lying outside the realm of thinking makes the categories conditional: their *own* inner content is not thereby examined. They are examined by

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[95] Cf. Houlgate, "Hegel's Critique of Foundationalism in the 'Doctrine of Essence.'"

reference to something else. But what, if not thinking, would grant *that* something else its

worth and validity, its claim to 'normative authority'[96]?

Thus, if the aim was to examine the categories' nature and content, we would

require not presupposing an external source for the validity of thinking. The Logic needs to

be, in this important regard, *presuppositionless*. Hegel claims that philosophy 'lacks the

advantage from which the other sciences benefit, namely the ability to presuppose both its

objects [*Gegenstände*] as immediately endorsed by representation of them and an

acknowledged method of knowing, which would determine its starting-point and

progression.' (E §1) In the Logic, all such presuppositions must be 'surrendered':

> all other presuppositions or prejudices [alongside that of an opposition between a self-
> standing immediacy and a mediation incompatible with it] must be surrendered at the entry
> to science, whether they be taken from representation or from thought. For it is in science
> that all such determinations must first be examined and the status of them and their
> oppositions recognized. (E §78)[97]

So, a pure, presuppositionless beginning is necessary. Hegel claims his Logic meets this

standard by beginning with what initially appears as the most abstract possible thought-

determination: being (*Sein*), which, under a reasonable interpretation, would itself show the

impossibility of a pure immediate beginning[98]. The requirement is not only for a

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[96] That thought is itself the source and ground of its own claims to normative validity, thus refusing the model where intelligibility relies on a passive apprehension of content, is a characteristic claim of 'modernist' or 'post-Kantian' interpretations such as Pippin's. See Pippin, "Avoiding German Idealism: Kant, Hegel, and the Reflective Judgment Problem", 143. For an interpretation of the Logic which centers this notion of 'normative authority', see Zambrana, *Hegel's Theory of Intelligibility*.

[97] ‚Eben so sind alle andere Voraussetzungen oder Vorurtheile bei dem Eintritt in die Wissenschaft aufzugeben, sie mögen aus der Vorstellung oder dem Denken genommen seyn; denn es ist die Wissenschaft, in welcher alle dergleichen Bestimmungen erst untersucht und was an ihnen und ihren Gegensätzen sey erkannt werden soll.'

[98] Much more should be said about how and why the Logic must begin with 'being'. To consider if being in fact accomplishes the desiderata for a presuppositionless beginning goes beyond present purposes, namely, to illuminate how the Logic's method is set to provide the means for an evaluation of the categories of thinking in virtue of their own content. The option Dunphy, following Wolff and others, provides for how to understand the structure of the beginning of the Logic as a form of 'dual reductio' seems plausible to me. Cf. Dunphy, "The

presuppositionless beginning, but likewise for the connection between categories, the mode

of how they are encountered, to be *immanent*, internal. A crucial fault identified by Hegel

in past attempts at providing categories for the cognition of truth was that the categories

were 'merely enumerated', to 'pick a portion of them' from sources such as the function of

judgements, or historically inherited attributes. (Cf. GW 12:28)[99] 'Taking the categories'

from 'elsewhere' is a fault which would be remedied by a scientific logic. Hegel makes

such a requirement for immanence explicit:

> The presentation [of the Logic] 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. (GW 21:18)

Maybe then a scientific logic would follow the form of 'mathematical inference', as it

seems to remedy the problem of a non-immanent connection between the terms within the

inferential chain. It enables thought to 'see' how one determination is internally and

necessarily connected to others through the application of a determinate arithmetical

operation. This procedure appears to provide the internal form of necessity required to

resolve the problem of 'taking categories' from 'elsewhere', enumerating them in a

'historical' fashion. Indeed, contemporary systems of symbolic logic follow a mathematical

standard for the demonstration of the validity of theorems.

Beginning of Hegel's Logic"; Wolff, "Die 'Momente' Des Logischen Und Der 'Anfang' Der Logik in Hegels
Philosophischer Wissenschaft."

[99] 'In its well-ordered form, the first part of this metaphysics was constituted by ontology … [but] a principle
was lacking for these determinations. For this reason, they had to be enumerated empirically and contingently
and their more precise content can be based only on the representation, on the assurance that in thinking one
associates precisely this particular content with a given word, or perhaps on etymology as well. In all this, it
can be a matter merely of the correctness of the analysis (agreeing with linguistic usage) and of empirical
completeness, not the truth and the necessity of such determinations.' (E § 35)

But if we follow Hegel, a connection in the form of a mathematical inference will not do. For, as we have seen, the Logic needs to 'rectify' categories by determining their 'truth' in virtue of the consideration of *their own inner content*. A mathematical connection, according to Hegel, depends on an operation which cannot comprehend concrete content, for it makes 'calculation', as a form of proceeding, a 'mechanical business' (GW 21:208): calculation is an *application to* the determinate content, rather than something that emerges from the content itself. Since the operation is something *applied* to the content, the meaning is 'external' to the results of a calculation. This is clear from Hegel's critical remarks:

> In arithmetic, numbers have no conceptual content (*als das Begriffslose genommen*), no meaning outside equality or inequality, that is, outside relations which are entirely external; neither in themselves nor is their connection a thought [*noch dessen Beziehung ein Gedanke ist*]. 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. (GW 21:37)

And further:

> Essentially, however, the perverse nature [*Verkehrtes*] of enlisting mathematical categories for injecting some determination into the method and the content of philosophical science shows in the fact that, inasmuch as mathematical formulas signify thoughts and conceptual distinctions, this meaning must rather first be indicated, determined and justified [a*nzugeben, zu bestimmen und zu rechtfertigen*] in philosophy. In its concrete sciences, philosophy must take its logical element from logic, not from mathematics; it can only be an expedient of philosophical incapacity to resort for the logical element of philosophy to the shapes which it assumes in other sciences, many of which are only adumbrations of this element and others even perversions of it. Besides, the mere application of such borrowed formulas is an external operation; the application itself must be preceded by the awareness of both their value and their meaning, and *only the consideration of thought* [*nur die denkende Betrachtung*]*,* not any authority drawn from mathematics, yields this awareness. Logic itself is this awareness regarding such formulas. It strips them of their particular form, rendering it superfluous and useless*;* it rectifies them and alone procures for them their justification, their sense and value. [*Berechtigung, Sinn und Werth*] (GW 21:207, emphasis mine)

Thus, the mode of categorical derivation must be internal *analogous* to mathematical inference, while at the same time being able to comprehend the concrete content and

meaning of each of its categories, not impoverishing their content to the successive results

of an arithmetical, or quasi-arithmetical operation. Only a logic that can integrate the

meaning of the content itself could be fit to provide the 'sense and value' of determinations

of thinking, including those of mathematical categories and functions. If this critique of the

'application' model holds, the question is: what kind of connection, what kind of

operation[100] would fulfill the requirement of an 'inner self-movement of the content' (GW

21:37)?

      The answer is, of course, the 'determinate negation' which characterizes the

productive negativity proper to thinking, or what Hegel refers to as *dialectic*. Here is a clear

characterization of determinate negation as fulfilled in the method:

> The one thing needed to *achieve scientific progress* [*wissenschaftlichen Fortgang zu gewinnen*] – 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. [*die Einheit seiner und seines Entgegengesetzten*] – It is above all in this way that the system of concepts is to be built [*bilden*]– and it has to come to completion in an unstoppable, pure progression that admits of nothing extraneous. (21:38)

The dialectic, Hegel claims in the Encyclopedia Logic, presents the 'true nature of the

determinations of the understanding, of things, and of the finite in general' such that it

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[100] The reading of dialectical negation as a 'self-referential' operator functioning as the ground for the logical movement dates back to Henrich, "Hegels Grundoperation. Eine Einleitung in Die 'Wissenschaft Der Logik.'" See also Koch, "Die Selbstbeziehung Der Negation in Hegels Logik"; Wandschneider, "Dialectic as the 'Self-Fulfillment' of Logic."

exposes the finitude of such determinations by the '*immanent* process of going beyond.' (E §81 R) Everything finite, Hegel claims, is 'the sublating [*aufheben*] of itself', which allows us to understand how the thinking through finite content (such as the categories of the understanding) would be the immanent manner of exhibiting their limitations and connecting such limitations to the emergence of a new moment. Hegel continues claiming that the 'dialectical moment' constitutes the 'moving soul of the scientific progression and is the principle through which alone *an immanent connection and necessity* enters into the content of science, just as in general the true, as opposed to an external, elevation above the finite resides in this principle.' (E §81 R) Indeed, for Hegel, the 'dialectical' method of categorical derivation constitutes 'the one and only true method'. (GW 21:38) For it is the only method that is supposed to be *inherent* to the subject matter itself: it is not meant as an application of an external formula or operation, but what necessarily emerges from the *thinking through* the content. In the thinking through pure content, the content's own dialectical nature comes to the fore, and places upon thinking the decision to either give up in the face of conflicting determinations (as empiricism allegedly does), dogmatically uphold prior categories or determinations without advancing further (as metaphysics allegedly does) or come to a 'higher' determination which contains the prior one via its determinate negation. The 'giving up' or remaining within limited determinations is always an option for thinking: the necessity proper to the dialectical movement is not meant to be a *coercion*. Hegel emphasizes that the engagement with pure thinking is a 'resolve', 'the freedom that abstracts from everything and grasps in pure abstraction.' (E §78 A) Thought can cognize however it wants, advance no further than finitude and immediacy. But, in pure thinking, to stop would be to exhibit a form of *unfreedom* or, at best, a *bias*, as thinking would be here stopping in virtue of granting normative authority to something outside its

movement. In contrast, pure thinking freely examining itself is not beholden to any imposed standard of validity. So, giving up or remaining within a limited conception is not an option pursued in a *presuppositionless* Logic, whose aim is the scientific exposition of the thought-determinations in their necessary development *in thinking*, to reach the pure form of truth, independently of any presupposed realm of validity in virtue of which thought would be demanded to stop. Since this is the aim of the Logic –the aim consistent with the demand for reason's highest satisfaction—then thought freely continues the movement until, if at all, it reaches the point where reason's ambitions are satisfied.

Importantly, for the movement to be wholly immanent, not only does it require being 'presuppositionless'. It requires expressing how thinking *actually* works –otherwise, it would be an 'external' operation, thus it would appeal to a principle not proper to thinking, thus it would not be the immanent evaluation of thought-determinations as these are meant to emerge. The movement of the Logic, as a methodic form of generating and evaluating determinacy, justifies its claim to be the correct method by mirroring or expressing the form proper to the *actual activity* which is *thinking*: by arriving at a novel determinateness when faced with mutually incompatible moments, or the relevant sense how thinking produces a *contradiction*.[101] When I think through a content, a claim, a determination, and through the process of thinking over my thought finds itself incapable of understanding such a content by itself, thought 'moves' to the 'higher' position which enables the intelligibility of the antecedent moment *and* its negation. The crucial claim that the logical method 'mirrors' the actual process of thinking is what I call the 'mirror thesis':

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[101] The 'relevant' sense of contradiction, for our purposes, is expressed by a conflict between determinations, each of which, considered from a first standpoint, seem to possess an equal claim to validity such that, *if* thinking aimed at a 'resolution', a further standpoint would have to be produced. Cf. De Boer, "Hegel's Account of Contradiction in the Science of Logic Reconsidered."

the movement of the Logic for generating categories 'mirrors' the productive negativity (the 'spontaneity') which is *thinking* itself. Without the mirror thesis, the method of categorical derivation would mobilize an external operation, thereby violating the immanence requirement. In this way, it should be in virtue of the unsustainability of a category when considered in its purity that thinking finds itself in need to reach a 'higher' moment. The productivity of the self-contradictory relation a category finds itself in is what fuels the logical movement, at least until we reach a category without inner limitations.

If the legitimacy of categorical derivation depends on the mirror thesis, this raises the question: is such a purported productive determinate negation how thinking works? Is thinking, *in fact,* the activity of determinate negation? Does it 'develop' in this way? We might question so. Maybe thinking is the receptacle for determinations that demand to be objectively represented in a determinate way, and the object itself is not affected by the mode of its apprehension in thinking. Maybe thinking cannot 'move' without the coerced influence of external input, without a 'force' acting upon it. Here is a defense otherwise. Say I have a determinate conception of a person, C. My conception of C has been formed by thinking through making inferences based on her acts and claims. I think of C as a selfish, self-interested person who only cares about herself. Let us say one day C acts in such a way that my complete conception of her is contradicted: she acts in a way that could be interpreted as expressing a deep capacity for self-abnegation. Now, my thinking is perfectly free to remain within the conception that does not make sense of this, and clings to the standpoint where the action is an accident: my prior view can be kept safe by regarding her action as an 'exception', nothing expressive of C herself. But, if my aim was to make sense of C, and if the act of C under my original conception cannot make adequate sense, and if I *resolve* to make adequate sense of C, I can move into a new thought where

all of C's actions make sense. The new thought of her would not simply be an opposed viewpoint that nullifies the prior apprehension of C as a selfish person. I do not simply discard my impression of her selfish acts. Rather, my gained insight contains the prior perspective on C *under* the 'higher' conception. The new conception is 'higher' because it can encompass something that the prior perspective could not: itself *and* its negation. I think of C now as what a superficial interaction reveals as a selfish person, and a deeper knowledge of her as subject reveals as capable of acts of self-abnegation fundamentally incompatible with the one-sided truth of the superficial perspective. In this new perspective, thinking has arrived at a shape that can comprehend opposite determinations in their necessary unity. It has overcome its one-sidedness by determinately negating prior content and incorporated this content into its understanding. The incorporation of prior content as determinately negated in the higher insight is its *sublation* (*Aufhebung*).

Crucial to note is that the 'highness' of the higher perspective is not obtained in virtue of being a more *correct* apprehension of the object C. This *might* be the case, but, as we have seen, thought is perfectly free to continue cognizing C as a selfish person, and continue to understand all her actions, even those that do not quite fit into the perspective, under such a schema. The demand to reach the non-one-sided perspective has not been forced upon thinking by the object it attempts to cognize, such that the object could not be thought of or understood without the higher perspective. Rather, it has been reached by thought in its attempt to *comprehend* within the thought of C aspects which the one-sided perspective would discard from its sphere of intelligibility. The non-one-sided perspective might turn out to be empirically inadequate, thus 'incorrect': maybe C *is* (best described as)

fundamentally selfish,[102] and the action where she displayed self-abnegation was an accident, something she did while under the influence of some substance or a relapse in her usual judgement. Even if such a lack of 'correctness' were to be the case, that does not make the one-sided perspective any 'lower', nor the 'higher' conception any less developed.

Hegel's requirements for categorical derivation, as I have tried to show, follow from what rendered past philosophies incapable of producing categories that exhibit the development of thinking towards Truth. If my defense holds, the 'dialectic' of determinate negation mirrors thought's proper development, thereby meeting the requirement for an immanent method, at least in principle. If Hegel is correct in claiming past systems failed due to their insufficient attention to thought's inner content and development, then, at least when contrasted with past articulations, the Logic ought to be better positioned for the derivation of inherently true categories.

Now, two aspects need to be distinguished. First, how the categories are 'derived' or how they are meant to 'emerge' from the dialectical 'movement' of pure thinking. Second, how the categories are justified or how they are said to be 'true in and for themselves' (inherently true). I call the first function the *expository* or *descriptive* function of the Logic, while the second is the *evaluative* or *normative* function. The distinction is crucial for understanding the Logic. For, while Kant's transcendental deduction in the Transcendental Analytic responds to the question of quid juris by relating all the understanding's categories

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[102] If there is such a thing as a person being 'fundamentally' anything, which I would think is not the case insofar as personhood involves the constant becoming of self-determination. I explore the possibility of the self or the person being a concrete example of the form of realized purposiveness in the general conclusion.

to the form of sensible experience (Cf. CPR A84/B116),[103] Hegel's project of categorical

derivation is more ambitious.[104] Hegel's aim, as we have seen, is not to provide the

categories which stand as the constitutive conditions for experience and the objects of

experience. The Logic might do so, and it might be even necessary that it does so, but it is

not its fundamental aim. Rather, Hegel wants to provide categories that would ultimately be

adequate for the cognition of 'what is highest': the 'only thing' of 'philosophical interest',

the one which the Kantian philosophy 'did not consider' (GW 21:28), Hegel repeatedly

stresses, is *which categories have truth in and for themselves*.

The expository function of the Logic, thus, is subordinate to the evaluative function.

This claim entails the following: the exhaustive exhibition of the determinations of thought

via the method of thinking through their immanent content and showing their self-sublation

is the *means* for the determination of which among the categories has truth 'in and for

themselves'. Their exposition is for the sake of their evaluation. And their evaluation is for

the sake of the grounding of philosophy as the cognition of Truth, the justification of

categorically adequate determinations for philosophy.

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[103] On the historical origins of Kant's use of the legal metaphor in his notion of a 'deduction' as well as the *Critique* as 'the true court of justice for all controversies of pure reason' (CPR A751/B779) emerging from the eighteen-century practice of settling legal claims through large documents known as *Deduktionsschriften*, see the classic Henrich, "Kant's Notion of a Deduction and the Methodological Background of the First Critique." Proops provides a critical development of Henrich's interpretation, and further elaborates how a justification in the form of a 'deduction' is meant to function by examining Kant's use of the legal metaphor. See Proops, "Kant's Legal Metaphor and the Nature of a Deduction." On the differences between Kant and Hegel's 'courts of reason', see Lau, "From the Kantian to the Hegelian Court of Reason."

[104] Cf. Wolff, "Science of Logic."

3.4.

Now I address the issue of the meaning of the evaluative function of the Logic: the claim of the 'inherent' truth or untruth of categories. To recapitulate: the categories are 'derived' by emerging within the pure movement of thinking in the determinate place where these must necessarily emerge. The derivation at stake in the pure movement of thinking needs to be immanent: presuppositionless and 'mirroring' how thinking in fact develops or 'grows' via determinate negation. But their 'derivation' within such a movement does not guarantee their inherent truth. There is a difference, then, between the categories being 'valid' in virtue of being scientifically derived (which, allegedly, all the categories within the Logic would be), and their being true. The question then is: what determines their inherent truth?

The straightforward answer is: 'agreement with itself'; a certain relation of *self-correspondence*. This self-correspondence is the mark that distinguishes finite from infinite categories: finite categories will be inherently untrue, while infinite categories will display the pure form of truth. Hegel is reported to make such a connection and its meaning explicit:

> Truth considered in the sense here explained, namely as the agreement with itself, constitutes the proper concern of logic. In ordinary consciousness, the question regarding the truth of thought-determinations does not even arise. The business of logic can also be expressed by saying that in it thought-determinations are considered in terms of their ability to capture what is true [*Wahre*]. The question thus aims at finding out which are the forms of the infinite and which of the finite. (E §24 Z2)

He characterizes the 'finitude' proper to thought-determinations as follows:

> More specifically, the *finitude* of the thought-determinations is to be construed in this double sense: the one, that they are *merely subjective* and are in permanent opposition to the objective; the other, that due to their *limited content* [beschränkten Inhaltes] generally they persist in opposition to each other and even more so to the absolute. (E §25)

It is in this second sense that categories are deemed inherently untrue within the Logic: in virtue of their *limited* content, persisting in opposition to each other *and* to the infinite. We know that the meaning of a 'pure' justification of the categories requires thinking over their pure logical content. The question now is: how can a category display truth as a form of 'self-correspondence' with its own content? The issue requires discussion on Hegel's concept of truth. The first aspect to note is that, although Hegel embraces the definition of truth as involving some form of *correspondence* or *agreement*, his view is far from a traditional correspondence theory.[105] In traditional correspondence, the issue is a correspondence between *propositions* and *facts* (or between thoughts, cognitions, and 'reality'). For Hegel, in contrast, the logical evaluation that distinguishes true from untrue is one that pertains to *the categories themselves*, in virtue of their own content –the categories are meant to *agree with themselves*. Thus, the categories themselves, rather than propositions or sentences, constitute Hegel's 'truth-bearers'.

Among commentators, Alznauer has recently centered on the question of the inherent truth of the categories. His proposed interpretation is elegant and illuminating, so I borrow aspects of it, while amending what I identify as its shortcomings. Before we turn towards the proposal and the suggested modifications, an element from Hegel's analysis must be rendered more explicit, namely the *hierarchical* structure of the Logic. The hierarchical structure of the Logic is important for categorical justification for it expresses how the development of the pure content of categories mirrors their increase in conceptual complexity, such that the final categories will be the 'highest' (the inherently true one). 'Highness' is inextricably tied to their inherent truth –the 'higher' the category, the greater

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[105] For an explicit defense of truth in Hegel in line with a correspondence theory of truth, see Ficara, *The Form of Truth*, ch. 7-8 . For my assessment, see Vieyra, 'Conceptual truth and the idea in Hegel'.

degree of 'self-correspondence' it is meant to display. This result is not accidental. It is an

outcome of the immanence of the method of determinate negation, if we believe (my)

Hegel. The Logic cares about the *evolution* and *richness* of determinacy itself.[106] There is a

progressive integrative elimination of the unmediated (the 'unfree', un-reflected) element,

such that we can claim that the logic of the concept has *integrated* (via determinate

negation) those categories of being and essence, and generated something 'higher' or

'richer': an account which can be adequately described as closer to complete self-

awareness, *subjectivity*. (Cf. 12:98)[107] (I develop this sense of the priority of the concept

over being and essence in chapter 4.) The 'richer' status of the logic of the concept can

thereby be read as a fulfilment of greater integrative complexity, rather than a mere

accumulation or summation of determinacy proper to a bad, merely quantitative conception

of infinity. As evidence for this claim, we read in the Subjective Logic:

> The concept is *concrete* and the *richest* in determination, because it is the ground and the
> *totality* of the previous determinations, of the categories of being and the determinations of
> reflection; these, therefore, are certain also to come up in it. [*Der Begriff ist das Concrete
> und Reichste, weil er der Grund und die Totalität der frühem Bestimmungen, der
> Kategorien des Seyns, und der Reflexionsbestimmungen ist; dieselben kommen daher wohl
> auch an ihm hervor.*] But its nature is totally misunderstood if such determinations are

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[106] In the sense that I consider the Logic to care about *determinacy*, I reject Houlgate's claim that the Logic is fundamentally *about being* as such. Cf. Houlgate, *The Opening of Hegel's Logic*, 124. As readers such as Moyar and de Boer claim against Houlgate, Hegel consistently remarks the *poverty* of the category of being. So Moyar: 'The goal for Hegel is not being, but rather *richness of determination*. (…) for Hegel existence is a concept with its own content, and is ranked by its conceptual richness well below mechanism (not to mention teleology).' "Thought and Metaphysics: Hegel's Critical Reception of Spinoza," 208; de Boer similarly claims that Houlgate 'underestimates the fact that Hegel treats 'being' primarily as a pure concept that allows thought to constitute something as an object of knowledge. The term 'being' therefore cannot be identified with (the ultimate principle) of reality or the world such as it is given.' de Boer, *On Hegel: The Sway of the Negative*, 216 note 2.
[107] If an essential aim driving the movement of the Logic is the elimination of 'givenness' and 'externality' given the 'unfree' character of a thought which is not answerable only to itself (as 'modernist' readers of Hegel's Logic, such as Pinkard, Lau, Pippin and Rand emphasize), then this likewise has the corollary that the Logic aims at a certain formal *exhaustiveness*. Its culmination is the actual exhaustion of the form of thought, since to not eliminate all dependence on the external element would mark its failure. But, on the other hand, it opens up the objection that Hegel's Logic is, in a sense, a closed system of categories, which many readers deem incompatible with the historicity of Hegel's thought. For a proposal making these two aspects compatible, see Lau, "Absoluteness and Historicity: Hegel's Idea of a Self-Transcending System."

> retained in it in their former abstraction – if the wider extent of the universal is understood to mean that the universal is a more, or a greater quantum, than the particular and the singular. (GW 12:48)

This greater complexity makes the 'higher' categories *formally irreducible* to the 'lower' ones. In my view, the most apt model for comprehending the hierarchical, progressively unified development which the Logic shows is a *purposive* one: a model based on an idea of purposeful unity through a growth which is 'implicitly' guided by the concept of the whole. That the progression is purposive indicates that it has a concrete goal in virtue of which all the moments make sense, but only *retroactively*. In its achievement, the end 'contains' or comprehends the prior moments. This goal is the complete form of truth: the concept as the absolute idea. (Cf. E §19, §19 A)[108] That Hegel views the Logic as implying a 'hierarchical' development is clear enough: as I claimed above, the 'higher' moments *contain* the 'lower' ones in a non-symmetrical fashion. It is also textually clear that the telos of the movement rules over the moments as an 'implicit' guiding principle. In the final moment of the Logic, when Hegel describes method, we read that 'implied in it [the immediate beginning of the Logic] is the demand for *the realization of the concept*, a realization that is missing at the *beginning* itself but is rather the goal and the business of the entire subsequent development of cognition.' (GW 12:240) Such a beginning, to move forth, must 'be endowed with the impulse to carry itself further' (12:240), the impulse that the totality be posited '*for itself*'. The logical movement is 'self-developing' as it is the

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[108] In E §19, Hegel defines the logic as 'the science of *the pure idea,* that is, of the idea in the abstract element of thinking.' As it should be clear, at this stage of the logic, a mere introduction or preliminary conception, the notion of 'idea' has not been developed. It will become clear that for Hegel 'idea' is a technical term which expresses the concept as the coincidence between itself (i.e., the concept) and *objectivity*. This unity of the concept and objectivity is that in virtue of which something *is true*. This will have significant consequences which will mark a departure from usual understandings of truth in both philosophy as well as everyday speech. So, when Hegel defines the logic as 'the science of *the pure idea*', he is claiming that the idea is to be presented in the proper element of thought, rather than as structuring a determinate field of reality.

concept of the whole which guides the complete progress and provides unity among the moments.[109]

While purposiveness serves as a model for understanding the hierarchical unity proper to the logical development, it might run the risk of obscuring certain important aspects.[110] Crucially, it might obscure the fact that 'lower' logical fields (such as that of the categories of being) can in principle provide forms for *valid* cognition, cognition which is *adequate* to its object –when its object shows to require an articulation based on the categories of being ('*seinslogische'*) for its proper comprehension. The more developed ('richer') categories might be more adequate for truth (for speculative objects, which, as we shall see in chapter 5, have a conceptual or ideal unity), but there are many spheres of both theoretical and practical activity where 'lower' modes of thought are valid and even essential.[111] That is, as anticipated in section 3.1: if Hegel's Logic aims to provide the

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[109] In his critique of the organic model for thinking the logical development, Werner argues that the teleology of the Logic ought not be fully equated to a *natural* or *organic* form of teleology (the teleological organization of a natural living organism), since in this latter there is always the possibility (dependent on the external element of the contingency of nature) that the concept might not be realized: that the seed might not become the tree. Yet in the Logic the fulfilled realization of the whole is not subject to such external contingencies. Werner, "Some Limits to Hegel's Appeal to Life." While I agree with the limits pointed out in the case of the model of Organic Growth, as stated above, I disagree with Werner's reasoning for rejecting the Organic Unity. His rejection rests in overlooking that in the case of thought, alternative explanatory possibilities do not apply because, unlike in the case of an explanation in the case of a *non-logical* object (such as a dog), pure thinking is not subject to the contingency of spatiotemporal existence. Furthermore, as I defend in chapter 6, the purposiveness characteristic of life is constitutively different from a traditional teleology in that the purpose is always already realized.

[110] An objection to the teleological model would be that it overemphasizes the *end* of the Logic, while for Hegel it is the *beginning* where the scientific status plays out, as we saw, through its *presuppositionlessness*. Fundamentally, it poses the question: if there is an 'end' implied at the beginning, how is the teleological model compatible with the demand of the presuppositionlessness of the beginning? I outline part of my answer. On the one hand, the primacy of the beginning is justified when the matter at hand is to explain or address how the Logic can be 'free': to develop itself out of its own immanent element. In this, readers like Houlgate are right to emphasize the beginning in its essential connection to freedom. But the primacy of the *end* of the Logic is justified when the matter at hand is to address the issue of the nature of the *hierarchy* presented by the moments of the science of logic as a *whole*. In this way, on the other hand, from the perspective of the *whole*, the 'end' is indeed present at the beginning, not as a presupposition but in the form of thought's own formative drive (*Bildungstrieb*, Cf. GW 12:240) that only comes to be explicit at the end, and whose necessity can be understood only retroactively.

[111] In this way, I reject the claim that the Objective Logic (as the part of the Logic dealing with the thought-determinations of Being and Essence, characteristic of former metaphysics as well as Hegel's interpretation of

conditions for categorical adequacy, finite objects will require finite categories; finite

categories are not to be rejected absolutely, but evaluated in terms of their inherent

limitations, which render them logically deficient for the comprehension of infinite subject

matters.[112]

With the hierarchical-purposive structure of the Logic in mind, we can turn to

Alznauer's proposal. For context: we want to understand the meaning of categorical self-

correspondence, for this is the mark of a category's inherent truth (what would satisfy the

aspirational sense of Truth). Alznauer takes his cue from Hegel's claim that 'if truth were

nothing more than the lack of contradiction, the first thing that would have to be considered

for every concept is whether it did not of itself contain such an internal contradiction

[*inneren Widerspruch*].' (E §33 R) Untrue categories will accordingly exhibit a form of

'internal contradiction'. The internal contradiction is not to be equated with their

inconceivability or incoherence in the sense that notions such as *square circle* are meant to

express. Untrue categories are intelligible. The test of their inner contradiction relies,

according to Alznauer, on the possibility of an *unrestricted* application:

> A concept is untrue in the specifically philosophical sense if it cannot be used
> unrestrictedly—that is, if it cannot be predicated of the absolute or used to characterize
> things as they are in themselves—without generating a contradiction. A concept is true if it
> lacks such immanent contradictions (though it will turn out that the only thought-

Kant's transcendental idealism, among other systems of thought) is merely *negative*, a work of 'destruction' of
these forms by the engendering of the true logical shape by which to describe the real. This is the position taken
by Bowman, *Hegel and the Metaphysics of Absolute Negativity*, see especially 36ff. He compares the
'destruction' of ontology by Hegel with that of Heidegger: 'there is a sense in which Hegel intends a destruction
of ontology every bit as radical as Heidegger's and just as little concerned with vindicating the self-(mis)-
interpretation that reason gives itself in the form of the understanding with its categorial outlook.' (Footnote
13) I articulate how I understand the primacy of the concept in chapter 4.

[112] Furthermore, against the purely 'negative' impression, we know from the teleological growth of the Logic
that the 'lower' categories are necessary for the 'higher' ones: after all, in its genesis a high category such as
the concept is the unity of being and essence (Cf. GW 12:29). The whole might be the true, but the whole is
necessarily mediated by its (on their isolation or abstraction false) moments.

determination that fully satisfies this condition is the last one treated in his logic: the absolute idea).[113]

I follow Alznauer's proposal in many key aspects: the Logic requires considering the pure logical content of categories, rather than validating them by means of something else. Furthermore, I also understand his proposal as aligned with my commitment to the Logic's *grounding* function, as Alznauer recognizes that '[t]he importance of the Logic in Hegel's philosophy stems from his contention that our most basic concepts must prove to be true in this sense before they can be legitimately employed in philosophical reasoning about the fundamental structure of reality as a whole.'[114] The categories need to demonstrate their own standing *before* they can be legitimately mobilized for the philosophical cognition of concrete subject matters.

But, without a more detailed exposition of how the 'use of a category in an unrestricted sense', the 'removing the context' of the category, and its relation to the internal generation of contradictions, the immediate problem with the proposal appears to be that it too falls into a standard of truth other than the nature of thought itself. That the inability to be used unrestrictedly marks the untruth of categories raises two problems. The first is that it seems to contradict the requirement that categorical limitations must be inherent to the logical *content* –we need not ask a *further* question *after* we understand the category, namely if it could be predicated 'absolutely'.[115] If the categories are *inherently*

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[113] Alznauer, "Untrue Concepts in Hegel's Logic," 223.

[114] Alznauer, 224.

[115] Support for this claim: '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.'; (GW 21:49); 'The forms of thought must be considered in and of themselves [*an und für sich*]. They are themselves the object as well as the activity of the object. They themselves examine themselves and they must determine for themselves their limits and point up their deficiency in themselves. This is the activity of thinking that will soon be specifically considered under the name of dialectic, about which a preliminary remark must here suffice, namely that it is to be regarded not as

untrue, that suggests that their own untrue nature emerges from within the attempt at

thinking them through, not after a subsequent act of 'removing their context' (unless,

somehow, the removal of the context *was* an integral part of the immanent process of

thinking them over, for which Alznauer, as far as I see, offers no evidence or argument). If

this understanding of inherent truth holds, then the limitations of a category cannot rely on

a failure in their *use*. The second problem is related: if the inherent untruth of categories is

displayed through a failure in their unrestricted use, then this procedure appears to

presuppose a normative notion of a successful unrestricted application. Without such a

normative notion, a failure in their use could not be identified *as such*. But how could we,

from the perspective of the logical movement, know what the standard of that which can be

predicated absolutely, such that it would serve as the normative basis for categorical

evaluation? If the normative basis for the testing of categories is a certain representation of

what a successful absolute predication would look like, then it appears we once more bring

in an unjustified standard for categorical evaluation. We would seem to have an

independent criterion for what making sense absolutely would mean or require. But

Alznauer correctly recognizes that bringing in an external criterion of truth for the testing of

the categories, such as a presupposed representation of God, would violate the requirement

for an *immanent* method.

Considering these problems, I propose amending the proposal by focusing on the

relation between finitude and untruth.[116] We have seen above that Hegel explicitly connects

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something brought to bear on thought-determinations from outside of them, but instead as immanent in them.'
(E §41 Z1)

[116] I am here influenced by Martin's account of 'serial generality' as a model to understand the development of
thought-determinations in the Logic. Cf. Martin, "Four Types of Conceptual Generality," 414; and by
Wandschneider's account (in turn influenced by the work of Wolfgang Wieland and Vittorio Hösle) of
dialectical development as involving a '*seminatic-pragmatic discrpancy*'. 'the explicit meaning of a category
does not express everything that is already implicitly presupposed for its meaning (…) at the pragmatic level

these two issues. Finite things are finite and untrue insofar as they do not correspond to their concept, they do not have their concept as the basis for their being. Hegel's examples tend to rely on how we claim a bad friend is *an untrue friend*, how a bad work of art is an *untrue* work of art: 'Untrue then means as much as bad, something in itself inadequate. In this sense, a bad state is an untrue state, and what is bad and untrue generally consists in the contradiction that obtains between the determination or the concept and the concrete existence of the object.' (E §24 Z2) Although these examples have led to proposals regarding Hegel as upholding a 'material' theory of truth where concrete objects stand as the correct truth-bearers,[117] I believe they can help illuminate an immanent form of categorical evaluation. A house that is useless to live in does not correspond to the concept of a house. But I suggest we ask the following question: why is it that an object which fails to correspond to its concept is nonetheless *intelligible* as a house? On the basis of *what* does thinking reach the notion of the useless house purportedly being a *house*? The answer is: because, within thinking, there is something *external* to the houseness of the useless house which is doing the work of connecting the object with its concept –say, the fact that the useless house has the physical shape pictorially associated with houses. The shape pictorially associated with houses is not part of what makes a house a house: it is contingent.[118] If the object does not correspond to the concept, this means the concept is not

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the act of explication presupposes much more than this already relatively explicit meaning, and contains, as it were, a certain meaning-surplus that requires its own explication, and so forth—referring back to the program of logical explication or (…) to the self-fulfillment of logic.' "Dialectic as the 'Self-Fulfillment' of Logic", 33. Another possible avenue to consider a form of immanent evaluation centers on the role of the *speculative sentence (spekulativer Satz)* as a 'destructive strategy' for overcoming one-sided logical discourse. Cf. Lau, "The Aristotelian-Kantian and Hegelian Approaches to Categories", 96-7.

[117] Cf. Stern, "Did Hegel Hold and Identity Theory of Truth?"; Alznauer, "Hegel's Theory of Normativity."

[118] Not to claim that the true concept of the house is a static Platonic essence with fixed content. In the next chapters, I defend an understanding of the concept of the concept which makes the objectivity of determinacy compatible with the dynamism of reason, thereby foreclosing the possibility of a 'conceptual-realist' view of the objectivity of the concept. As we shall see, nonetheless, as a teleological object whose principle is a mind-given purpose, the constitutive norms of a 'good' house are indeed epistemically available for us.

what uniquely sustains the intelligibility of the object as the object it is meant to be: to be understood as a house, despite being a failure*,* there is a background of intelligibility which is external to the concept, and which is doing the work. But such a background enables us to still identify the failed house with the concept of house, despite the lack of correspondence with the concept, is the logical bond between the object and its concept. *The enabling factor for the intelligibility of a non-self-corresponding object is external to the concept it is supposed to express.* The more work the concept-external background does for the intelligibility of the thing as the thing it is supposed to be, the less does thinking rely purely on the self-correspondence between the object and its concept. In contrast, a 'true house', a house that in a great degree corresponds to the concept of the house, requires very little outside itself to sustain the identification of the concept: we need not appeal to other, concept-external factors that make the object intelligible as what it is, factors which therefore would appear as mere accidents.

A perhaps better example is the untrue work of art. [119] Let us say someone accidentally leaves a can of sparkling water in a modern art museum, and the museum goer (say, me) confuses the can for artwork. When uncovering the truth about the sparkling water, I can understand why I understood the object as an artwork: not because the object *expressed* the concept of art, but because of something *outside* the object sustains the bond between the concept and the object. In this case, it is the fact that the can of sparkling water was left *in a museum*. But being in a museum is *not* what constitutes a true work of art; it is not part of its concept. After I become aware of my mistake, I can see that the condition for

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[119] This second example is 'better' insofar as, unlike the house, the work of art is not an object, and the logical structure of objects is itself what makes up their finitude as the separability between the concept and objectivity. I will further problematize the inherent finitude of external purposiveness in chapter 6.

the intelligibility of the object as a work of art was nothing in the object itself, but rather a background of determinacy connecting the object and the concept in an *accidental*, an *external* manner: by the contextual factor of its being in a museum. A true work of art would not require this implicit background of determinacy to do the work of connecting the object with the concept: the object itself would be the *expression of* its concept.

We should understand the finitude of categories analogously. A category shows its limitations in that *the thinking over* the category illuminates that there is something outside itself (in the logical case: a further category) that is doing an essential work for the very intelligibility of the category. This second concept is, in this sense, the first concept's 'truth': in it, we find the original category's limit, thus its finitude: its incapacity to sustain itself as itself without further logical aid. A concept which would be ultimately true, an inherently true concept, would be one where there is no further logical presupposition required for the bond between the concept and itself. *It itself would be its bond*. Finite, untrue things are perishable in that the 'bond' between their concept and their object is always dissolvable: it can be broken by the mere passage of time. The animal's death marks the point when time undoes the bond between itself and its concept.

Based on these remarks and illustrations, I suggest understanding the meaning of inherent truth as follows:

(a) A category is *inherently* finite, thus untrue, if the procedure of thinking over the pure logical content shows the category's intelligibility cannot purely depend on itself.

(b) A category is *inherently* infinite, thus true, if the procedure of thinking over the pure logical content shows the category to be intelligible by means of itself.

Understood this way, we amend the limitations of Alznauer's original proposal. We need

not appeal to a test *subsequent to* the pure thinking of the categories to encounter their

finitude: the finitude is shown through the non-self-sustaining character that would

necessarily appear in the immanent process of thinking them over. Furthermore, we need

not appeal to an external normative standard, such as a representation of what a successful

'absolute predication' would look like. Finitude appears as an inherent limit in the

category's incapacity to sustain itself, through the illumination, in the thinking over of the

category, that its original intelligibility rests on a further thought. When the implicit

presupposition sustaining the category is made explicit, it is no longer a presupposition.[120]

But we require yet another distinction for the proposal to make sense. I only briefly

address the problem and the proposed solution here, as the issue would require in-depth

discussion on the final section of the Logic (provided in chapter 6). If the pure derivation of

the categories is to fulfill the immanence requirement, we cannot presuppose that pure

thinking will encounter ultimate truth in the final moment.[121] But, in line with the claims

above regarding logical hierarchy and the culmination of the Logic, it turns out it

necessarily does: all categories, and the whole movement of thinking, have their truth in the

final category --the True category, the concept as idea. The idea, it turns out, has been the

necessary logical presupposition sustaining the development of all the prior thought-

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[120] A problem with my examples as analogical to an immanent categorical evaluation might be that the discovery of that the truth of the thinking of untrue objects is a sustaining background of intelligibility does not seem to be 'found' in the pure thinking of them, while indeed nothing external can be brought forth within the movement of pure thinking for it to encounter the limitations of its one-sided thinking.

[121] Cf. GW 12:252: 'To meet the subjective need and the impatience that comes with not knowing, one may well provide an overview of the *whole in advance* – by means of a division for reflection that, in the matter of finite cognition, gives the particular of the universal as *already there*, to be waited for as the science progresses. Yet this affords nothing more than a picture or representation'.

determinations, and indeed the whole 'movement' of the Logic. Does the fact that the idea

is the truth of the whole not introduce an external normative standard, a standard that we

cannot legitimately bring in before legitimately deriving such a concept in the logical

movement? The meaning of a self-corresponding category, a category which would be

intelligible in and for itself, cannot be stipulated in advance. Much less could the stipulated

concept serve to exhibit the inadequacy of categories, for this form of exhibiting categorical

self-inadequacy would violate the immanence requirement.

　　I suggest we can make these two issues compatible through a distinction which Hegel

integrates into his discussion on method: the distinction between analytic (reflexive) and

synthetic, both of which are, Hegel claims, included as moments in the 'method of truth'

that comprehends the subject matter' as 'equally' analytic as well as synthetic. (GW

12:248-9) We can claim that the idea stands as the truth of all the other untrue thought-

determinations *retroactively,* from an *analytical* cognition, while the ground-level

development occurs *immanently* or synthetically. The evaluative or normative moment

would be retroactive (or 'analytical'), while the expository moment is progressive

('synthetical'). The progressive movement of categorical derivation is not *by itself*

transcendental or 'reflective'; the dialectic is an '*immanent* process'. Only at the end of the

Logic, with the whole in view, do we have something like a 'transcendental' methodic

element at play for the critique of all thought-determinations, a *complete retroactive*

grounding, for it is only with the whole of the Logic in view that we can understand the

idea as the implicit supportive condition of intelligibility of each of the moments in the

Logic.[122] Let us remember: my sense of the Truth demanded of philosophy is *aspirational*:

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[122] Since we do not yet know what the 'idea' is, we do not have sufficient resources to determine if it ends up
being the 'complete explainer' (as Kreines argues) or the ultimate condition of possibility for any experience

it is a placeholder for content whose legitimacy would only be shown through the logical demonstration. If the distinction between analytic and synthetic as two moments of one method holds, then the synthetic movement of the Logic does not presuppose the truth of the idea for the immanent derivation of the categories, despite the ultimate need to recognize the idea as the fulfillment of Truth, as well as the ground of the total logical movement.

3.5. Conclusion

In this chapter I defended reading the Logic as having the grounding function of exposing and evaluating the determinations of thinking, intending to determine the categories for Truth-aiming cognition. First, under my *aspirational* reading, Truth is the object and purpose of the Logic. The attainment of Truth depends on the development of categorically adequate concepts for the cognition of 'what is highest'. Such a development requires a 'reworking' of past systems, as the inherent flaws within these systems are to blame for the finitude of their content, thus their incapacity to develop infinite categories. I examined Hegel's main claims regarding the past system's shortcomings, and made explicit, based on these identified shortcomings, the underlying requirements for a satisfactory categorical derivation and evaluation. Hegel's Logic aimed to fulfill such requirements through an *immanent* derivation that considers the categories in terms of themselves. I proposed to amend Alznauer's reading of immanent categorical evaluation by focusing on *if,* in the thinking through a determinate category's content, this content proves to be implicitly

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or sense-making (as implied in interpretations such as Pippin's and Ng's). Maybe it will turn out to be so. The relevant question here is: is playing such transcendental role (either as the supreme condition of possibility for experience, or as the ultimate explanation) what Hegel has in mind as the meaning of its *inherent truth*? No. See ft. 304 in chapter 6, where I take stock of the claims of inherent truth of the logical idea within the relevant literature.

sustained by another category, akin to how the untrue house can be thought of as a house in virtue of something outside the manner how the object exhibits the concept. In contrast, true categories, like true(ish) objects,[123] require nothing outside themselves to intelligibly be what they are meant to be.

My analysis involved a critique of metaphysical and transcendental models of categorical evaluation. This result has important implications for what follows. It forecloses the possibility to interpret the concepts which shall end up being inherently true as inherently true in virtue of either, on the metaphysical-ontological side, being what ultimately coincides with 'reality', 'the world' or any other purportedly mind-independent entity, or, on the transcendental side, being the ultimate necessary condition for the possibility or the intelligibility of experience, knowledge, or some determinate subject matter such as living organisms or the human social world in the sense that the things, without such inherently true concepts, could not be rendered somehow intelligible. Of course, categorical adequacy also entails that inherently true content will demand infinite categories for its cognition: utilizing finite categories for infinite content 'deflates' or misconstrues speculative content, as Jacobi's fideism, according to Hegel, misconstrues the meaning of God. Thus, indeed, (say) the logical concept of life might be the 'best explanation' or the 'condition of intelligibility' of living beings. But being the 'best explanation' is not what *constitutes* the truth of the category. Similarly, on the metaphysical side, it will turn out that there is a sense (to be significantly qualified in chapters 4 and 5) in

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[123] Properly speaking, as it will become clear in chapters 5 and 6, nothing that has the logical form of the object can be inherently true, for the object, even in its truest form (as a *teleological* object) entails a separability between its concept and its objectivity.

which concepts are 'actual', have concreteness and objective standing. But it is not in virtue of 'existing' *that* they are inherently true.

One final note. I have so far proposed a general understanding of the meaning of inherent truth meant to be demonstrated by speculative categories in the Logic. But, if we follow Hegel's claims regarding the logical method, the *demonstration* of the truth of the final concept *is* its logical 'genesis' from the presuppositionless movement of pure thinking. Thus, we cannot claim to have understood *why* the idea is 'True' without having followed the logical derivation from the first, most immediate category ('Being'). This is a problem: it means that we cannot properly comprehend *why* the idea is inherently true without not only reading, but somehow *endorsing* the totality of the movements of thinking presented in Hegel's Logic. An attempt to understand and defend the totality of the Logic as the presuppositionless movement of pure thinking goes well beyond my capacities. But, luckily for us, I consider we can nonetheless understand *what is aspired by* the notion of inherent truth allegedly reached by the final category, as well as why such an aspiration grounds Hegel's method in the Logic. That is what I have tried to do in this chapter. In the following chapters, I apply this understanding of inherent truth to make sense of the argument of the 'deduction' of categories, which would be inherently true: those that appear in the final part of the Logic, the Doctrine of the Concept.

Chapter 4

0.4 Introduction

If the categories of thinking that takes itself as thinking could not be seen as truth-disclosive, then thinking could not think that it can achieve truth in virtue of itself. If thinking could not think that it could achieve truth in virtue of itself, then philosophy, as conceptual cognition, would be unjustified. For I have claimed that Hegel considers philosophical satisfaction to be obtained in terms of *thought's* self-satisfaction: thought cannot be true in virtue of something outside itself, but must be inherently true, if there is to be truth as self-correspondence. In chapter 3, I argued for the relevance and meaning of such a requirement. Given the immanence requirement for the derivation of true categories, then either there cannot be a philosophy of the real (and all philosophy, if possible at all, would be logic, science of pure thinking in its abstract element), or there are real structures that permit being adequately cognized in terms of pure thinking, such that their cognition would be 'self-satisfying'. In this chapter and the next, I provide a defense of the second option. The first step, undertaken in the present chapter, is to show the categories which take thinking *as* thinking to not be 'merely subjective': that the cognition of reality in 'pure' terms, in terms of proper conceptual categories, can indeed be truth-disclosive. To establish thought's status, we require outlining thought's appropriate sense of *objectivity*.

The categories that take thinking as thinking are the categories of the *concept*, which is 'the truth of' the objective categories of being and essence. So, I believe most of the answers lie in the concept of the concept, Hegel's focus on the third part of the *Science*

of logic: the Doctrine of the Concept (*Begriffslehre*). The BL focuses on the kind of

categories to be mobilized for philosophical cognition: *conceptual* categories. In this

chapter, I focus on the first part of the BL, Subjectivity, to show how thinking overcomes

the thought of itself as one-sided, as *merely* subjective, but its subjectivity immanently

unfolds the sense of its objectivity. The main argument I pursue is the following. If reality

could not be truth-functional, it could not have standards for the correctness or

incorrectness of its judgements and representations. If these objective standards were not

constitutive of what we take reality to be, thinking could not have a meaningful

engagement with the real. If thinking could not have a meaningful engagement with the

real, then thought would be *mere* subjective one-sided thinking. The development of the

pure concept from the concept of the concept to the transition towards objectivity through

the syllogism in the Subjective Logic shows this claim not to hold. Thinking overcomes the

view of itself as 'merely subjective' by showing its syllogistic function of articulating a

whole of normative commitments to stand as the condition of possibility for reality to be

truth-functional. If anything in reality can be apprehended as a judgement or representation

with conditions in which it can be validly or invalidly asserted or conceived, this is only

due to reason's syllogistic activity. Reason's activity, when explicitly thematized in its

logical terms, is thinking that thinks of itself as thinking. Thus, thinking overcomes the

necessary perspective it assumes at the beginning of the Subjective Logic regarding its

character by identifying its own proper activity, the activity of reason, to be what makes

reality objectively truth-functional.

In section 1, I introduce the Subjective Logic and argue for its primacy vis-à-vis the

Objective Logics of Being and Essence. I here present the argument for what is at stake in

the demonstration of thought's objectivity: not the proof that thinking 'exists' outside the

subjective concept, but rather the demand for the subjective concept to gain a 'higher' view of itself once having passed through the realization of its necessary contribution in the generation of thought-determinations (i.e., for thinking to gain a self-esteem once seeing itself as thinking). In section 2, I bring in the distinction between reason and the understanding in both Hegel and Kant to further clarify what is at stake in the demonstration of the primacy of the concept, as equivalent to the refutation of (what Hegel views as) Kant's claims to (i) a discontinuity between the understanding and reason; (ii) Kant's claim to the primacy of the understanding over reason. In sections 3, 4 and 5, I present an interpretation of the Subjectivity section of the Doctrine of the Concept. I show the objectivity of the concept as enabling the truth-functionality of reality. The subjective concept provides an account of the origin of the stability of the determinations of the understanding; as Hegel shows, their immutability is an appearance which has its ground on the universal's need for inner difference. Judgement exhibits the necessary finitization of the concept through the breaking up of pre-conceptual unity through predication. Finally, in line with contemporary inferentialist interpretations, the syllogism shows syllogistic reason to stand as the condition of intelligibility of judgements as truth-functional units of meaning. In section 6, I briefly delve into the meaning of the primacy of the syllogism in Hegel, to further outline the differences between my reading and a 'transcendental' one.

4.1.

As argued in chapter 3, the infinitude of a category is a form of 'self-correspondence', where the infinite category demonstrates to need nothing outside itself for the intelligibility of its own content. Finite categories are not self-corresponding, for these require something external to their own pure content for their intelligibility. They contain an inner

contradiction exhibited in the inability to sustain their own content by means of themselves. In the case of the logical evaluation of a category's truth, finite categories display their finitude in requiring a further category for sustaining their meaning.

The categories of causality are paradigmatically 'finite'. If we aim to understand the pure content of the category of causality, we find that the notion requires reference to an *effect*. For the meaning of a cause is that which precedes, is the effective force of, that which the cause causes. So, the intelligibility of the notion of a cause is conditional upon the notion of an effect. Reversely, the notion of an effect does not make sense as a self-standing concept but requires reference to that in virtue of which the effect is supposed to be an expression of: its cause. Then thinking finds that both have their relative truth in their *reciprocal* relation: without such a referential relation, the categories possess no content. We can easily identify a similar dynamic at play in categories such as whole and parts, finitude and infinity, identity and difference, atoms and the void, being and nothing. All these categories remain 'finite': the process of thinking them over demonstrates the limitations of their content in that they require a further logical form to sustain their intelligibility. The exhibition of the inherent limitation, and the overcoming of such limitations, in the process of thinking over, as we saw in chapter 3, constitutes their *dialectic*.[124]

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[124] By exhibiting their inner dialectic, these categories obtain their proper *deduction*, thereby retroactively becoming *concepts*. See Hegel's description of how being only becomes a concept through passing over dialectically into becoming: 'Becoming is the first concrete thought and thus the first concept, whereas being and nothing are empty abstractions. When we talk about the concept of being, the latter can consist only in becoming, since as being it is the empty nothing and as such the empty being. In being, then, we have nothing and in it being. This being, however, that persists in being with itself in nothing is becoming. In the unity of becoming, the difference [*Unterschied*] must not be left out, for without it one would return to abstract being. Becoming is merely the positedness [*das Gesetztsein*] of what being truly is.' (E §88 Z)

The categories of causality and substantiality are categories belonging to the doctrine of essence, the second part of the Objective Logic, containing the 'true critique' of traditional metaphysical categories (GW 21:49). All categories within the logic of essence, along with those of the logic of being, express inherent finitude in their incapacity to 'sustain' themselves, to be a self-sufficient ground for their own logical content. Their finitude is not accidental. Considered logic-externally, their finitude corresponds to the very nature of the fields of thinking where such categories originate, and which determines their legitimate applicability. Often in his introductory remarks, Hegel distinguishes three modalities of thinking: thought as feeling or intuition, thought as reflection or representation, and thought in its proper element, as self-consciousness or reason. (Cf. E §3; E §20 A) Let us remember that thinking is the universal activity of determinate negation. This activity produces thought-determinations: intelligible content. These three modalities of thought correspond to the three doctrinal loci of the Logic: being, essence and concept. (Cf. GW 12:21; 25,1:135[125]) Thinking gives content the form of universality. Feeling, sensible intuition, is its 'lowest', most immediate form: it appropriates the content as a form of *receptivity*. The thereby generated universal determinations (which is the proper content under evaluation in the Logic) are limited by the requirement of an 'input' to fuel thinking: affection. Affection occurs singularly: as a determinate singular point in space and time, the categories related to feeling and intuition are thus limited to singular

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[125] GW 25, 1: 135: 'Die Anschauung ist Denken nur an sich, aber das wahrhafte Denken ist für sich, wo der Inhalt auch Gedankenbestimmungen sind. Wenn es nur Gedankenbestimmungen sind philosophiren wir überhaupt wie im Logischen. Das Denken, das für sich ist, hat die Besonderheit, den Unterschied in sich selbst. Das existirende Denken bedarf der Sprache, und diese Äußerlichkeit macht die Sphäre des Daseins des Denkens aus. Wir können nur denken in Worten, insofern das Denken existirend ist, muß es diese Weise der Objectivität haben. Das Denken also ist die dritte Stufe. Ich habe darin mein Thun und das der Sache.'

content. A singular point differentiates itself from other singular points in the most minimally determined manner.[126]

The categories of reflection contain a greater degree of abstraction, thus, less dependence on immediacy, for these do not take immediate being as substantial, but as the reflected expression of an *essence*, something which thought takes to lie behind the veil of appearance, and of which appearance is the outward form. The basis of the correctness of reflective concepts is determined by finding common patterns, modally robust relations which are meant to express that which is essential, substantial, in what appears. Since here thinking takes appearance as standard for validity, representative categories of essence produce a 'system of *reflected determinations*' where, while thinking is indeed mobilizing its own content for apprehending the sensuous, it is nonetheless 'also fettered by an immediate being still external to it.' (GW 21:46)[127]

The categories of being and reflection are finite in the twofold sense: logic-externally, they are finite in their *conditionality* upon appearance, as explained above. But here, within the pure movement of thinking at stake in the Logic, we are restricted by the

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[126] Hegel is reported to claim, numerical or quantitative categories (categories of the logic of being) stand at the basis of the formative constitution of the sensory: for 'sensory beings to be is to be external to one another, outside one another. (…) The general nature of number is thus to stand in an intermediary position between pure thought and whatever is sensory.' Hegel, *Lectures on Logic, Berlin, 1831*, 119. Cf. also E §85 Z: 'The three forms of being mentioned here are also the poorest, that is to say, the most abstract, just because they are the first. The immediate sensory consciousness, insofar as its behavior involves thinking, is chiefly limited to the abstract determinations of quality and quantity. This sensory consciousness is usually regarded as the most concrete and thus also the richest. It is so, however, only in terms of its material, whereas it is in fact the poorest and most abstract consciousness with respect to the content of its thoughts.'

[127] On the transition from essence to concept, see Schick, "Freedom and Necessity: The Transition to the Logic of the Concept in Hegel's Science of Logic". I am influenced by Moyar's claims on how Hegel displays the primacy of thinking in the concept: 'Hegel's version of conceptual dependence includes the idea of "cause of itself," though it is the conceptual activity of thought rather than substance that is the cause. (…) Against Spinoza's conception of absolute infinity, Hegel claims that the intellectual infinity of thought is the true model of infinity. He aligns intellectual infinity and cause-of-itself with his own idea of the "negation of the negation" (…), a structure of conceptual activity that overcomes the externality of Spinoza's thought.', "Thought and Metaphysics: Hegel's Critical Reception of Spinoza," 206-7.

requirement to evaluate categories in virtue of themselves rather than appealing to their field of origin or applicability within reality. Thus, this first form of finitude cannot be the ground that *justifies* the insufficiency of these categories. Were this conditionality upon appearance to be the ground of their *logical* insufficiency, then the criterion of a category's untruth would stand outside the pure process of thought, thus, it would violate the immanence requirement. So, we need to think of their proper logical finitude as emerging 'purely'. Logic-internally, these categories turn out to be finite insofar as the pure thinking of their content reveals something as their implicit condition of intelligibility. The 'something' at stake is *the concept*, and ultimately the concept as the pure logical idea.[128]

'The concept' turns out to be 'the truth of' being and essence: it has primacy over the categories which show up in these logical fields. Hegel is explicit about this priority and repeatedly emphasizes it. He claims: 'the concept is to be regarded indeed, not just as a subjective presupposition but as *absolute foundation* (...) Being and essence are therefore moments of [the concept's] becoming; but the concept is their *foundation* and *truth* as the identity into which they have sunk and in which they are contained.' (GW 12:11) He claims the concept is being and essence's '*unconditional foundation* [unbedingten Grund]' (12:24), and that 'the concept is also what is utterly concrete, precisely because it contains being and essence, and hence all the riches of both these spheres, within itself in ideal unity.' (E §160 Z) Having established the textual basis for the claim of the 'primacy' of the concept over being and essence, I turn to the question of what it means.[129]

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[128] That the categories of essence turn out to presuppose the concept for their intelligibility discloses the 'transcendental' primacy of the concept. More on this below.

[129] Cf. Wolf, "Metaphysics Supervenes on Logic: The Role of the Logical Forms in Hegel's 'Replacement' of Metaphysics Metaphysics"; Lau, "The Aristotelian-Kantian and Hegelian Approaches to Categories."

First, it *does not* mean or entail that the categories of being and essence have been 'critiqued' in a way that has exhibited them as ultimately invalid, in the sense of being useless or discardable, that these should be thrown out or relegated to a mere 'historical' interest. Neither does it mean that the categories as they appear in being and essence will be replaced by the forms and functions proper to the Subjective Logic, thus implying that the categories of the Objective Logic are *reducible to* those proper to the concept.[130] Were this reductionist position to be held, it would render the whole of the Objective Logic rather superfluous. Given the dual function of the logical 'deduction' (as both descriptive and normative, as argued in chapter 3), the categories of being and essence can be restrictedly valid, while nonetheless being untrue. The categories are valid insofar as they are necessary moments in the pure movement of thinking: thinking *needs to* think being and essence – the categories are *categorically adequate* for forms of finite thought and cognition: the finite cognition of finite fields of reality, 'feeling, intuition, and representation'. (GW 12:24) Feeling, intuition, and representation are *necessary* forms of how thinking is concrete; without them, finite intelligibility in finite, sensible reality would be impossible. So, being and essence having their 'truth' in the concept does not amount to the claim that the thought-determinations encountered therein become invalid, vacuous, or reducible to their 'truth' in subjectivity.

Then, if the primacy of the concept does not mean that being and essence are discardable or reducible to the concept, what *does* it mean? When thinking understands its own activity as the source and ground of logically prior thought-determinations, when it

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[130] This might be a point where I depart from Wolf, who seems to consider the categories of being and essence as *reducible to* their 'genesis' in the concept. See Wolf, "Metaphysics Supervenes on Logic."

can see such determinations as *posited* by itself,[131] thinking takes itself *as* thinking: it can

now retroactively identify itself as the generative source of being's and essence's

categorical content. While before, thinking was indeed doing *its thing* (generating

determinacy via determinate negation), now it comes to see itself *as doing that*. Given the

realization of its positing moment, in the realm of the concept we have thinking's 'self-

reference' (GW 12:16), 'purely self-referring unity' (12:17), thinking containing the

thought of itself. This is why, (in)famously, Hegel introduces the concept by approximating

it (albeit in a qualified manner) to the I, self-consciousness, Kant's *synthetic unity of*

apperception:[132] '[t]he concept, when it has progressed to a concrete existence which is

itself free, is none other than the "I" or pure self-consciousness. […] the "I" is in the first

place purely self-referring unity and is this not immediately but by abstracting from all

determinateness and content and withdrawing into the freedom of unrestricted equality with

itself.' (12:17) The concept is the realm of thinking that contains the explicit reference to its

own activity, the explicit reference which is the logical structure of self-consciousness,

regardless of which concrete structures can be, or are in fact, self-conscious.[133] What needs

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[131] On the 'genesis' of the concept via substance, see GW 12:12-15. See especially the following passage, where Hegel makes explicit that the realization of the moment of *positedness* inherent to the thinking of the substantial relation is what marks the transition to the concept. 'This infinite immanent reflection – that the being-in-and-for-itself is only such by being a positedness – is *the consummation of substance*. But this consummation is no longer the *substance* itself but is something higher, the *concept*, the *subject*. The transition of the relation of substantiality occurs through its own immanent necessity and is nothing more than the manifestation of itself, that the concept is its truth, and that freedom is the truth of necessity'.

[132] Pippin's influential interpretation is well-known for centering Kantian apperception for Hegel's concept, a centrality which is consistent throughout Pippin's work. See Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism*; Pippin, *Hegel's Realm of Shadows*. See also Redding,: 'Hegel's peculiar concept of concept should be thought of as, at least in the first instance, closer to Kant's 'I think', the representation that can accompany all other representations, thereby allowing for the rational unity of all those representations: the transcendental unity of apperception.' ('The Role of Logic Commonly so Called in Hegel's Science of Logic', 6)

[133] Metaphysically inclined readers tend to dislike the reference to Kantian apperception, because it sounds as if Hegel's Logic was *about* self-conscious subjectivity, a logic inherently tied to the form of 'our' mind, rather than a logic which provides the fundamental determinations of reality, or the thoughts of God before creating finite spirit and nature. It is correct that the Logic is not *about* processes occurring 'within' the self-conscious entity, *Geist* –and that this marks a significant departure from Kant's analysis of reason as a *faculty*. But the mistake, I take it, rests on an incapacity to conceive how thinking can have a claim to sui generis validity and

to be understood is not the reference to a finite thinker, but the *logical structure of self-consciousness itself*: to be self-conscious is not merely to do x, but to understand oneself *as* doing x, which entails the capacity to *separate* what is being thought from the thinking of it, thus the possibility of 'withdrawing into the freedom' of self-equality. As we shall see, it is only due to this novel form of thinking, self-relational thinking, that there can be conditions for objectivity in the sense of the objective validity of judgements and representations.

That thinking can see itself as what it is, Hegel shows, cannot simply be presupposed: it is an *achievement*, thought has '*made* itself' into the absolute foundation of the concept (GW 12:11). It cannot be taken for granted that thinking will reach such a form of self-relationality, the logical structure of self-consciousness.[134] This thinking that takes itself as thinking is *the concept*, and it produces thought-determinations of a higher nature than the thinking not understanding itself as thinking, which is why the Subjective Logic is the Doctrine of the Concept: 'the realm of *subjectivity* or of *freedom*' (11:409).[135] As Wolff

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unconditionality without becoming reified as the mind-independent structure of being or reality itself. For Tolley, for example, *either* we understand the thinking examined in the logic as 'merely subjective', and then it is not the truth of the things, *or* we go the metaphysical route and admit that thought-determinations are both *in* spirit and *in* reality. See "The Subject in Hegel's Absolute Idea." In holding that intelligibility can be the ground for the truth of reality and be so given the fact that it has its source in the activity which thinking is, I reject this very dichotomy. See Wolff's apt remarks on objective thoughts: 'The thought-determinations which in Hegel's view make up the subject matter of logic are called 'objective thoughts' since 'what is ' is a subject matter of cognition 'in virtue of its being thought' (…). They are therefore not representations that we merely have. *Truth can only be thought in objective thoughts since what is can only be known by being thought*.' (Wolff, "Science of Logic", 81, my emphasis)

[134] The unsecured nature of self-relational thinking does not mean it is not always implicitly at play in any determinate thinking. The thought of oneself as thinking might be always implicitly at play in any thinking, whatever this might mean. But to recognize it *as such* is an achievement.

[135] Cf GW 12:15-16: 'In the concept, therefore, the kingdom of freedom is disclosed. The concept is free because the identity that exists in and for itself and constitutes the necessity of substance exists at the same time as sublated or as positedness, and this positedness, as self-referring, is that very identity. Vanished is the obscurity which the causally related substances have for each other, for the originariness of their self-subsistence that makes them causes 5 has passed over into positedness and has thereby become self-transparently clear; the "originary fact" is "originary" because it is a "self-causing fact," and this is the substance that has been let go freely into the concept.'

clarifies, subjectivity ought not be understood as involving any psychological claims: Hegel identifies the *logical primacy* of the concept over Kant's formulation of this same thought as something which has a reference to 'human consciousness', and therefore 'links psychology to transcendental logic.'[136] The 'primacy' of the Subjective Logic then means not that everything is reducible to the functions of a finite mind, but rather that thinking recognizes itself to be the formative source of what it took to be mere being and essence: thinking is now not in itself, but *for itself*. (Cf. 12:16)

But, since this thought appears to thinking after it took itself to be revealing the absolute as substance, the recognition of thinking as thinking immediately appears to thinking as a *loss*. Following my interpretation, the Subjective Logic begins with pure thinking standing in an awkward position.[137] On the one hand, by passing through the stages of being and essence culminating in substance, thinking (now as concept) emerges as their explicit truth: subjective activity of 'self-referring unity' and 'self-referring negativity' (GW 12:17). Simultaneously, at this stage, the concept thinks thinking is *merely* formal, not substantial, as standing on its own with its little subjective activities and functions on one side, and the objective realm of things on the other. Subjectivity is equated with a form of arbitrariness, one-sided, abstract truth. (Cf. 12:21; 12:24) Thinking, having discovered itself in the concept as the activity of form, does not initially think too highly of itself. The goal shall for thinking, qua concept, not to see itself as *mere* thinking: to demonstrate for itself its objective moment, so that it can think higher of itself, understand itself as 'the highest

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[136] Wolff, "Science of Logic," 92.

[137] While a possible reading of the beginning of the Subjective Logic could take Hegel as merely critiquing Kant, rather than taking seriously the thought of thinking as merely subjective as a necessary stage thinking passes through, I understand Hegel's strategy as incorporating the Kantian standpoint and providing a critique form within, an 'immanent critique'.

form of thought' (12:17) and thus see itself as indeed truth-disclosive, and ultimately as the pure form of truth.[138]

As it can be anticipated, this position, where the thinking that understands itself as thinking assumes itself to be a one-sided subjectivity, is one Hegel attributes to Kant: after praising Kant's profound discovery of the synthetic unity of apperception as the structure of the concept, Hegel claims as 'an essential proposition of Kant's Transcendental Philosophy' that the concept is taken as 'something *merely subjective'* to be contrasted with objectivity and 'the concept and anything logical are declared to be something merely formal which, since it abstracts from content, does not contain truth.' (GW 12:19) Importantly, rather than being a mere external critique of Kant, Hegel concedes that abstract truth is indeed the first manner how the concept necessarily understands itself once it reaches this stage, and grants that overcoming abstract truth is a logical task *internal to* the doctrine of the concept (Cf. 12:24). Thinking has seen itself as producing thought-determinations through its formative activity, but this *naturally* leads to the thought that it never gets at the things, it cannot be the source of their 'truth'. So, in its first moment, Hegel grants that thinking thinks of itself as one-sided: as '*mere* thinking', '*only* a concept' it thinks of its subjectivity as a *demotion*, as what marks its activity as something separate from the objects, the substantial, the real. To see the concept 'purely as concept' is thinking

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[138] Although influenced by Wolf's argument from the primacy of the concept and the 'supervenience thesis' that metaphysical concepts supervene on logical form ("Metaphysics Supervenes on Logic"), Wolf focuses on reading the task of the *Begriffslogik* to rely in a 'rebuilding' of the reality that has vanished after the critique of metaphysical thought-determinations in the objective logic. It is in that way, by showing the metaphysical concepts as reconstructed as having their basis in forms of judgment, that Wolf displays the primacy of the concept (thinking taken as thinking) over being and essence. I, on the other hand, focus on showing how thinking, by passing through the stages of itself as concept, judgement and finally syllogism comes to see the concept's rational activity of syllogistic inference to stand at the basis of reality's capacity to uphold truth-functional content: the 'stability' and 'objective standing' which Kant grants to the understanding's categories implicitly depends on the dynamic work of reason, which can therefore always dialectically dissolve any claim of categorical immutability.

that has 'only arrived at *abstract truth*' (12:24), in its first moment, the concept is '*at first only* the concept of the concept' (12:29). As it is not often appreciated, Hegel recognizes that the concept must necessarily pass through this initial stage to *exhibit it* as immanently self-sublating, rather than beginning with a notion of the concept where it is always already objective. Thinking must go through the experience of thinking of itself as *mere* thinking, to show the inner instability of this position. That thinking begins thinking of itself as *formal* is clear from Hegel's outline of the division of the DC: '*At first*, therefore, the concept is only *implicitly* the truth (…) The shape of the *immediate* concept constitutes the standpoint that makes of the concept a subjective thinking, a reflection external to the *subject matter*. This stage constitutes, therefore, *subjectivity*, or the *formal concept*.' (12:29-30)

But how can thinking think highly of itself, overcome abstract truth, once it has understood itself as a subjective activity, the logical form of *self-consciousness*? Maybe doing so would require a demonstration of how thinking can capture the truth of the objects by going *outside* itself, apprehending being as it is *independent of* the concept. This demonstration would amount to 'proving' thinking can correspond to that which is external to it, it can 'capture' it in its thought-external 'structure' as it is, thought-externally. Yet this externalist form of correspondence would no longer be the self-referential form thinking has gained in the concept. If that is how thinking wanted to regain the world and objectivity, thinking would have to lose its self-referential character of understanding itself as thinking. But the concept is no longer satisfied with (nor is it able to retreat to) a reality that is logically equivalent to how it is *intuited* and *represented*, a reality as it is for pre-conceptual thinking. It wants a reality that is compatible with the achieved view of *itself*: a reality that it can *comprehend*. Thus, Hegel tells us, the 'incompleteness' of the concept at

this first stage 'does not lie in its lack of that alleged reality as would be given in feeling and intuition, but in the fact that the concept has yet to give to itself its *own* reality, one that it generates out of itself [*Aber ihre Unvollständigkeit liegt nicht darin, daß sie jener vermeintlichen Realität, die im Gefühl und Anschauung gegeben sey, entbehre; sondern, daß der Begriff noch nicht seine* eigene *aus ihm selbst erzeugte Realität sich gegeben hat*.].' (GW 12:24) What would be required to show the concept its truth, Hegel repeats, is that the concept 'passes over' into reality 'as into something which it *generates out of itself* [aus sich erzeught], not as if it were falling back again onto a *ready-made reality which it finds opposite it*. [*daß er zu einer fertigen, ihm gegenübergefundenen Realität wieder zurückfällt*]' (12:25, my italics) The reality that the concept demands is one *it itself* generates from a dialectic 'immanently grounded' in the concept, *not* a pre-made world to which thinking externally corresponds.

But then, what does this odd talk of 'generation' (*Erzeugen*) mean? Does it mean that Hegel endorses a quasi-Berkeleyan idealism, because now reality will be materially created out of pure thinking? No. Hegel clarifies that the Logic, as pure formal science, cannot also contain, nor should contain, the kind of reality which is the content of the other parts of philosophy, of the sciences of nature and of spirit.' (GW 12:25) Thinking is not the material cause for the generation of the real, and the Logic will not have to include or 'produce' anything thought-external to demonstrate the concreteness of the concept. Neither must we interpret the concept as the monistic metaphysical substance of reality.[139]

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[139] 'Monism' is tricky, because Hegel might be recognized as a *epistemological* monist, without having to subscribe to *metaphysical* monism –this is, for example, Kreines' claim. Cf. Kreines, "Fundamentality without Metaphysical Monism: Response to Critics of Reason in the World." Cf. Horstmann, "What Is Hegel's Legacy and What Should We Do with It?" For further elaboration on Hegel as a 'monist' in line with contemporary analytic metaphysics, see Tripaldi, "With or Without Monism? A Roadmap to the Contemporary Appeal of Hegel's Metaphysics."

We need a better alternative. I defend an interpretation where (i) the demand is for thinking to think more highly of itself, satisfied by (ii) 'generat[ing] reality out of itself', in turn satisfied through (iii) the demonstration that reality's truth-functionality, thus its objectivity, depends on the syllogistic activity of the concept, activity that enables anything to be meaningful.[140] The concept will prove to be the condition of intelligibility of objects qua objects, and indeed anything *as* anything, thus showing the stability of the real to be a posited moment of its own pure activity. But before I provide the argument through a reading of the Subjective Logic, it is here that Hegel's critique of the discontinuity between reason and the understanding becomes relevant.

4.2.

Kant separates reason and understanding. He separates them according to their function: the understanding is the faculty of *rules* constitutive of experience, reason is the faculty of *principles* for the ordering of the understanding's representations and cognitions. Accordingly, the pure concepts of the understanding stand at the basis of experience, while the pure concepts of reason (the 'ideas') are inherently dialectical (in Kant's sense, as producing antinomial results in their positive use) and thus possess only regulative validity.

Hegel rejects thinking of reason and understanding first, as *faculties* that thinking beings 'have', as if properties inhering in an object, second, as discontinuous, and third, he rejects what he views as Kant's prioritization of the understanding over reason. Yet, up to an extent, Hegel follows Kant's talk of a distinction between reason and understanding.

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[140] Cf. Martin, "Hegel on Judgements and Posits", 54: 'From this viewpoint, what he calls 'the concept' is the transcendental apperception exhibited as the source of pure concepts and of ways in which concepts can be combined into logically organized wholes, i.e., forms of judgement and inference.'

Why, if Hegel locates so many problems with Kant's division of reason and understanding, does he continue to place value on drawing such a distinction?

Hegel does so to differentiate the determinate concept from its own dialectical productive source: to show the primacy of dynamic reason over stable appearance. Hegel retains the connection between understanding as judgement and reason as syllogism. Both, for Hegel, fall within *the concept*. (Cf. GW 12:32) He equates the first immediate moment of the concept, where its moments have the form of '*fixed determination*s' with 'the sphere of the mere *understanding*.' (12:30) This equation of the understanding with fixed determinations is not arbitrary: the understanding, for Kant, is the source of the stability of experience.[141] The 'lawfulness of appearances in space in time' (CPR B165) is constituted by the functions of the understanding: the twelve categories. These categories, we know, are grounded on the 'functions of unity in judgements' (A69/B94), such that it is 'the same understanding', indeed through 'the very same actions', which brings 'unity to the different representations *in a judgement*' and also 'gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations *in an intuition*' (A78/B104-5). The objective validity of a cognition is necessarily tied to the understanding. Like Kant, Hegel sees the understanding as having to do with *determinate* concepts. Determinate concepts are concepts with fixed and concrete boundaries, concepts which are, in a word, stable. He affirms the understanding's function in the *stabilizing* of appearances: 'it is the understanding that through the form of universality imparts stable subsistence to the otherwise inherent instability of

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[141] And, accordingly, nature 'considered in general', as *natura formaliter spectata*, Cf. CPR B165.

determinateness', through 'abstract universality', the understanding gives determinacies a '*rigidity* of being' (12:42).[142]

The challenge, for Hegel's demonstration of the primacy of infinite 'reason' over the finite category, is to display that such a stability that constitutes the determinations of the understanding is the result of 'self-referring universality' (GW 12:42). Hegel claims 'this universality belongs to the concept as its own' (12:42). What this entails, I argue, is that the rigidity of the understanding, which grants experience the form of universality, is only found and expressed in the concept: it is the *self-reference* proper to thinking. It is not 'out there', nor is it 'given' to us by the mere form of our mind as a certain pre-determined set of functions. We can provisionally see the posited nature of the stability of the finite concept when the understanding, which holds fast to its fixed determinations, runs into contradictions that it can nonetheless think: it can think of the possibility of *both things* being possibly true. It can be thought that it could possibly be true that (say) the world has a *cause*, and that it could also *not have a cause*. That it can hold both moments together in a single thought dissolves the rigid nature of the understanding: it makes thinking suspect that, to hold one possibility as true rather than another, is a *positing* by that universality which initially could think the two moments together in their abstract generality.[143]

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[142] As it should be noted, Hegel is not dismissing the key role of the understanding. Rather, his critique pertains to a *one-sided* view, where the understanding is granted a claim to ultimacy. Cf. GW 21:8: ‚Der Verstand bestimmt und hält die Bestimmungen fest; die Vernunft ist negativ und dialektisch, weil sie die Bestimmungen des Verstands in nichts auflöst; sie ist positiv, weil sie das Allgemeine erzeugt und das Besondere darin begreift.‘; Cf. E §25: ‚Das Denken, nur endliche Bestimmungen hervorbringend und in solchen sich bewegend, heißt Verstand (im genaueren Sinne des Wortes).‘

[143] Cf. GW 21:31: '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.'

This universality that refers only to itself is the form of *reason*. For Hegel, as for Kant, syllogistic inference is intimately connected to reason. Hegel claims the syllogism *expresses* the form of reason: 'The syllogism is what is rational and everything rational' (E §181), and 'everything rational is a syllogism' (*Alles Vernunftige ist ein Schlüss*)'. (GW 12:90) Yet for Hegel, elucidating the nature of the function of thought through which it formally arrives at a self-sufficient totality is not a negative project meant to limit the epistemic pretenses of reason.[144] Rather, it will show the proper formal mediations characterizing absolute objects. It will thereby legitimize the cognition of those objects which, based on the results of the Transcendental Analytic, Kant declared to be inherently 'beyond' possible cognition. Against the Kantian limitations of reason, Hegel remarks:

> If reason is supposed to be a cognition that would know about God, freedom, right and duty, the infinite, the unconditional, the suprasensible, or even which gives only representations [*Vorstellungen*] and feelings [*Gefühle*] of such objects [*Gegenstände*], then for one thing these objects are only negative, and for another the original question still stands, what is there in all these objects that makes them rational? – The answer is that the infinitude in them is not the empty abstraction from the finite, is not a universality which is void of content and determination, but is the fulfilled universality [*erfüllte Allgemeinheit*], the concept which is *determined* and has this determinateness in this true manner, namely, in that it differentiates itself internally and is the unity of its thus intelligible and determined differences. Only in this way does reason *rise* [*erhebt*] above the finite, the conditioned, the sensuous, or however one might define it (…) (GW 12:91)

What makes an object rational, what makes content infinite, is being a 'fulfilled universality', a determinateness that 'differentiates itself internally'. What is rational will be that which is *determined* by the concept not by some external abstraction of a presupposed reality, but intimately, or in the '*wahrhafte Weise*' the syllogism displays by uniting internally differentiated content.

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[144] Cf. Ferrarin, "Reason in Kant and Hegel."

If it were possible to show, thus, that the functions of judgement which produce the stability of appearances through the categories, the *'determinate* concepts' (GW 12:32) are not static markers 'given' to the form of *our* discursive understanding, but that the appearance of their stability depends on the syllogistic work of reason, which Hegel conceives as the self-determining concept, its '*free* determination' (12:29), then it would amount to showing that stability and lawfulness, which for Kant constitute the ground for granting *primacy* to the understanding, are *achievements* of reason. The rigidity of abstract moments of thought would be shown to be a posited moment of the universality that refers only to itself. (Cf. 12:41-43) It would be shown that the stability of (the thinking of) reality, through determinate concepts, stability which conditions the possibility of anything to be a fact, is a moment '*posited through the concept itself*' (12:29).[145] Thus, if Hegel shows the implicit condition of intelligibility of *determinate* concepts is judgement, and the condition for judgement in turn to be syllogism, he would be showing (i) the continuity between the understanding and reason (that 'the common practice of separating understanding and reason is to be rejected on all counts', 12:42)[146]; (ii) the primacy of reason over the understanding. Showing the primacy of reason over the stability of appearances would amount to showing thought's objectivity: that the concept itself, through its pure self-referential activity, makes reality truth-functional. This would be what we need for the

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[145] Cf. GW 12:42-3: 'On the contrary, to consider the concept as void of reason should itself be considered as an incapacity of reason to recognize itself in the concept. The determinate and abstract concept is the *condition*, or rather an *essential moment, of reason*; it is form quickened by spirit in which the finite, through the universality in which it refers to itself, is internally kindled, is posited as dialectical and thereby is the *beginning* of the appearance of reason.'

[146] In his Introduction to Hegel's *SL*, di Giovanni makes the point that this rejection of the absolutization of the distinction between understanding and reason is anticipated in Fichte in the *Wissenschaftslehre*. See Translator's Introduction, *The Science of logic,* xxxii.

concept to overcome its view of itself as *only* a concept, a *merely* formal structure which needs external input for the achievement of truth.

Having laid out what is at stake and having elucidated the general form of the argument, now I proceed to show how Hegel shows the primacy of reason, how the concept '*generates*' reality '*out of itself*'.

4.3.

The concept in its first moment is the '*formal*' or '*immediate* concept.' (GW 12:31) To claim something is a concept is to claim the productive self-referential unification of something into an abstraction. What does this mean? The thinking that takes itself as thinking identifies concepts with a form of determinacy which is the identifiable unity of the thing, but never exhausts the thing. Although a book can only be identified as what it is through the unity it has in the general concept, the singular book itself is not exhausted by the concept. The concept is the background of thought that makes the individual comprehensible. But the concept has, to this extent, been posited by thinking. The posited nature of conceptuality renders it different from other forms of determinateness. For, in being and essence, thought did not take itself to be *positing* (*setzen*). Positedness requires productivity. Only when thinking takes itself as thinking can it see its productive work in the determinateness of unity.

The concept of the concept has three moments: universality, particularity, and singularity. The more universal a conceptual determination is, the easier it is for anything whatsoever to fall under it. Take 'being'. Whatever *is* falls under it. Take 'existence'. Take 'quantitative'. Take 'composed'. In its purest universal moment, the concept is that under

which *anything* can fall, that which is unconditioned by any determinacy whatsoever. On the positive side, the concept as universal requires considering nothing of its other –it makes the universal the form of autonomous self-reference, 'pure identical self-reference' (GW 12:32), 'the absolutely infinite, unconditioned and free' (12:33). Being, too, seemed to entail such a form of universality via the poverty of its logical content. Here, in contrast to being, in the universal concept, thinking is taking *itself* as standard for the consideration of its other, since anything about its other can be encompassed within it.[147] Everything can fall under the poverty of determinateness, which is universality; the abstract concept has the upper hand. By allowing *anything* to fall within its scope, the pure universal concept retains its autonomy and unconditionality in the face of any possible appearance. Any possible appearance, whatever it is, will be *for it*. Thus, any content is negated as independent by being tied to the self-reference of the pure universal concept. If we now relate this thought of the 'self-referring negativity' of the pure concept to Hegel's claims regarding the concept as the pure form of the self, we have that the concept in its pure universality is simply that anything that is, regardless of any other determination it might have, will be *for me*. This form, that anything whatsoever will have the minimum form of being *for me*, is the basic unity of the concept, '*pure* self-*reference*'. (12:33)

The self has itself as its point of certainty. Pure universality's truth comes from the fact that no matter what anything is, even if I get it wrong, I will never get it wrong that it is for me. I might wrongly think that the donkey over there is a horse, but I will never think wrongly that I think the donkey over there is a horse. But precisely what gives the universal

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[147] Cf. GW 12:33: 'Being is simple as an immediate; for this reason we can only intend it without being able to say what it is; therefore, it is immediately one with its other, non-being. The concept of being is just this, that it is so simple as to vanish into its opposite immediately; it is becoming. The universal is, on the contrary, a simple that is at the same time all the richer in itself, for it is the concept.'

concept its freedom in the sense of being the unconditional unity of anything whose certainty is not lost in the determinateness of anything, also renders it poor. If the universal moment is characterized as pure self-identity, then it would have no content. For in order for something to be *for* it, it would have to have the form of something *different* from it. Otherwise, if the concept were pure self-identity, it would think of nothing, as it would not determinately negate anything, for there would be nothing to negate.[148] If the universal is truly universal, it must thus have content that it determinately negates, and for it to have content requires *difference*.[149]

The determinateness of the concept comes from the moments of particularity and singularity. The free determination of the universal concept into internal difference marks the moment of the particular concept. Hegel mentions that the move from universal to particular concept is not a transition (*Übergehen*). It is not a transition in two senses. First, the concept is *one*: none of its moments can ever be thought through without implying the others. The truth of universality is never lost in any concept or conceptualization, for the true universality simply is the self-reference proper to thinking as such. Universality cannot be thought of apart from these moments: 'one cannot speak of the universal apart from determinateness which, to be more precise, is particularity and singularity.' (GW 12:35) Universality must not be thought of as a determinate concept, but rather as the abstract and self-identical moment which renders any concept its specifically conceptual form of necessity –the fact that it is *for* me. For example, the concept *cat* has as its universal

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[148] Cf. Hegel's critique of Kant's 'pure I' in GW 21:224-5.

[149] Fichte, of course, defends something like this: the I posits difference (not-I) within itself. "Hence the sum of that which is unconditioned and is purely and simply certain has now been exhausted, and I would like to express this in the following formula: *the I posits in the I a divisible Not-I in opposition to the divisible I*." (GA I,2: 272) And: "The not-I is itself a product of the self-determining I and by no means anything absolute posited outside the I." (GA I,2: 218)

moment its necessary irreducibility to any singular cat –what unifies any singular cat as a cat will be nothing to be encountered within it. This moment, the moment which unifies ('negates') the material through an inward movement, is the universal. But this does not mean that the universal is thinkable in abstraction from determinate cats. Rather, the concept cat would be empty without determinateness; without cat *meaning* something, the *genus* cat. (Cf. 12:35) So, universality is always already the unity of itself, particularity and singularity. It does not stop being universal in particularity; rather, universality itself posits particularity. Second, it is not a transition, since it is 'the absolute negativity that relates itself to itself', the '*Unterscheiden in sich'* is what creates *determination*: 'it is a positing of differences that are themselves universals (…) they become thereby *fixed*, isolated differences.' (12:36) What this means is that particularity, which we are here to understand as the moment of self-subsistence of the concept, is a posited product of the spontaneous activity of the universal, the pure form of self-reference, the logical I. Thus, the universal concept, by thinking itself, thinks its other. The thought of its other is the generation of difference: this constitutes the simple difference between the universal and the particular, between itself as the identical and the content it directs itself towards.

I will try to make this point a bit more intelligible. First, I can think of myself as a self-enclosed identity, the infinite principle of spontaneity which does not change over time, and which I share with all other selves. This is the universal: the self-identity which imparts necessity to content. But by thinking of myself that way, I realize there is *determinate content* which makes me a *particular* by directing my thoughts *towards* something. One cannot simply think self-identical thoughts, but thoughts have a determined direction. Even when I think my own self or attempt to think of myself by abstracting from all particularity, I think *something*. The act of thinking consisting of a determinate negation

rules out a view of the universal that could *in principle* remain in a stable, unchanging self-identity. The direction of my thoughts is determined by *particularity*: the stability of things outside myself, or even more abstractly and appropriately, the stability of the very difference between myself and what I think. So, when I think of anything, I think of it as it necessarily is *for me* –the self-identical self cannot simply abstract from the difference that occurs in thinking. And, since thinking must think something, and since the thinking *of* something entails a difference between the direction of my thinking and my thinking, and since the thought of it has the character of self-equality (the *universal*), the thinking of something cannot be pure self-equality. If the form of that which is thought by the universal cannot have the character of the universal, then there is *difference*. And the determinations of how things are for me appear as *particular*: for my thinking, things must necessarily appear causally, as being in relations of wholes and parts, etc. Things are thought by the self in a particular form, but the particular form, since it is different from the pure form of the self, appears as *content*. (GW 12:39)

There is an abstract form of universality that is imparted to the determinations of thinking that appear in particularity: Hegel considers the categories of the understanding, which we first encounter in the Doctrine of Essence as the determinate concepts posited by universality in the moment of particularity. (Cf. GW 12:38-9) Thus, the particularity of the concept is its first *finitization*: the concept internally posits difference, but difference contains the moment that abstracts from its own act of positedness, which in turn 'rigidizes' difference, removing the categories from 'the reference to the other' and becoming '*unalterable*.' (12:41) But such an inalterability, which Kant took to be a given by the discursive form of our understanding and the very meaning of the categories' 'a priori' status, shows its true derivative nature only in the concept (thinking that thematizes its own

activity).[150] The mistake of the perspective of the understanding which 'rigidifies' the

categories can be summarized in the following manner: *that indeed* we must acknowledge

that difference is necessary (for, as we have seen, the concept cannot simply be the abstract

moment of pure self-identity) does not mean that *this precise content* that makes up for *this*

difference is itself necessary, or that it *itself* carries with it the form of an a priori

necessity.[151] That it is necessary for a country to be a country that there are other countries

besides itself (since, otherwise, it would be the world or something, but not *a country*) does

not mean that the countries that *in fact* exist *must* in fact exist. That a mother *must* have a

child to be determined as a mother at all does not mean that she must have *the precise child*

she does. All that is needed for the meaningfulness of a country is that *there are others*,

regardless of *which*; all that is needed for a mother to count as such is to *have children*,

regardless of *who*. The content becomes reified when we, like (Hegel's) Kant, conflate the

legitimate logical necessity for content with something like the transcendental or

metaphysical necessity of *this determinate* content.

Since the universal moment is forced to recognize these determinations in their

particularity, it creates the appearance that these particularities have power over the subject,

the universal. Yet it has been the concept itself that has set forth the internal distinction that

makes up the appearance between itself and the particular concept. (Cf. GW 12:38) Even

the opposition between the universal and the particular is only granted standing insofar as *it*

holds for me. If the unifying element that makes any difference meaningful is the universal,

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[150] The exhibition of the stability of determinate difference within the concept as a mere moment having its 'truth' in the dynamism of reason constitutes, in my view, part of what should motivate us, following Rand, to drop the terminology of the 'a priori' when referring to the status of the categories in the Logic.

[151] The necessity of the precise content of difference cannot be derived from the necessity of there being difference at all. Rather, it must be derived from its place within the logical movement itself, thus through its necessary reference to another.

then it has been the universal all along that has enabled the intelligibility of difference. In this way, Hegel claims, '[a]ll previous difference [the differences which appear in the stages of being and essence, in being in the form of a *limit*, in essence as *reference to another*] has this unity in the concept' and that difference, as presented in the particularity, 'is in its concept and therefore in its truth.' (12:38) In 'its truth', difference is neither simply the limit of a concept, nor the essential reflection of a determination. Difference, qua difference, is a *positing* through the absolute negativity of the universal concept.

Thinking realizes that the purported stability of particularity is a posited moment in the concept by paying attention to the *form* of the necessity it imparts to particular concepts: 'the form of the imperishable (…), self-referring universality.' (GW 12:42) The form of the necessity thinking asserts of the categories (in Kantian terms, their a prioricity, their claim to hold universally and necessarily for all experience of reality) does not come pre-built in the content of the determinate concept itself. Causality, for example, does not contain in its concept that it must be the universal form of experience and/or reality. Rather, 'this universality belongs to the concept as its own, and for this reason what is found expressed in it, infinitely close at hand, is the *dissolution* of the finite. This universality directly *contradicts* the determinateness of the finite and *makes explicit* its disproportion with respect to it.' (12:42) The realization that the concept itself, by reference to its self-referring universality, is what renders the moment of the stability of difference, attends to this universality, and illuminates the contradiction between the true form of universality, and the 'determinateness' it has granted to the finite. Thought then realizes that that which is most intimate to it, its universalizing activity, is the ground for any purported claim to necessity. This realization of the 'borrowed' nature of the necessity of a specific determinateness 'dissolves' the finite in thought's terms, as the demonstration of the

momentary nature of the determinate concept as unified in a system of mutually referring moments, categories whose sense internally depends on their other as recognized by thinking, marks 'the *beginning* of the appearance of reason' (*Anfang selbst der Erscheinung der Vernunft*) (12:43).

In this way, Hegel claims: 'Difference, which is an essential moment of the concept but in the pure universal is not yet posited as such, receives its due in the determinate concept.' (GW 12:43) Difference receives its due by being recognized as necessary for the identity of the concept; if a concept contained no difference, then the concept would be devoid of content. But reversely, if the difference were not recognized as a *posit* of universality, then it could not be reunified for thinking, since such a difference would be rendered as more essential than the moment of its holding *for the self-identical thinker*. From these two thoughts, thinking can think of difference (determinateness) as intrinsically united to the form of universality. The abstract universal concept supplied the self-referential unity, and the determinate concept supplied the necessity for internal difference in determinateness. The thought of both together in their mutual necessity is their truth: the concept as *singular*, 'self-referring determinateness is *singularity*.' (12:43)

Singularity has primacy over the other moments of the concept, as it shows both moments to have their 'truth' in it. How does this happen? As 'self-referring determinateness' (rather than mere determinateness in particularity, or self-referring identity in universality), singularity provides the ground for thinking unity and difference together, such that for the singular concept the simplicity is 'determined together' with conceptual inner difference. (GW 12:45)[152] Before outlining the structure of singularity in

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[152] In line with my claims regarding categorical adequacy, Hegel expresses the commitment that the development of the *content* of a category depends on the form of its apprehension, that such form of

greater detail, the sense of primacy must be further understood: the concept in its 'true'

sense is neither a simple abstract representation empty of content, nor a set of marks put

together to form meaning, not because it is unthinkable to have such views of the concept

(as a representation or as a definition based on a common mark, or sets of definitions), but

rather because these two moments *depend for their intelligibility* in the one true concept of

the concept: the inner self-referring unity of difference. As an example, let us think of the

concept of a house. In its universal moment, we think of the house as a universal

abstraction, a name. But if this abstraction is to have *content*, then even the most abstract

understanding of the house *as a house* requires difference: the necessity of recognizing

something *as a house* does not come from the immediate occurrence of the term 'house' in

one's head (what Hegel calls an 'abstract immediacy', 12:67), which might bring up more

an *image* than a concept,[153] but from the concept's difference from *other* concepts.[154] But

secondly, if we took the moment of *particularity* as the true concept of house, and

understood it as a set of marks or traits (say, 'having a roof' *plus* 'being habitable' *plus*

'having at least one room', etc.), then these traits could only constitute the concept of the

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apprehension in fact is capable of exhibiting the inner complexities of its object: 'Even the object that is richest in content, as for example spirit, nature, world, even God, when non-conceptually apprehended in a simple representation of the equally simple expression: spirit, nature, world, God, is of course something simple at which consciousness can stop short without proceeding to extract the proper determination or a defining mark. But the objects of consciousness ought not to remain so simple, ought not to remain representations or abstract thought determinations, but should rather become conceptualized, that is, their simplicity should be determined together with their inner difference.' (GW 12:45)

[153] It is an empirical question *how* concepts appear in immediate consciousness. Some people claim to think with images, such that the concept 'house' brings up an image of a determinate house. Hegel clearly thinks something like this takes place in 'ordinary consciousness', which has no 'concepts', but simple representations. The form how we use concepts in common life, Hegel thinks, is superficial, and must be overcome through conceptualization: 'If we stop at white, red, as representations of the senses, then we call concept what is only a determination of pictorial representation. This is common practice. But then, surely, the not-white, the not-red, will be nothing positive, just as the not-triangular will be something totally indeterminate, for a determination based as such on number and quantum is essentially *something indifferent*, *void of concept.* Yet, like *non-being* itself, such a sensuous content ought to be *conceptualized;* ought to shed that indifference and abstract immediacy with which it is affected in the blind immobility of pictorial representation.' (GW 12:67)

[154] Cf. Stang, "'With What Must Transcendental Philosophy Begin?'': Kant and Hegel on Nothingness and Indeterminacy.'"

house *insofar as* these inhere in a unified subject matter. But the inherence relation presupposes that the marks' meaning, as part of a single concept, relies on a notion of unity which common marks do not, by themselves, are able to provide. If there was no underlying unity, then these traits would stand in mutual indifference. Standing by themselves, these traits would be unable to constitute any *single* concept whatsoever.

So, the holding together of difference in unity is the true concept of the concept, insofar as the other moments of the concept are abstractions from it, thus presuppose it for their complete logical intelligibility. This claim further gives us a hint on the operative *normative* notion of concepts: there are 'higher' and 'lower' concepts, just like there are 'higher' and 'lower' forms of judgement (*and* syllogism, *and* object, *and* the idea…) depending on how much a determinate concept or judgement expresses a properly self-referential unity, i.e. how much it expresses the capacity to sustain its own intelligibility without relying on implicit presuppositions. (Logical hierarchy, as we know from chapter 3, corresponds to the categories' capacity to display inherent truth.) The true singular concept shall be the one that has within itself, or determined itself, the *principle* of its self-differentiation. To do the logical work it has shown itself as doing (namely, sustaining, or being 'the truth of' universality and particularity), singularity must be, in an important sense, immediate. Hegel explains singularity 'is the concrete' (*ist das Concrete*) as '*determinate universality*; and then it is the *immediate* unity in which none of these moments is posited as distinct or as the determinant' (*in welcher keines dieser Momente als unterschieden oder als das Bestimmende gesetzt is*t). (GW 12:50) The 'true relation' of the concept, thus lies in the '*inseparability*' of its determinations, and here, when thinking comes to recognize the singular as the ground for universality and particularity, do we have the 'positing', the becoming explicit, of singularity as grounding. (12:50-1)

As commentators have broadly recognized, singularity has special relevance since it paves the way for thinking the concept as possessing a certain standing beyond pure thinking.[155] True singularity would have the structure of self-referring determinateness, unity in difference. But to be such a form, the singular would be determinate in virtue of itself, rather than as a mere achievement of abstract thinking. That is: in true singularity, or the true concept, the logical genesis that justifies the thinking of difference as unified does not come from the 'external' abstract moment of my thinking, as it might occur when, for example, there is nothing justifying my thinking of the donkey as a horse, or nothing justifying my determination of a certain person I have a crush on as smart and kind, but my subjective activity is what determines the unification of those objects as conceptually different from what they themselves constitutively are, because the manner how these objects constitutively are can be recognized or misrecognized by subjective thinking. The singular concept is the concept as the justificatory logical ground of its own identity: the concept thought of as that which it itself has posited itself to be. The singular '*exists for itself*' as 'the immediate identity of the negative with itself.' (GW 12:51) How? And what does this mean?

The first clue is Hegel's claim that the moment of singularity is the concept *reflecting itself*: at first 'singularity appears as *the reflection* of the concept out of its determinateness *into itself*.' (GW 12:49). Reflective thinking entails a specific form of relation: thought extracts a 'truth' on the basis of what it takes as the shining forth of appearance. Reflection is indeed relating to appearance, a presupposed given, yet it relates

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[155] See Moss, *Hegel's Foundation Free Metaphysic*; Wolf, "Rethinking Hegel's Conceptual Realism"; Trisokkas, *Pyrrhonian Scepticism and Hegel's Theory of Judgement,* ch. 7. Paradigmatically, Trisokkas claims: 'The individual [singular] must be an indeterminate element from which—paradoxically—determinacy springs. Individuality is a fissure which whenever it takes place determinacy comes out of.' (190)

to it with something akin to a suspicious attitude. It does not take what appears to be in itself what it is, but what it is in 'truth', its 'reality', is what is substantial only reflected in appearance. Yet, if singularity is a conceptual moment, then singularity cannot be a mere determination of reflection. Rather, singularity reflects in virtue of the *particularization* of the universal by an '*outward'* turn. (12:49) The outward turn of the concept is to be contrasted with the abstract, universal moment of the concept. In the abstract moment, the concept remains in its self-identical universality, without referring to or encompassing reflected appearance. Hegel calls such an abstract understanding of the concept as empty universal a 'false start' (12:49).

In contrast to the inwardness of an abstract universal, the particularization of the concept in singularity is an 'double shining' in the determination of '*absolute negativity*'. The qualifier 'negativity', expresses that, just like in the very definition of thinking itself, the relation to its presupposition is one of *negation*: in claiming the unity of the tree, thought *negates* or contradicts what sensibly appears as non-unified: a bunch of different colors, shades, textures as dispersed in a determinate spatiotemporal location. All such differences are determinately negated (*not* eliminated or discarded) within the concept.[156]

Singularity as absolute negativity is *absolute* insofar as, unlike in the determinations of essence, the reflective shining of the concept loses its conditional status of having truth in virtue of another. This form of unconditionality is articulated in singularity having both an *inward* and an *outward* moment. That it contains both moments makes the shining 'double'. The 'inward' moment is the dependency of particularity (what enables the individual to differentiate itself from others of its kind) on universality: that, for example,

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[156] Cf. 2.4 above.

this singular tree is different from other trees, not in its *not* being a tree (negating the universal), but in the specific manner how universality concretizes itself through it. Remaining within universality (an 'inward' determination insofar as universality is self-identical abstraction) enables it to express its characteristic differences. This dependence on the abstractive universal does not mean that the expressive determinations of the object do not matter for the understanding of an object such as a tree –determinations like having a determinate texture, height, branches, colors, etc. These 'indexical' determinations matter, they are intelligible, and they exist, but the truth of the tree as a tree is not *conditional* upon these: these, rather, can only even appear as determinations of a specific genus *because of* the primacy of universality in the concept. In that the determinations *appear as* expressions of a universal is singularity's 'outward' turn: the concept is reflected as the unifying moment of appearance.

True conceptual unity is then an unconditional reflection achieved by the inwardness of form. We can consider another example of how the singular concept 'inwardly particularizes' in 'reflecting itself out of difference into absolute negativity': in a couch, the 'difference' is again what appears, indifferently of conceptual thought-determinations: a bunch of materials standing close to each other in a determinate shape. Without concepts, the couch's shape could be contingent –the appearing determinations *by themselves* contain nothing that could be autonomously raised to a conceptual unity. In this way, the necessity of the unity of such 'stuff' into couch-ness is a determinate negation of the mutual indifference of the components. The negativity is *not conditioned* by anything in the stuff itself: no matter how hard we examine the appearing stuff through the reflexive categories, the concept of couch will never appear. Thinking will not be forced to identify couch-ness. It is perfectly intelligible that a non-conceptual being never 'sees' the stuff put

together in a couch-like manner as a couch.[157] The perfectly plausible fact of possible

alternative interpretations of the same appearing stuff does not make the perspective

identifying the couch-ness of the couch any less true.

So much for how the absolute negativity reflected in singularity relates to what is

thought-external. But it is still unclear what the integration of externality into the concept

means. Again, the familiar model would be to understand singulars as individuated items

sharing a common characteristic, 'mark' or 'trait', based on which thinking generates a

concept as the class of all the things sharing such a determinate mark. This, for Hegel, will

not do. For, as it is clear from Hegel's critique of the 'false start' of the abstract

understanding of the concept, the abstract model of universality cannot capture the concrete

as *individual*: it removes from its principle of individuality, generating one-sided content.

This abstract notion of the concept would be too undetermined to capture necessity in the

way the concept is meant to do. In contrast, I propose to take our cue of how to understand

the preservation of concrete individuality in the concept from the following claim:

> As intuited or also as represented, the subject matter [*Gegenstand*] is still something
> external, alien [*äusserliches, fremdes*]. When it is conceptualized, the *being-in-and-for-itself* that it has in intuition and representation is transformed into a *positedness*; *in thinking it*, the 'I' pervades it [*Ich durchdringt ihn* denkend]. But it is only in thought that it is in and for itself; as it is in intuition or representation, it is appearance. (GW 12:18)

Instead of reflectively capturing common marks and patterns, in conceptualizing we have

the recognition of the I in the other: the 'universal factor of the concept' is not 'merely

something common', but rather 'is the process of particularizing (specifying) itself and

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[157] This is, again, entailed by the non-transcendental form of necessity at stake. The non-transcendental form of necessity is essentially connected to the concept's claim to freedom and unconditionality, as argued in chapter 3.

remaining in unclouded clarity with itself in its other.' (E §163 Z1) When thinking

conceptualizes something (say, a chair), the universal moment of the I *recognizes* itself in

whatever constitutes the unity of the thing. The I, as the universal moment, identifies in the

chair the *same* determinate negation that stands at the basis of its own activity; in being a

content which negates its immediacy (the materials which the chair is made of) in virtue of

a universal principle (in the case of artifacts, this is their *finite purpose*, as we shall see in

the next chapter). The principle underlying such an identity is the purposiveness entailed by

form, *that* the thing is inherently unified. In the case of the object, we have that its unity is

based on a *reason*, to have objects in which we can comfortably sit. Such a recognition, I

take it, is what Hegel has in mind when explaining that, in conceptualizing the object, 'the

'I' pervades it'. The principle of intelligibility of the thing is the same as what makes the

self a self: the self-referring negativity of thinking, a principle expressed through its active

self-differentiation. The universal 'reconciles' itself with the singular by recognizing, in the

unity of the singular, the exact same abstractive principle which constitutes its own self.

The incorporation of externality into the concept should be understood as one of

relative subjugation and appropriation. Although the concept integrates the singular

determinateness of the real, in the concept the reality of 'intuition and being' is sublated,

and along with it the appearance that they had of being the 'conditioning reality' (GW

12:22). It sublates the status of the object as mere appearance, to see it 'in and for itself', as

having the structural shape of the self. In line with the more common understanding of

abstraction, there is a relative loss of content when the subject matter is conceptualized. By

being appropriated into the form of the concept, the appearing content is freed from its

conditionality: the universal, the rational, now has the upper hand, rather than the particular

contingent content necessarily integrated in singularity. What the content loses in the

concept is, accordingly, its *contingent* status: those elements that render it 'finite', such as its spatiotemporal location, the non-essential particularities that are entangled with the arbitrary form which burden the content in its appearing moment. Similarly, the pure concept also loses something in becoming concrete. The concept, when fully realized as concrete universal, becomes '*external to itself*' –it is no longer in its pure element of unclouded abstractive clarity. It is now determined. By integrating the difference of the subject matter, the concept sees itself outside itself. For Hegel, such a loss is not a failure. It is rather the necessary outcome of a concrete understanding of the concept.

Can all of this be described as the movement of the concept 'giving itself reality', showing itself to be 'real'? Could this account support a 'realism' about concepts? Only inadequately or with many qualifications. The singular is the structure of the true concept. Its structure is one where we think of the concept as it must be thought. But this means that the form of how the concept *must be thought* can be normative or otherwise authoritative for thinking. For it to be normative for thinking, that which is conceptualized must have a conceptual structure in and for itself, a conceptual structure where thinking *recognizes* itself when it conceptualizes the thing correctly. So, in a sense, yes, for the concept of the concept to be intelligible, thinking that contains the thought of itself must be able to recognize itself in its other. But, as always, the argument is *logical*: the intelligibility of concepts depends on singularity. If one wants to read this as Hegel's argument for why concepts 'must exist' 'out there', we run the risk of overlooking the logical nature of the argument. We are exhibiting how thinking thinks once thinking has seen itself in the concept, not what thinking 'essentially' discovers about a world independent from its own activity.

On the other hand, little of our account of conceptuality would make sense if taken as a description of a psychological process that occurs whenever there is human experience. That is not what we are doing. The Logic is concerned with the logical conditions of conceptuality itself, regardless of if it is an empirically adequate claim that all human psychology is inherently conceptual. Further, since logical concept formation relies on the processes of positing the principle of universality in the singular, at the concrete level we form 'concepts' of things which do not have thinking at the basis of their being –the minimal recognition of *singularity*, no matter how apparent such a singularity might be, is sufficient for thinking to unite the universal with the singular. This process produces universal determinations which would not be considered as concepts in the strict Hegelian sense. For example, a stone, unlike the chair (an explicitly teleological object), does not have self-referring negativity as its constitutive principle. Yet stones have appearing determinations which the understanding can gather as individualized enough that thinking *makes up* for the lack of actual singularity: in the conceptualizing process, mediated by reflection, the abstract universal has the upper hand, since the singular moment does not contain the principle for its self-differentiation.[158] Understood in such a manner, Hegel's account is *normative*: it provides concrete criteria for what subject matters are to count as properly conceptual. Properly conceptual entities, unlike the naïve understanding of concepts of concrete objects or abstract universals, or even how proper concepts appear in language and experience as images or representations, have the self-referring negativity that only thinking recognizes as their constitutive principle.

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[158] Cf. Parra, *Das Reflexive Absolute,* 478–79.

In terms of the aims of the present chapter, to show thinking overcomes a 'formal' view of itself by virtue of the 'generation' of the world according to the concept, let us take stock. The concept is one, but we think its moments as abstractly different. The moment of singularity is the truth of the conceptual relation. Singularity shows the posited nature of particularity as fixed determinate difference: what is necessary is the presentation of difference internal to the concept, but the appearance of the stability of a determinate difference is derivative upon the necessity proper to self-referring universality –the logical I. If this holds, then the rigidity of the determinations of being and reflection, rigidity making experience intelligible by fixing determination, is a *product* of the concept as self-referring determinateness. If this in turn holds, it destabilizes the 'a priori' view of the pure concepts of the understanding, as emerging from Kant's Transcendental Analytic.

But we cannot stay in the concept of the concept. The primacy of the singular concept means the primacy of a form where determinateness, not an abstraction external to the matter itself, is what unifies the differences. What makes the unity of (say) the concept of a cat cannot be the reflective act which imposes a universality in an otherwise indifferent determinateness. Rather, the cat itself, as a concrete whole, must contain the principle for the unity of its determinate differences. The concept, as claimed, must *recognize itself* (the principle of self-reference which gives unity) in its *other*. As we have seen, such a recognition cannot be simply that the cat 'reflects' its concept. The concept is not a reflective determination. Rather, the concept presupposes a certain *breaking up* of reality in accordance with its own logic. Thinking *posits* abstraction by determining the singular to be universal. But the singular to be determinate as universal, as the activity producing the stable concept, is not itself another form of the pure concept. It is rather a new category: that which exhibits the act of separation necessary for the generation of universal content.

Thus, singularity itself, the elevation of appearance into conceptually apprehensible intelligibility through universality, has such an act of separation as its supportive condition of intelligibility. This partitioning act proper to the concept is *judgement*.[159]

4.4.

If the determinate concept is determinate in virtue of holding a moment of difference in unity, then the determinate concept is, in fact, an achievement of a process that abstracts difference to posit unity. The unity, to be the singular concept, requires internal difference in virtue of which it is a unified determinacy. But, by abstracting difference to enrich itself with content, the presupposed process is one of *separation*, the breaking up of nonconceptual indifference into differentiated content. To have the concrete universal concept of a rose, the essential markers of what makes a rose a rose must have been put together in the concept, which presupposes that the separation essential for determinateness is a moment for the concept. Thinking requires first *breaking up* reality through abstraction to then regain its unity, now with inwardly appropriated content, with difference, determinateness, and meaning. The stability of the determinate concept, insofar as it will be a concrete concept rather than a subjective abstraction, is thus dependent on judgement.

Judgement is the condition of the concrete concept. From singularity, we have the concept that has posited itself as self-subsisting: it is *different*, but the *same as* the

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159 For a similar claim regarding the relation between singularity and judgement, see Trisokkas, *Pyrrhonian Scepticism and Hegel's Theory of Judgement*, 221: 'Individuality [in my translation: singularity] appears determinately as the unity of the fundamental concept-determinations but in such a way that in this unity they explicitly fix themselves against one another. The judgement denotes exactly this determinate appearance of individuality as the unity of the fixed difference of the fundamental concept-determinations. The judgement, then, proves to be the true form and content of being-as-concept'.

universal. When thinking of the *singular* rose, the concept 'excludes the *universal* from itself' insofar as the rose is *this concrete rose*, while simultaneously the universal remains as 'a moment of it' insofar as the concrete rose is only intelligible *as such* thanks to the universal moment. (GW 12:52) This is a form of connection of 'self-subsistent' determinations: the singular concept transitions into the partition of the concept in judgement: 'this thing is a rose'. As the judgement of *this thing* being a rose turns out to be the condition of intelligibility of a unified concrete concept of the rose which essentially requires constitutive internal distinctions, judgement is appropriately characterized by Hegel as 'the *determinateness* of the concept *posited* in the *concept* itself', and as 'this positing of the determinate concepts through the concept itself.' (12:53) This understanding of judgement does not map onto the common Aristotelian view. This common view makes judgement the unification of self-subsistent concepts. 'The rose is red' assumes the pre-given intelligibility of rose and redness. Judgement is simply uniting the subject with the predicate, thereby producing a truth-functional sentence. The truth-functional sentence can then be evaluated in virtue of how much it corresponds to 'the facts'. Hegel is claiming there are no self-sufficient concepts without judgement: judgement is the implicit condition of intelligibility of true singularity. And, if true singularity is tied to the possibility of anything being a truth-functional unit of meaning, and if to be a 'fact' is to be a truth-functional unit of meaning,[160] then the judgement is the condition of anything being a

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[160] But see Hegel's use of *Sache*, which di Giovanni translates as 'fact', in the transition from the logic of Being to the logic of Essence: 'the quantitative, for its part, sublates itself by suddenly turning into the qualitative, that is, a being which is determined in-and-for-itself. This unity which thus continues in itself in its alternating measures is the self-subsistent *matter* that truly persists, the *fact* [*Diese so sich in ihrem Wechsel der Maaße in sich selbst continuirende Einheit ist die wahrhaft bestehenbleibende, selbstständige* Materie, Sache].' (GW 21:370)

'fact', rather than self-intelligible 'facts' conditioning the possibility of the validity of judgements.

In its positive role, judgement serves the articulation of concrete determinacy, showing to be a necessary presupposition for the concept and, if my analysis holds, of the possibility to render anything as a 'fact'. The judgement is the 'positing of the determinate concepts though the concept itself', which, given that it produces determinate concepts by which anything in experience is stabilized as a unit of meaning or representation, signals the concept's 'entry into *existence* as *determinate* being' (*Das Urtheil kann daher die nächste Realisirung des Begriffs genannt werden, insofern die Realität das Treten ins Daseyn als bestimmtes Seyn, überhaupt bezeichnet*). (GW 12:53) But, in its negative role, judgement is the finitization of the concept, which translates into being a thoroughly inadequate form for the expression of truth, for its very form presupposes a separation between subject and predicate. The second aspect is essential for Hegel: a common critique against other philosophies is their reliance on judgement, a form which holds subject and predicate in strict separation, against the very thing being attempted through the copula 'is': the determining of the true nature of the subject.[161] According to my rendering of the dialectical method that displays the inherent untruth of categories, the negative aspect of the judgement necessarily emerges as an internal contradiction in the attempt to think the content of judgement. Let us attempt to think through it.

In judgement, subject and predicate stand in a determinate relation. In this form of relation, the subject is the more particular, the predicate the more universal; through the purported identity between the subject and the universality of the predicate, we attempt to

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[161] See 3.2, on Hegel's critique of metaphysics.

reach an essential determination of the subject matter. In this way, Hegel's notion of the function of judgement is to reach the '*what is*' of the subject term –when judging 'the horse is an animal', we attempt to essentially determine the subject, to say something informative about it as the specific thing it is. Before the determination of the subject through the predication in the judgement whereby the universal is expressed, 'the subject as such is at first only a kind of *name*' (GW 12:54, Cf. 12:128).

Because, according to its essential determination, the judgement's concept is to provide the subject matter with its *what-is*, to make an assertion regarding a determinate subject matter, the universality of the predicate should tell us something *about* the subject. But it attempts to achieve so by keeping the two terms apart: the subject stands on one side, as if ready-made independently of the predicate, the predicate stands on the other side, as a self-subsistent generality which could be proper to many other possible subjects. Such an *appearance* of the self-subsistence of the extremes directly contradicts the concept of judgement: exhibiting and determining what the subject is in its proper individuality. If the two terms are capable of being thought of as if subsisting in isolation, then the concept of judgement as reaching necessary *internal* determinations of the subject is never capable of being realized. For the form proper to judgement combines terms precisely insofar as those terms are *separate*. In the separation, the connection between subject and predicate remains an *external* one: as two things stitched together through the bond of the copula 'is'. The possibility of being thought of as self-subsistent totalities only weakly connected is an element that no judgement, no matter how concrete, could ever overcome. For it is something that burdens the *form* of judgement itself: subject and predicate combined through the copula. Judgement is, in this sense, an inherently untrue category –it contradicts that which its concept entails.

The hierarchy of judgements in the Logic expresses the development of forms in terms of achieving closer and closer versions of the 'true' concept of judgement.[162] This claim entails that the most immediate forms of judgement exhibit external and weak combinations, barely saying anything substantial about the subject matter. Nonetheless, there is an important positive element, as it is through the conceptual articulation of singular items found in sense-perception through judgements of existence that such singulars can first receive a universal (intelligible) form. In contrast, the more developed form of judgement, the judgement of the concept, achieves a greater form of conceptual unity, the expression, through the subject, of the object's '*in-itselfness*', its proper universality. (12:57) The most immediate judgement is the 'judgement of existence'. The judgement of existence expresses the nature of 'beings [*des Seienden*] or *sensory* things' (§173 A) since subject and predicate are related by means of qualities which do not express any essential relation to each other. For example: 'this is a cat'. The indexical 'this' might be a cat, but it might as well be a table, a chair, a water bottle. Or: 'the cup is on the table'. The only thing which makes this judgement correct is the weak bond of existence. The subject and predicate stand in an indifferent relation, something that is only united by the contingent point of them being correctly asserted as existing or holding at the same time (indexicality). Precisely because of its conceptual poverty, this form of judgement is necessary for the constitution of intelligibility, since judgements of existence first introduce, via predication, universal determinations into experience and reality.

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[162] Cf. Redding, "An Hegelian Solution to a Tangle of Problems Facing Brandom's Analytic Pragmatism", 671: 'This forms a series that leads ultimately to a judgement form, the 'judgement of necessity', that can equally be treated as a complex judgement or as an inferential relation between two judgements, and with this, Hegel's presentation transitions into his treatment of inferences, 'syllogisms.''

Judgements of reflection integrate greater internal determinateness: the predicate expresses an attribute which is *proper to* the reflected nature of the subject.[163] For example: 'Plastic is elastic'; 'The plant has healing powers'. Not everything can be adequately said to be 'elastic', or 'have healing powers' --only a subset of things can. The predicate is constrained by the nature of the subject: to say 'electrons are delicious' would make little sense. In the judgement of reflection, the attributes or predicates only make sense in the context of how they *reflect* the determinateness of their subject term –which, in contrast to judgements of existence, suggests that both subject and predicate have universal (intelligible) content. Since both terms have universal content, the judgement of reflection can be truth-functional in a manner which is independent of the contingency of indexical affirmation.

Yet the proper attributes, which are reflected in the predicate, are an empirical matter. Thus, insofar as the judgement of necessity involves an appeal to an empirical totality (*Allheit,* an amalgamation of many ones, not a true whole, *Ganze*), it is not wholly self-sufficient: that the rose is a plant requires understanding something which stands beyond the singularity of the rose itself, and which is not only proper to the rose, but also to other things which can also be determined under the same universal (plant).

Mutual dependency and inner relationality are most properly expressed in the *judgement of the concept*. The judgement of the concept has 'the totality in simple form for its content, the universal with its complete determinacy' (E §178). It demonstrates the self-

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[163] Cf. Alznauer, "Hegel's Theory of Normativity": 'An attributive adjective, like 'large', is one that does not preserve its semantic content when it is separated from the noun it is modifying. If I say that this is a large pencil, it does not follow that this is large simpliciter, for the very meaning of adjectives like these depends on the noun they are modifying. Once this distinction is marked, it can be seen that evaluative notions like 'good' and 'bad' fall in the latter category: they get their content from the thing they modify'. (98) Yet a similar point of criticism applies to Alznauer as to Ng regarding their use of Hegel's theory of judgment for the attribution to constitutive norms in nature. See ft. 165.

sufficient totality of form through an understanding of the concept, its demands, and relating those conceptual demands to the individual. Examples are judgements of beauty, of truth, of goodness. When I judge 'the painting is beautiful', what is expressed is (i) that the universal 'painting' has determinate conceptual requirements, that (ii) the individual stands in a necessary relation to this universal (since, by ascribing beauty to the painting, I express that the subject is such that it can or cannot be beautiful), and finally (iii) I internally display an evaluation of the subject in virtue of its capacity to measure up to internal constitutive norms. These judgements articulate the tripartite structure of the concept: universality (the ideal of beauty as proper to things which are artwork); particularity (the recognition of the painting as a particular manifestation of the universal); singularity (the position of *this* painting with respect to the universal). Similarly, to judge a theory as *true* implies having a criterion of truth that is not contained in the theory itself but rather emerges from the determinate non-empirical commitments of what it means for something *to be true*. Even if one is a committed empiricist, as the well-known objection goes, the very claim 'empiricism is true' is a judgement that does not itself hold itself to an empirical validity. It is rather an example of Hegel's judgement of the concept.

The judgement of the concept asserts thought containing the criterion for its truth. It is through an inner understanding of the concept, rather than by observing a determination or property that *inheres* in the subject, that the content of the judgement makes sense. (Cf. GW 12:85-6) There is nothing 'outside' the implicit conceptual requirements which could make these judgements correct or incorrect: these judgements are, in this sense, not dependent on an empirical contingency for their correctness. Hegel's view then stands in clear distinction from the modern logical conception of judgement as dependent on instantiating the form S is P—in Hegel's view, it is a crude misunderstanding to consider

that the judgements 'cheating is wrong' and 'the rose is red' stand at the same *logical*

register. There is nothing within a presupposed immediacy that would make the first

judgement correct, while the second judgement's correctness is a matter of mediation

through an indexical link such as a purported concept-free observation. The features

making the judgement of the concept intelligible rely on the 'inward shining' of the

concept; the standard of correctness of judgements of the concept is *thought* and *reason*.[164]

Only an impoverished logic could not recognize a formal distinction between the two

judgements. Furthermore, Hegel claims, in judgements of the concept do we have 'true

adjudication': the concept being at its basis means having the *evaluative* component of an

ought to be, in virtue of which the subject is rendered sufficient or deficient. (12:84) The

ought to be is the concept's internal standard, its being 'good', 'bad', 'true', 'right',

'beautiful'. [165]

    With the judgement of the concept, we have reached the most internally developed

form of judgement. It is the one that closest approaches self-correspondence. The primacy

of judgements of the concept also has a 'transcendental' element in the sense that these

judgements stand as implicit conditions for the holding as correct of the other forms of

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[164] Cf. GW 12:84: 'To know how to form judgments of existence , such as "the rose is red," "the snow is white," etc., hardly counts as a sign of great power of judgment.'

[165] Ng argues that 'judgments of the Concept' presuppose 'a "principle of purposiveness" as their ground, which for Hegel means the following: the *Gattung* or life-form of the subject defines the space of judgment, or again, the subject belongs essentially to a *Gattung* or life-form which provides the necessary horizon of determinacy and context of predication (…)' (*Hegel's Concept of Life,* 214) and 'Hegel means to suggest that *Gattung*-concepts are objective with respect to the determination of individuals, that individuals are always essentially individuals of a certain kind, and moreover, that the kind of thing an individual is provides the standard and context for the ascription of normative predicates. (…) Judgments of the Concept thus presuppose the objective context of the genus as their necessary ground, a context without which subject and predicate could not be brought into unity and relation.' (219) Although this illuminates the sense how *Gattung* stands as the normative background of possible predication, the application of this form of normative background in the case of life, I believe, is mistaken. To fully understand why requires resources from the next chapter. Briefly: judgements of the concept integrate constitutive norms. The *Gattung* or life-form has no constitutive norms epistemically available for us, for it is not a form of finite purposiveness, but of infinite purposiveness. Thus, life-form cannot be an objective ground for 'the adscription of normative predicates'.

judgement: a judgement of existence, such as 'the rose is red', can only be held as correct (or incorrect) in virtue of the fact that thinking upholds implicit commitments, such as that reality has determinations which can be sensibly apprehended.[166] The progression of judgement, in this transcendental line, can be understood in the following sense. Thinking through the most immediate judgements exhibits the presupposition for their validity to lie in further forms of judgement, such that judgements which do not presuppose to be verified or validated *empirically* (judgements of the concept) end up being the very supporting condition for any claim of validity of judgements of immediacy, i.e. judgements which presuppose an empirical or immediate form of validity. A simple judgement such as 'The grass is green' is intelligible as an attempt at truth-functional sense-making because of less empirical conditions for sense-making, such as the fact that we presuppose (i) the world to be structured in a certain determinate manner (objects, objects with properties); (ii) our experience to disclose the properties of objects. If (i) and (ii) were to be put in judgement terms, their logical form would be 'higher' than that of 'the grass is green', since the validity of (i) and (ii) does not depend on 'the grass is green' holding as true, while the reverse is not the case. This argument can, again, be related to my claim to Hegel's *antirealism*: if the condition of intelligibility for any empirical judgement is a non-empirical element (the thinking that allows anything to be meaningful), and if for Hegel this renders the non-empirical element *more fundamental*, then his notion of fundamentality is an antirealist one.

But, insofar as even the judgement of the concept remains a *judgement*, it is an inherently contradictory category. Because of its form, where subject and predicate remain

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[166] 'The rose is red' presupposes something like 'objects have properties' which presupposes something like 'the properties of objects can be apprehended'.

separate, even in the truest (most self-corresponding) versions of judgement, it can never fulfill its concept: to display, in Martin's terms, an 'explicative identity' between subject and predicate.[167]

4.5.

This last described realization by thinking that active mediation stands as the condition for intelligibility and the determination of the very validity or invalidity of judgement marks the transition towards the syllogism as the form of reason. In the final judgement, the copula has become '*replete of content*' (GW 12:89): it makes explicit, in varying degrees of explicitness or transparency, that the unified identity of the concept ('the whole', 12:89) is the foundation of judgement. If we want to overcome the conceptual weaknesses of judgement as implicitly supported by a structure which is not thematized (the active mediation of the concept), we now require a category which re-unites the concept in what judgement has separated. We need a category that returns the concept to its unity, or better: that exhibits that such a unity has been actively presupposed for the meaningfulness of judgement. This is the move enabled by the syllogism (*Schluss*).

If the syllogistic form is the presupposition for the determinability of judgement's correctness, then the syllogism is something akin to the condition of possibility for

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[167] Martin, "Hegel on Judgements and Posits," 56. One might object to Hegel's definition of judgement and claim it is idiosyncratic. Many judgments do not seem to aim at claiming something 'essential' or 'substantial' about the subject matter through the relation of identity with the copula (think: 'the cat is on the mat.' It is surely not an attempt to say something *essential* about the cat, to determine it constitutively). Martin defends Hegel's: 'For if a judgement's subject matter is not immediately given as a distinct, re-identifiable item independently of its being articulated within judgement, then qualitative judgement, for instance, in articulating a subordinate aspect of its subject matter, presupposes something which it cannot ensure on its own namely the distinct, re-identifiable determinacy of its subject. Because, in abstraction from judgement, such determinacy is provided for only in so far as what is can be non-arbitrarily articulated within judgement, the distinctness of the subject is nowhere actually in place as long as it has not been fully articulated (…). Therefore, because judgement as such claims to be about one distinct subject matter rather than anything else, it contains, qua judgement, a claim to the explicative identity between its subject and its predicate, a claim, which, qua judgement, it only partially fulfils.' (56)

anything to be determined as correct. Paradoxically, if this interpretation holds, it will be much in line with Kant's remarks regarding reason as the condition for 'coherent [*zusammenhängende*] use of the understanding' without which there would be 'no sufficient mark of empirical truth'. (CPR A651/B679) As we saw in 4.2, Hegel follows Kant in associating the syllogism with the form of the rational. In traditional Aristotelian logic, the syllogism is the form of an argument where the conclusion (a judgement) is established through two or more premises (also judgements), where the mayor term (the predicate in the conclusion) and the minor term (the subject in the conclusion) are mediated by a middle term. Mediation here means that the middle term enables the connection between the two extremes –the major and the minor terms. Then the middle term enables a form of *closure*:[168] in syllogistic figures, the middle term 'disappears' from the conclusion in its explicit form but is nonetheless present as the conclusion's enabling condition.

Since we understand the dialectical movement of the Logic to rely in showing a particular moment's limit through an implicit dependence on a further category, it is not difficult to understand the logical priority of syllogism over judgement. The syllogism stands as the presupposed condition for the intelligibility of any judgement: a judgement or proposition, when possessing the aspiration of validity or truth-functionality ('assertoric force', in Fregean terms), implies being the *conclusion* of a syllogism. Judgements only make retroactive sense in virtue of the background of meaning supplied by the fact that they are the result of inferences. (Cf. 12:95)[169] As Redding points out, the syllogism explicitly affirms that 'judgements only find their truth as judgements when they are

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[168] Remembering that in German *Schluss* comes from *schliessen*, to close. Cf. GW 9:89.

[169] Cf. GW 12:95: 'This rationality is not an expedient; on the contrary, in contrast to the immediacy of the connection that still obtains in judgment, it is the objective element; it is the prior immediacy of cognition that rather is mere subjectivity, in contrast to the syllogistic inference which is the truth of the judgment.'

functioning as parts of larger inferential wholes.'[170] Taken as an isolated judgement, the judgement's validity is unjustified. Taken as the conclusion of a valid syllogistic inference, the conclusion has the possibility of being justified: only then is it a *truth-functional* unit of meaning. The transcendental element of the progression of judgement implies that judgements such as 'the grass is green' or even 'there is grass' require, for the determination of their intelligibility and correctness, to be placed within the background of an inferential network where the judgement's correctness is settled in virtue of being the justified conclusion of implicit logical moves. The criteria and possibility of determining correctness comes from *outside* said judgement –empirical information in some cases ('Ana's cat is smelly'), a grasp of a thing's normative requirements ('this computer is useless'), which only properly holds for objects with normative requirements, see 5.3.), or minimally a basic understanding of definitions ('the bachelor is unmarried.') Not even the judgement of necessity, which best articulates the self-referential nature proper of subjectivity, can validate itself: we require that the information provided from a presupposed elsewhere is in fact assumed by thinking to be ground for attributing correctness. These requirements for the validation of a judgement cannot be fulfilled by simply introducing more and more judgements.[171] We require a form which makes explicit the *connection* between one judgement and another –something that posits how one thing is meant to follow from the other, how one element is supposed to be contained within another in a relation of explicative identity.

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[170] Redding, " Hegel's Treatment of Predication Considered in the Light of a Logic for the Actual World ," 17.

[171] The syllogism is not only a set of judgements. It is a set of judgements standing in an *inferential* relation, where the predicate is meant to be supported by the premises.

The syllogism makes such mediation explicit. In this way, it realizes what the concept of judgement demanded, and where judgement found its limit: the positing of a manner of thinking that allows thought to internally determine the validity of its claims. This primacy means that judgement cannot think thoroughly without illuminating that it presupposes syllogistic inference, thus, that it stands as an abstract moment of a syllogistically articulated whole. If this is the case, then the very intelligibility of judgement relies on the syllogism, the proper form of the rational. And if this is the case, thinking qua thinking would be able to have the resources to see itself as the condition for reality's truth-functionality, thus its objectivity.

The syllogism, in virtue of the production of intelligibility by self-referential mediation, enables inner conditions for validity. This internal support brings syllogism closer to inherent truth (as we saw in chapter 3, a form of self-correspondence). But syllogisms too have a hierarchy expressing different degrees of self-sufficiency and possible self-correspondence. In the greater Logic, the classification runs as follows:

A. Der Schluß des Daseins
a. Die erste Figur des Schlusses [E - B - A]
b. Die zweite Figur: B - E - A
a. Die dritte Figur: E - A - B
d. Die vierte Figur: A - A - A, oder der mathematische Schluß
B. Der Schluß der Reflexion
a. Der Schluß der Allheit
b. Der Schluß der Induktion
c. Der Schluß der Analogie
C. Der Schluß der Notwendigkeit
a. Der kategorische Schluß
b. Der hypothetische Schluß
- c. Der disjunktive Schluß

The syllogism of existence (*Schluss des Daseins*) is the first, most immediate figure. An example: 'this rose is red. Red is a color. This rose is colored' (E §183 Z). Here, the

relation between the rose and its color is *contingent*: no matter *what* color the rose was, the conclusion would be justified. Thus, the conclusion does not reveal anything essential regarding the major term (*this* rose). This lack of connection with the subject marks the syllogism of existence as displaying, although *formally* rationality, still nonetheless an 'external connection' (GW 12:91), the kind of connection proper to judgements in the sphere of *Dasein*. The contingency of this immediate syllogism is expressed in that the same subject of the syllogism 'runs into contradictions' (12:96) as well as devolving into bad infinities. The contradictory aspect rests in the weakness of the connection provided by the middle term. Two syllogisms of existence with opposite conclusions might be equally correct, given that the middle term is only superficially connected with the extremes. In Hegel's examples, predictably, the weak bond is *observation* or *sensibility*. Descartes might be right to conclude that the figures he observes from his window are people, but, from that same middle term (the content of Descartes' observation) he can just as well conclude that they *are not* people, but automata with coats and hats. The middle term has no intimate connection to the extremes, which is expressed in the possibility of multiple incompatible conclusions, each being equally well-grounded.

The weakness in the mediating link conflicts with '*the nature of the syllogism*': a connection which is at the same time a form of *positing* in a higher unity. (GW 12:98) Let us remember the requirements from the proper nature of the syllogism as the 'truth' of judgement: to establish a connection where the extremes are at the same time *posited* in a unity in a way that their mediation is transparent. Not everything allows the posited unity of all three moments of the concept. Some elements of reality only allow for an arbitrary or superficial connection. Thus (again, against a purely negative reading of what dialectical development entails), there are aspects of reality for which the more formal syllogisms are

adequate, as it is the case with the mathematical objects in the mathematical syllogism.[172]

But, of course, the overcoming of the deficiency is the exhibition of the foundational work

of a more intimate relationality, the kind of relationality which retroactively grounds the

validity of immediate forms of inference. This would be a relationality where the extremes

are connected by a middle that relates to the moment of singularity and that of universality.

Such a mode of relationality is unavailable for purely contingent kinds of determinacy (as

in, say, the conclusion that *this thing here, my* desk, needs cleaning) or whose objects are

purely abstract and devoid of concept (the calculation of arithmetical operations).

At first, in the second moment of the syllogism (the syllogism of reflection), a more

intimate relationality is achieved by the figure of the *genus (Gattung)*: 'the universality that

lies at the basis [of singularity expanded into universality], uniting singularity and abstract

universality in itself, *the genus*.' (GW 12:111) The genus provides the basis for a unity

among the singular moments ('this frog feeds of insects, and this second frog also, and this

third one also…') and the universal ('all frogs feed of insects') by pointing towards the

ground of both: *the frog* as a genus. The two terms are united in a more intimate way since

the criterion for unity has at its basis the gathering of singularity into universality by a

reflective constant: a repeatedly observed commonality. Thus, since this syllogistic form is

mediated by a kind of generality resulting from the observation of a pattern which becomes

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[172] This is important: not everything belongs as a subject matter to be treated by the philosophical science. It might appear from my reconstruction as if Hegel did not hold mathematics in high regard. This is not so: to claim that a cognition does not require the categorical framework proper to philosophy need not involve a *devaluation* of such cognition: this would be to misunderstand the doctrine of categorical adequacy. To claim that something is not philosophy is not to claim it is debased, unvaluable, superficial. Furthermore, as we can see from the extensive discussions on mathematics in the Doctrine of Being, Hegel had a deep philosophical interest in the development and results of the mathematics of his time. See Redding, *Conceptual Harmonies: The Origins and Relevance of Hegel's Logic*.

posited *as such* by thinking, the terms stand in closer connection. It is no longer a fully arbitrary or contingent association.

So far, so good. But, as we can anticipate, the deficiency of this syllogism maps onto the deficiency in general of the categories of essence and reflection: presupposing the authority of a stable set of external contents as the source of truth, where the legitimacy of such presupposition is taken for granted, rather than internally thematized. To be sure, syllogisms of reflection do not allow for antinomial results, expressed through mutually compatible conclusions, as easily as the syllogisms of existence. The middle here 'contains *singularity* and is thereby itself concrete' (GW 12:112). It contains singularity insofar as it comprehends the concrete singulars for the determination of the universal, precisely the structure described by the singular as self-referring determinateness. Thus, it comes closer to displaying the proper nature of the extreme as the ground for its constitutive attributes. But, in the syllogism of reflection, the premise *presupposes* the conclusion. As an example, the conclusion '*the swan* is white', where *the swan* is supposed to express the *genus*, emerges from 'all swans are white', meaning the genus of the swan is supposed to be dependent on its empirical specification through repeatedly observed traits. But why would these observed traits disclose anything essential about 'the swan'? How could an empirical generalization be the ground of the inherence of universality (swans being white) in singularity (this swan) if all there is to universality is the repetition of singularity?

Empirical induction presupposes a labor of thinking which does not transparently understand itself. That the empirical generalization could disclose anything about the essential nature of the entity in question presupposes that *the singular* expresses the universal: the essential nature of the swan is disclosed and that is *why* the observed patterns hold. We have a circularity: that *this* swan is white is supposed to be grounded in that *all*

swans are white, but that *all* swans are white is grounded on the repeated observation of individual swans being white. The syllogism of reflection does not have sufficient resources to address the circularity of its form. While the deficiency of the syllogism of existence expressed its dependency on *other* syllogisms (thus leading to bad infinity, which could only be resolved by a shift in the form of the syllogistic closure itself), the syllogism of reflection expresses its dependency on presupposing the validity of induction: that *repeated* patterns *ground* genus.[173] Since the conclusion is grounded through the consistent experience of singularity, it remains tied to something which can never guarantee its completeness. As Hume exposed, there could always be an observation that refutes a well-established pattern's claim to universal validity. Since the individuals 'can never be exhausted (…) each induction is therefore imperfect'. (E §190 Z)

Since there can never be a complete experience of all individuals, the connection between the individual and the genus must be implicitly supported by some further logical relation. The implicit support is provided by *analogy*: the syllogistic function holds that, since this individuality is like this other individuality in this particular way, they must likewise be like each other in this *other* particular way.[174] Such a mode of reasoning underlies inductive claims: going from the singular to the universal implies the experience of many singulars which have been posited as analogous by thinking. The example Hegel is

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[173] In the greater Logic, the syllogism of induction shows itself to be the truth of the syllogism of the *Allheit*. This is the syllogism not of mere generalization based on perception, but rather it is the syllogism of experience: 'the subjective gathering together of singulars in the genus, and of the conjoining of the genus with a universal determinateness on the ground that the latter is found in all singulars.' (GW 12:114)

[174] Cf. Hegel's treatment of analogy in the *PS*: 'The assertion that "if you pick a stone off the ground and drop it, then it falls," does not at all require the experiment to have been made with all stones; more likely, it just says that this experiment must have been tried with at least a good many stones, and from that we can with the greatest probability, or with perfect right by *analogy*, draw an inference about the rest. Yet analogy not only gives no perfect right, but its very nature refutes itself so often that the inference to be drawn from analogy itself is instead that analogy does not permit an inference to be drawn.' (GW 9:143)

reported to provide is the following: 'This law of motion has been found previously to hold for all planets; hence, a newly discovered planet will probably move according to the same law.' (E §190 Z) This syllogistic form is closer to self-determination, since it *explicitly* captures that the specification of the genus is a process of inferential thinking: the particularity is essentially connected to the universality. Thought is not selecting one mark over another in an arbitrary fashion; rather, when the analogical connections are strong, they demonstrate that the necessity of the genus is something posited by the associative efforts of thinking in its constitution of universality; its capacity to raise patterns to the proper form of the concept. The syllogism of analogy then captures, to a greater extent, the positing aspect standing at the true ground of the inferential relation: thinking that takes itself as thinking something essentially thinkable.[175] The middle is no longer arbitrarily presupposed 'empirical content' generating circular reasoning –such a content, Hegel clarifies, is not 'what matters in the syllogism as such.' (GW 12:116)

But analogy is still deficient. The analogical syllogism can easily lend itself to weak inferences, due to the nature of the relation between universality and singularity expressed therein. Consider, for example: 'Ana is Mexican and annoying, so Pedro, who is also Mexican, will be annoying'. But Ana's being annoying has little to do with her being Mexican; this property cannot be transmitted to Pedro simply because he shares the universal attribute of being Mexican. Despite making explicit thinking's associative moment presupposed by induction, analogy retains the universal and the singular too far apart: universality, in the syllogism of analogy, remains as 'an external determination' (GW

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[175] The sense of 'evolution' through the Logic, we know, means uncovering further logical presuppositions; thought's self-discovering that relations and structures are in fact significantly more mediated that we originally took them to be. For the use of 'evolution' as it applies to the development of logical thought-determinations through a fundamental operation of self-referential negation, see Koch, *Die Evolution Des Logischen Raumes*.

12:118) insofar as there is significant room for arbitrary facts to play a role in the drawing of the conclusion.[176]

The transition to objectivity begins with the syllogism of necessity, where the extremes of the concept are determined 'also as totalities'. (GW 12:92) The syllogism of necessity contains (i) the categorical syllogism; (ii) the hypothetical syllogism; (iii) the disjunctive syllogism. These three forms display a progression in the self-specification of internal content. How? The progress requires realizing the syllogism in such a way that the extremes are posited as the totality which initially constitutes the middle term, and the necessity of the connection, at first only the substantial content, shall be expressed as the explicit principle. Hegel clarifies that, in the syllogism of necessity, the middle term is 'is not any adventitious immediate content but is the immanent reflection of the determinateness of the extremes' such that the extremes have their 'inner identity' in the middle term. (12:118) In this way, 'the terms themselves are as moments of necessary existence.' (12:119)

In a categorical syllogism, the *genus* (*Gattung*) is the universality which determines the truth of the individual. Because gold belongs to the genus metal, being an electrical conductor will be true of it. In contrast to how the determination of universality was expressed in the syllogism of reflection, in the categorical syllogism, the individual is *substantially* connected to the universal. But the individual could still be any other instance of the genus –it could be gold, but it could also be copper. The fact that the individual is taken up as such only insofar as it is a relatively indifferent instance of the genus points towards an implicit form sustaining the categorical inference. The implicit sustaining form

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[176] Hegel indeed considers that such form of faulty reasoning is partly to blame for the 'deserved disrepute' of the philosophies of nature of his contemporaries. Cf. E §190 Z.

is a *hypothetical* syllogism: *if* this specific individual is an instance of the genus, then it will inherit that which is proper to the genus. The hypothetical syllogism therefore makes explicit a process implicit in the categorical syllogism: the necessity to take up the individual *as such*, consider it *in its concrete individuality* (singularity) as a possible instance of the genus. To categorically claim, based on the judgement that all cats are mammals, then Momo the cat will be a mammal, the *implicit* work of hypothetical syllogism has first determined the individual, Momo, as a member of a genus.

The hypothetical syllogism relies on a form of conditioning presupposing something like a substantial essence –for example, being a mammal as part of the essence of being a cat. It is the conceptual rearticulation of the essence-based categories of *substantiality*. So, the universal cat, taken up as the *substance*, is what controls, grounds or determines the scope of the possible 'accidents', which constitute the particularities of determinate cats. The hypothetical syllogism falls into a unity of the activity of form doing the conditioning and the conditioned. We encounter the same realization found in substance under the category of *Wechselwirkung*: that the intelligibility of substance is not self-standing, but substance is only intelligible qua substance *because* there are accidents. (Cf. E §§155-157) Given the dependence on accidentality for the determination of substantiality, there remains a 'contingent' aspect which, in its explicit thematization, requires transitioning to a further logical form.

The remaining externality present in the mutual dependence of accidentality and substantiality is sublated by transitioning to the final form of the syllogism: the disjunctive syllogism. The disjunctive syllogism expresses the full determination of content in its proper specificity, namely, one where there is inner difference within a unity, where each term is internally mediated. This difference within unity is the realization of the necessity

proper to *reason*, rather than as the simplicity of immediacy in being, or the modal

deterministic necessity of essence.

The disjunctive syllogism achieves conceptual necessity through the labor of a

function not new in the logical movement. This function is 'self-referring negativity': the

determination of something based on the self-referential expression of what such

determination excludes or negates, which illuminates the need for an articulated unity of

mutually referring commitments. Let us try to make sense of this function as it plays out in

the disjunctive syllogism. Conceptual unity requires determinate negation. In inferentialist

terms, this means the boundaries of the conceptual conclusion are only arrived at through

the implicit work of a network of inferential relations which exclude mutually incompatible

commitments.[177] The force of the conclusion 'it is not raining' depends on understanding

the possibility that it could be raining, and excluding it based on its incompatibility with the

inferential commitments assumed thus far --say, conceptually charged observations, such as

the ground not being wet, people not wearing umbrellas, the sky being clear. But

furthermore, we exclude through the basic commitment that the presence of those features

would entail the presence of rain. It is a disjunctive syllogism that thus stands as the truth of

any observational inference, not merely the 'external' observational input by itself. If the

perceived reality was not, for thinking, a syllogistically articulated unity, no judgement

could follow from it, for we would have no articulable ground by which anything would

follow from anything. *Negation* as 'material'[178] incompatibility is the function by which

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[177] Cf. Brandom, *Tales of the Mighty Dead*, 179. Brandom, *Making It Explicit*. For a critique of Brandom's 'de dicto' approach to Hegel (a *de re* interpretation specifies conceptual content according to the implicit commitments of the original author, while *de dicto* interpretations specify such content on the basis of the interpreter's inferential context and commitments), see Houlgate, 'Robert B. Brandom, A Spirit of Trust: A Reading of Hegel's Phenomenology, Harvard University Press, 2019.'
[178] One might worry 'material exclusion' involves extra-logical or metaphysical commitments, at odds with my interpretation of the Logic. The following remarks by Berto clarify the relative possibility of a metaphysically

something can follow from something: we know that all the hitherto assumed commitments *contradict* (are incompatible with) the judgement of there being rain. Similarly, the conclusion 'Momo is not a bird', as the conclusion of a disjunctive syllogism, is drawn from the internal unity of the rational commitments: Momo's being a bird, at this stage of the uncovering of conceptual mediations, does not follow simply from a pure observation, but from a comprehension of the rational entailments of Momo's being a cat.

If this is so, then the disjunctive syllogism determines content by means of material exclusion: a determination is affirmed or excluded in terms of its compatibility or incompatibility with the whole of articulated commitments. Exclusion, as a form of self-referential determination, has been implicitly at play in past syllogisms, insofar as every syllogism presupposes a whole of commitments grounding why judgements are asserted or denied, included or excluded, by reference to a unitary whole. Only at this point can thought identify the activity of exclusion was at play, and articulate syllogistic relations of *necessary* exclusion. In the syllogism of necessity, the activity of exclusion displays its thoroughly self-referential character: the singularity is understood as involving a relation of 'the exclusion of *others*' (GW 12:124). The disjunctive syllogism makes explicit the

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neutral interpretation of material exclusion: 'I shall talk of material exclusion or, equivalently, of material incompatibility. It may be explained in terms of concepts, properties, states of affairs, propositions, or worlds, depending on one's metaphysical preferences—and we want to be as neutral as possible not only on logical, but also on metaphysical issues. For instance, we may view it as the relation that holds between a couple of properties P1 and P2 if and only if, by having P1, an object has dismissed any chance of simultaneously having P2. Or we may also claim that material incompatibility holds between two concepts C1 and C2, if and only if the very instantiating C1 by a puts a bar on the possibility that a also instantiates C2. Or we may say that it holds between two states of affairs s1 and s2, if and only if the holding of s1 (in world w, at time t) precludes the possibility that s2 also holds (in world w, at time t). Put it any way you like, material exclusion has to do with content, not mere performance: it is rooted in our experience of the world, rather than in pragmatics'. Berto, "Ἀδύνατον and Material Exclusion", 179-180. For a critical assessment of material incompatibility as applied to Hegelian dialectic and the role of contradiction, see Bordignon, "Contradiction or Non-Contradiction? Hegel's Dialectic between Brandom and Priest." She clarifies: 'Determinate negation is not a formal operator. Rather, it corresponds to some kind of negative relation affecting the content of thought determinations. The adjective «material» that Brandom ascribes to the relation of incompatibility is precisely meant to capture the non-formalistic character of Hegel's notion of negation.' (227)

dependence on the 'whole' for the possible asseveration of the determinate content, now exhibited as the conclusion. The distinction between mediating and mediated 'falls away', for the whole depends implicitly on the moments to continue growing in its inferential power (we learn more about the possibilities of catness with each conceptualized experience of individual cats), and simultaneously what we know and think about a determinate individual is mediated by the prior commitments belonging to the whole (we comprehend the being of this cat based on what we know about cats in general). Thinking sees that what it comes to affirm of its subject matter is nothing other than the rationality of that subject matter itself, for the matter itself has been articulated by what is thinkable of it (that is, the subject matter as a determinate particularity within a whole). In this way, Hegel claims: 'the positeness or the form is not the external negative unity over against an indifferent existence but is identical with that solid content.' (12:125)

Thus, in the syllogism of necessity, we see that sheer external input is not the true mediating factor sustaining the possibility of an intelligible relation to reality, a 'thick' conception of experience involving truth-functional judgements and representations. Rather, thought-external content is recuperable thanks to the mediating work of 'self-referring negativity': the capacity to take up determinacy within the rational unity which has obtained further determinacy through the inclusion or exclusion of possible claims, which are themselves excluded or included by appeal to the hitherto assumed commitments. The dual work of inclusion and exclusion unifies the whole into an internally consistent *system*. In this manner, the disjunctive syllogism, by expressing a unity which is 'as developed and total as it is simple' (GW 12:125), marks the transition towards the concept as realized in the object.

In the transition to the object, thinking identifies itself as not a merely formal, one-sided, subjective activity. How? As we saw, in this form of the syllogism the substantial identity of the genus, universality, is one which includes particularity for its form of unity. It is thus 'a universal sphere that contains its total particularity' (GW 12:124), where the particularities are self-referring determination, such that the moments can be understood as material exclusions from the whole. Thinking can think of a shape where the difference of the concept, the determinateness it gained in the form of judgement, is itself at one with the whole. 'The whole form determination of the concept is posited in its determinate difference and at the same time in the simple identity of the concept.' (12:125) Hegel continues:

> In this way the *formalism of the syllogistic inference*, and consequently the subjectivity of the syllogism and of the concept in general, has sublated itself. This formal or subjective factor consisted in that the middle mediating the extremes is the concept as an abstract determination and is therefore *distinct* from the terms whose unity it is. In the completion of the syllogism, where the objective universality is equally posited as the totality of the form determinations, the distinction of mediating and mediated has on the contrary fallen away. That which is mediated is itself an essential moment of what mediates it, and each moment is the totality of what is mediated. (12:125)

The overcoming of the subjective concept, as the quote expresses, rests in the capacity to think a category where 'objective universality' is 'the totality of the form determinations', such that the mediation that renders a moment meaningful is completely internal. As we can see, the demonstration of the concept's objectivity is not a claim about concepts being 'out there',[179] but rather relies on the thinkability of a thoroughly mediated whole. The

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[179] Redding likewise rejects the attribution of conceptual realism to Hegel, based on his interpretation of Hegel's 'predicative duality': 'This process [of Hegel cycling between sentences about particulars to ones about the concepts the particulars instantiate] seems to objectify concepts, fitting in with the picture of Hegel as a type of Aristotelian 'conceptual realist' for whom 'concepts' (essences) are mind-independent entities 'out there' in the world, entities to which our 'subjective' concepts can somehow correspond. But, I suggest, Hegel's predicative

'kind of reality which is *objectivity*' (GW 12:125) is the kind of reality where moments are comprehended in virtue of an articulated unity; a something is a something in virtue of the background of meaning that enables the thinkability of such something as standing in determinate implicative relations with other things. In contrast to the reality of judgement, the truth of the syllogism is the mediation by universality; it is no longer a form of making sense that presupposes its validity, but one where the validity of any moment is asserted by explicit reference to the background of meaning.[180]

Thus, the objectivity of the concept is the demonstration that the pure work of the syllogism enables the *mediation* required for anything to be meaningful through relations of exclusion, or self-referring negativity. The movement of the syllogism 'is the sublation of this mediation in which nothing is in and for itself, but each thing is only through the meditation of an other.' (GW 12:126) An object will consequently be an actuality whose unity is posited by the mediating logic proper to thinking. The logic proper to thinking is the concept. So, we can now claim: the object, universally unified self-referring particularity, is the form of the concept's determinate existence.

4.6.

The primacy Hegel grants to syllogism over judgement is in significant contrast to Kant, and it allows us to highlight how Hegel radically departs from familiar models of semantic

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duality is designed just to avoid this ontology, just as Findlay's use of a similar distinction was his way of avoiding Meinong's version of a similar realism.' Redding, "Hegel's Treatment of Predication Considered in the Light of a Logic for the Actual World, 17." Redding himself does not provide a critique of conceptual realist readings, but rather an alternative understanding of the philosophical implications of the texts.

[180] On the distinctiveness of objectivity as the immediacy proper to the concept, see Illetterati, "The Semantics of Objectivity in Hegel's Science of Logic."

or conceptual grounding. From the premises which Hegel takes up from Kant, Hegel draws the opposite conclusion: the greater fundamentality of *syllogism* over *judgement*. For Kant, we have seen, it is in virtue of their constitutive import upon the form of experience (and material nature in its general form) that the concepts of the understanding have a certain primacy over the ideas of reason. The ideas of reason are 'regulative', which indeed demonstrates their relative untruth vis-à-vis the categories of the understanding and the pure forms of intuition. Thus, for Kant, the sense of primacy and categorical legitimacy is intimately related to the minimal conditions of possibility for experience.

In such an account, syllogism is less fundamental than judgement. This hierarchy of fundamentality retains important empiricist commitments. It seems that in a robust notion of adult, cognitively-able human experience, syllogisms are pervasive –for example, I *conclude* that the coffee shop will be closed by inferring from my knowledge that today is Labor Day, Labor Day is a national holiday, and most shops are closed when it is a national holiday. As competent human thinkers, syllogistic inferences are pervasive, either consciously or unconsciously. Yet are these processes *fundamental* for the constitution of the minimal sense of ordered, nomological experience? We can consider a human being for whom syllogisms play no role (perhaps a human without any empirical concepts, if we, as Hegel and Kant, hold that empirical concept-formation fundamentally relies on syllogisms). From our perspective, which holds reasoning in high esteem, her life would surely be difficult, and her experience impoverished. But would we be willing to deny our hypothetical non-inferential human *experiences*? I would not go that far. Insofar as there is an internal unity giving order and coherence to her sensory impressions, I deem that sufficient for a minimal sense of experience. I think Kant thought so too. And it is clear Hegel believed concepts (in his normative sense) are not even part of 'ordinary life':

'ordinary life has no concepts, only representations of the imagination, and to recognize the concept in what is otherwise mere representation is philosophy itself.' (GW 12:130)[181]

In contrast, this minimal sense of experience seems impossible without *something like* what Kant calls the pure forms of intuition and the categories of the understanding, or what Hegel understands under the functions of '*Empfindung*' and '*Verstand*'. Without experiencing things in space and time, or as one being the effect of the other, our hypothetical person could not provide the minimal coherence to what she sensibly perceives to count as having experience. Without judgement, she could not think *determinacy*, so her mode of apprehending reality in thinking would be indeterminate. In contrast, I consider, without empirical concepts and mobilization of syllogisms, insofar as there is determinacy (thought, albeit not taking itself as thought), there is still a minimal sense of experience.

These claims have a problematic status, as they depend on empirical and exegetical issues here unresolved. It would be here impossible to adjudicate the correct notion of 'experience' for Kant and Hegel, much less to provide necessary and sufficient conditions for what 'experience' is. All I need is to get the point across that it is both significant and

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[181] For Brandom, Hegel's contribution to semantics rests in that Hegel 'complete[s] the *inversion* of the traditional [representationalist] order of semantic explanation by beginning with a concept of experience as inferential activity and discussing the making of judgments and the development of concepts entirely in terms of the roles they play in that inferential activity.' Brandom, *Making It Explicit,* 92. Although I follow Brandom's claim regarding the primacy of inferences or syllogism over judgement, I do not believe it is correct to argue that Hegel's notion of *experience* is necessarily constituted by inferential activity. As Wolf claims, commenting on the same Hegel quote: 'for Hegel unlike these analytic philosophers [McDowell, Brandom], it is not that we already have concepts that need only to be further explicated, but that concepts are produced in the reflective activity that works over our representations. Concepts are the outcome of our thinking, rather than its merely formal basis. This, and not any metaphysical reason, is why Hegel says 'ordinary life has no concepts, only representations'. We do not need the outcome of a sophisticated reflective process (the one that constitutes philosophy itself) to navigate the everyday world, even if the very notions involved in our everyday world stand in need of conceptualization.' Wolf, "The Myth of the Taken: Why Hegel Is Not a Conceptualist," 10. Alznauer, in a forthcoming monograph, further elaborates the sense in which philosophy has the task of transforming representations into concepts proper. I thank him for sharing the draft of chapter 1 with me.

defensible that Hegel rejects a view of *fundamentality* as tied to what is necessary for a

minimal notion of what we commonly understand as 'experience', suggested by Kant's

claim that the 'thoroughgoing and synthetic unity of perceptions' constitutes the 'form of

experience'. (CPR A110)[182] The logical theory of the concept makes this rejection explicit.

Since the processes of the syllogism are not transcendental conditions for the a priori

constitution of experience, for Kant, these rational functions are, in a sense, less

fundamental. In contrast, for Hegel, judgement and syllogism are the logical functions that

provide the content of the concept itself; they are the enabling conditions for the concrete

concept. Their relevance is not in being constitutive of a minimal sense of experience. What

matters is that these processes are logical presuppositions for the *concrete universality*

which will enable thinking to reach the self-satisfaction proper to reason and truth, in the

absolute idea. Concepts are true, and their truth is a 'free' one, unburdened from being

conditioned by 'ordinary life' or experience in the minimal sense.[183]

Hegel's account allows us to see how the processes standing at the basis of the

articulation of determinacy are themselves *logical*: not a 'pure' reception of given material,

but logical forms impregnated with formative content, without which sensible awareness

would be un-appropriable within the concept. The true nature of the concept is to be a

concrete universal. To be a concrete universal means that the universal unifies the reflected

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[182] This, of course, is only one of the many ways Kant uses or defines 'experience'. Within Stang's classification, experience as the 'synthetic unity of perceptions' would fall under Kant's third sense of *Erfahrung*, which Stang claims is 'perhaps the dominant use of the term "experience"' in the first *Critique'*, "Hermann Cohen and Kant's Concept of Experience", 17.

[183] As we have seen, a total syllogistic network of developed commitments is the presupposition for any judgement being truth-functional. In this sense, we might claim there is a 'transcendental' aspect in the primacy of syllogism over judgement: the syllogism is a condition for the complete intelligibility of judgement. Although this claim is both correct and necessary, it is not in virtue of playing such role that the syllogism is 'truer', nor does its primacy rests solely on playing such role. Rather, syllogism is truer and more fundamental because it expresses self-correspondence to a greater degree.

manifold, such that the stuff can appear as itself conceptually articulated: a *singular*. But the stuff appearing as a singular itself depends on the separation that posits stuff *as* something other than itself, i.e. as having concrete determinations (predicates, attributes): judgement. Without judgement, the singular could not be concrete, as it is in judgement that its determinations are posited. But the positing moment of judgement cannot self-validate, or articulate its own conditions for holding as true –the conditions for its validity *presuppose* a further background of determinacy, in virtue of which any judgement can be correct or incorrect, meaningful or meaningless. Such a background is the *syllogism*: the syllogism articulates the manner how the conclusion is implicitly taken to hold: through the mediating labor of the middle term, which 'disappears' yet sustains the concluding judgement. The necessity of judgement and syllogism for the generation of the singular concept, where appearance is unconditionally subordinated to universality, is a deliberate departure from Kant's transcendental model of primacy.

4.7. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to articulate how subjectivity (the thinking of thinking as thinking, what is at stake in the Doctrine of the Concept) shows itself to be objective. It is not *mere* thinking, or *only* our thoughts as against a self-subsisting reality. By showing itself to be not an 'empty framework which first must acquire its filling from without', subjectivity, as dialectical, 'breaks through its limitation and by means of the syllogism discloses itself to be objectivity.' (E §192 Z) The more thinking becomes aware of its own mediating activity in the process of sense-making, the more it articulates its own syllogistic unity. The more thinking can identify itself in the process of taking a judgement as valid, a

representation as accurate, the more it recognizes its own activity therein. I defended this

'generation' of objectivity as resting on three key moments:

(a) The 'determinate concepts' gain their apparent immutability as a result of the dynamic activity of the concept.

(b) Judgment stabilizes content by breaking up what is originally united and positing universal distinctions.

(c) Judgements, through which anything in experience or reality is rendered meaningful, presuppose the syllogism for their truth-functionality.[184]

The first form amounts to an immanent 'refutation' of Kant's claims of the primacy of the

understanding over reason, as well as their separability: that which Kant took to be the

stable 'a priori' is shown to be a posited moment of necessary difference through the

dynamic labor of conceptual reason. The second form establishes how judgement is the use

of thought for the breaking up of original unity into relations of attribution and predication,

thereby the generation of intelligible content through thinking's divisive labor. This

function is the externalization or 'finitization' of thought, which posits and stabilizes

thinkable distinctions. Finally, the third form reunites thinking by exhibiting any

judgement's truth-functionality to rely on the work of the rational concept as a syllogistic

unity of mutually entailed commitments. This move provides us with the relevant sense of

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[184] Dewey claims: 'The striving to make stability of meaning prevail over the instability of events is the main task of intelligent human effort.' *Experience and Nature*, 50. My account, if successful, would be equivalent to the claim that the *primacy* should be granted not to the stability of meaning, but to the underlying syllogistic logic making the stability of our determinate concepts possible.

objectivity: a rationally articulated whole which, through relations of mutual incompatibility ('self-referring negativity'), makes reality truth-functional.

I would like to make the lesson from the subjective concept a bit more explicit. One of Hegel's aims in the Logic is to bring awareness of the forms mediating all thinking, forms which in ordinary life 'remain non-objectified and unnoticed even when they enter language' (GW 21:18). The logical shadows sustaining our judgements and beliefs can be so obscure that they play no explicit role in our everyday experience. The more thinking takes itself to be mediated by sheer externality to draw conclusions such as 'it is not raining', the less aware it is of the totality of implicit logical determinations enabling the drawing of such a conclusion. In contrast, when thinking understands that its *own* internally developed standards are the enabling condition for concluding 'this house is good', it can rationally account for such a claim. It can give reasons beyond the mere demand to *look* at it, to have a similar external form of mediation as the standard of validity. The primacy of the syllogism over judgement, as well as the meaning of thought's objectivity, can be summarized in the slogan I keep repeating, that it is through *reason* that reality becomes truth-functional.

Insofar as we take ourselves to depend on externality for the determination of the validity of the claims in our experience, the less we understand the contribution of reason, and the more heteronomous our experience is. The task of exhibiting the forms of thinking, then, has important existential connotations. We think we think what we think because things *simply are* a certain way. Taking thinking to be valid or intelligible in virtue of what we 'receive', what 'is given', provides few avenues for comprehension beyond the 'because it is that way', 'because I observe it to be so'. As we saw happened in the syllogism of existence, the weakness of the bond between the conclusion drawn and the means entails

that an opposite conclusion could be equally justified: if the justificatory ground for your belief in miracles is 'because of what I have observed', I can perfectly say I do not believe in miracles 'because of what I have observed'. In contrast, the awareness of each judgement as necessarily dependent on the syllogistically articulated whole of commitments traces the mediation to the form of reason: to the concept. It forces thinking to look at its developed commitments, and the processes of thinking holding between those commitments, for the proper comprehension of *why* it takes something as true, valid, and correct. This process traces any commitment back to the articulated unity, which is the *self*. To identify one's commitments as playing the role of necessary, yet revisable, moments within the rational whole is to be at home with oneself in one's determinateness. That is part of what it means to be free, in Hegel's sense.

Chapter 5

5.0 Introduction

Understanding how thinking (now as the concept) gains objectivity by not viewing itself as a *mere* formal schema is important, yet insufficient. For a problem arises, a problem that requires us to look both within as well as beyond the Logic, namely: how are concepts meant to *exist*? If the concepts do not exist in a way that is at least broadly compatible with a common-sense understanding of 'existence' and 'reality', and if the categories of the concept are the philosophical categories, then it is unclear how a philosophy of reality is possible. But (Hegel held, and I here defend) a philosophy of reality, grounded in pure logic, is possible. We thus need an account of the 'reality' of the concept to make sense of the possibility of a philosophy of reality. I argue that teleology does most of what I need for the next step of my argument: teleology achieves the self-positing of the concept in reality, thus establishing the *second sense* of thought's 'objectivity': objectivity as reality. We need this 'realistic' understanding of objectivity for my argument as, if conceptualization is the categorically adequate form for cognition of aspects of the real (if philosophy can be philosophy of something outside pure thinking), then conceptuality cannot *exclusively* belong to the realm of pure thought but must be recognizable in that which is thought-external. The logic of teleology exhibits how this can be, without the need to postulate the metaphysical 'givenness' of universals.

I argued in chapter 2 that objective *Geist* generates a world out of itself through its purposive activities. It is now time to take up the argument in its proper logical form: thought modifies finitude in accordance with the concept, thereby introducing *conceptuality*

to reality. By understanding the process of the self-positing of the concept in reality, I provide a reading of the objective standing of the concept which presents an alternative to more traditional 'metaphysical' readings, primarily the neo-metaphysical varieties of 'conceptual realism'. These readings provide a traditional metaphysical understanding, insofar as they posit the primacy of a mind-independent truth-maker for the making true of the cognition. While this metaphysical understanding may be an adequate model for what is presupposed in the generation of the reflective categories, it is not how we ought to understand the objective standing, the 'truth', of the concept, whose legitimacy emerges precisely from overcoming the need for a though-external truth-maker for the making true of its cognition.

Thus, the main aim of the chapter is to provide an account of the reality of the concept through (mainly) a reading of Teleology in the Objectivity section of the Logic. This chapter shall also serve the secondary, yet also important, purpose of clarifying the inherent limitations of external purposiveness (Teleology). Clarifying these limitations will enable us to see the requirements to be met by the inherently true form: the form of *realized purposiveness*.

In section 1, I outline the difference between an 'externalist' and an 'internalist' account of the reality of the concept. I bring forth the example of the conceptual realist interpretation of the objectivity of the concept and exhibit its limitations to motivate my 'internalist' reading. In section 2, I appeal to textual support from Hegel's understanding of spirit's self-concretizing activities to further motivate my reading. In section 3, I provide an interpretation of the section on Teleology in the Subjective Logic. The logic of Teleology as external purposiveness explains how the concept introduces its own order by the instrumental use of externality's logic of mechanical and chemical relations, without

thereby becoming another finite thing, perishing through the tear and wear of finite, materially constituted objects. This process I call (following Hegel) the *self-positing* of the concept, and it allows us to frame comprehension (*begreifen*) as thinking's rejoining with itself through the recognition of that which is constitutively conceptual in the real. In section 4, I provide an interpretation of the Realized Purpose which exhibits the inner limitations, thus untruth, of finite purposiveness, and show how the thought of an 'infinite' form of purposiveness emerges therefrom. I end the chapter by clarifying what the argument, if successful, does and what it cannot do.

5.1.

As it is broadly recognized, Hegel is committed to the claim that the concept does not merely exist closed off in subjectivity. He claims that the objective concept of things 'constitutes [*ausmachen*] what is essential to them' (GW 21:14), that when we speak of *things* (*Dinge*) 'we call their *nature* or *essence* their *concept*' (21:14), which, although it is 'only for thought', we do not 'dominate' the concept, but rather 'our thought must limit itself [*nach ihnen beschränken*] with them, and our choice [*Willkür*] or freedom ought not to want to fit them to its purposes.' (21:14) He famously characterizes the concept as 'the *nature*, the proper *essence* [*eigenthümliche Wesen*], that which is truly *permanent* [*Bleibende*] and *substantial* in the manifold and accidentally of appearance and fleeting externalization' (21:15), and as a universal which is *in* the thing (*der Begriff der Sache, das in ihr selbst Allgemeine*). (ibid) The concept must be understood as 'in' the things, and simultaneously as being only *for* thinking:

> This concept [*the* concept itself] 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 [*er ist nur Gegenstand, Product und Inhalt des Denkens, und die an und für sich seyende Sache, der Logos, die Vernunft dessen, was ist, die Wahrheit dessen, was den Nahmen der Dinge führt*] (…) (21:17)

These quotes express the need to think together that the truth, nature, and essence of things is both '*only for thought*' yet simultaneously 'not at our service'. We have seen thought overcomes the thinking of itself as a 'merely subjective' by showing anything to be truth-functional in virtue of the unity of syllogistic reason. This argument constitutes a *first* sense of thought's claim to objectivity: thought that takes itself as thought is objective in virtue of reason's claim to make reality truth-functional. Now we want to understand how the concept gives itself external existence: a *second* sense of objectivity (objectivity as reality), tied to the recognition of a certain standing within that which is thought-external. Only because the concept is *in* things can conceptualizing thinking be a categorically adequate form of making sense of reality.

We can consider two alternative ways of understanding the concept's demand to be recognized as this second sense of 'objective' in line with Hegel's inflationary claims. The demand for the recognition of the reality of the concept can result from the concept's (or one of its moments, the universal) standing as the principle of the object *independently* of any activity from the subject. Let us call this the 'externalist' reading, for it emphasizes the non-dependence on thinking's inner activity for the external standing of concepts. When thinking conceptualizes or finds a universal 'in' the real, it is finding something 'out there', not unlike a realist or anti-Humean explanation of the existence of natural laws – metaphysically, for the anti-Humean, laws of nature are 'relations of necessity between universals' rather than generalizations from particulars, without any metaphysical

substantive necessity 'governing' natural regularities.[185] And, since the concept constitutes

the rational in reality, then the rational form of reality would likewise be there, even if there

were no active thinking grasping it. Similarly, the 'constitutive norms' imposed onto reality

by the concept are normative even without our recognition of them; they are 'not at our

service' but rather they are fixed by the objective, 'out-there'-existing concept.

Alternatively, according to an 'internalist' reading,[186] the demand for the concept to be

recognized as 'in the things' (objective qua real) can be read as expressing a commitment to

thinking as that which both posits and recognizes the concept in the real: as demanding a

recognition of the truth-positing status of thinking *as such*. I call this second option an

'internal' reading, as the granting of objectivity depends on granting an inner worth to

thought, rather than an external standing to concepts.

Both readings of the concept share the conviction that (as our above quotes exhibit)

there is a sense in which concepts have objective standing, validity, and truth, and they are

therefore legitimate for the philosophical cognition of objects and reality. But, while the

externalist reading grants objectivity in virtue of the concepts' 'mind-independent' status,

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[185] Beebee, "The Non-Governing Conception of Laws of Nature," 250–51. Kreines defends his reading of Hegel's priority of the concepts as reasons in the world in such an anti-Humean manner. His characterization: 'what is distinctive of humeanism is taking the statement of a law to refer to all of the particular events collected under a universal generalization. It follows that humean accounts deny that laws govern what happens, or are a form of reason for what happens; for, on the humean account, everything is indifferent to everything else, and laws summarize the arrangement of indifferent particulars.' Kreines, *Reason in the World*, 59. For contemporary literature on Humeanism and anti-Humeanism about laws of nature, see "Humeanism and Non-Humeanism About Laws." Edited by Markus Schrenk (Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf) PhilPapers. Accessed February 9, 2025. https://philpapers.org/browse/humeanism-and-nonhumeanism-about-laws.

[186] One could raise the following Hegelian-sounding objection: is the division between 'internalist' and 'externalist' interpretations not a false dichotomy? Why would it not be possible to have *both* metaphysical necessity *and* mind-dependence? In a sense, if successful, the internalist account is a both/and: it can affirm the 'reality' of concepts while denying their 'mind-independent' status. Yet, we in fact have a dilemma regarding how to affirm the 'existence' of concepts: as either *dependent* or *independent* from thinking as the activity of determinate negation, 'activated' by thinkers. We cannot simply both/and our way out of this dilemma, for the claims are incompatible. Insofar as my defense of an internalist reading rejects the concept's 'mind-independent' status as entailing that the concepts are externally pre-given, it avoids the philosophical and textual problems of the externalist interpretation.

positing such concepts as the truth-makers behind any adequate cognition, the internalist reading rests on the position that thinking, the means of the concept, is itself the means for the true, and the source of whatever can be conceptualized. However, the concepts are meant to exist, they exist only in and through thinking.

Indeed, passages such as the above suggest an interpretation where concrete universality is instantiated in the world independently of subjects who think or posit purposes through their activity. This might indicate that concepts are real as either the pre-given essence, substance, or reason of concrete particulars, and the objectivity of our cognition of such concepts derives from such a mind-independent being.[187] This brand of what I call an 'externalist interpretation' has been labeled a 'conceptual realist' one, and is arguably the main contender within contemporary metaphysical readings.[188] As a proponent of this view helpfully summarizes:

> Authors like Robert Stern, Willem deVries, Kenneth Westphal and James Kreines have argued that Hegel's theory of the Concept is (at least in *one* of its functions) the core of Hegel's *metaphysics of finite reality*. It amounts, according to their readings, to a form of *conceptual realism*: a view on which reality is articulated by objectively existing universals or 'concepts'. Most of these authors understand such Hegelian objective concepts as kinds which provide an objective ordering of reality—hence, as *natural* kinds (where 'natural' contrasts with artificial orderings, not with entities that belong to spirit). In addition, some of them claim that Hegel holds an *essentialist* view of natural kinds: on this view, natural kinds constitute the *nature* or *essence* of the individuals by which they are instantiated. *The* Concept, in its turn, is variously interpreted by these authors as the overall system of such objective concepts, or as the general structure shared by them.[189]

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[187] I would prefer, following Chang, to not use the problematically ambiguous notion of 'mind-independence', and rather distinguish between 'mind-independency' qua 'mind-control' and 'mind-framedness'. But adding yet another layer of terminology might be too pedantic for present purposes. See Chang, *Realism for Realistic People: A New Pragmatist Philosophy of Science*.

[188] See ft. 25 above.

[189] Knappik, "Hegel's Essentialism. Natural Kinds and the Metaphysics of Explanation in Hegel's Theory of 'the Concept,'" 1. References omitted, italics are Knappik's. For further recent interpretations which adhere to some version of conceptual realism, see Ficara, *The Form of Truth*; Baumann, "Hegel on Market Laws and External Teleology"; Dunphy, "What Does It Mean to Say, of 'Thoughts', That They 'Used to Count as Expressing the Essentialities of Things'? Hegel and the Older Metaphysics"; Tolley, "Hegel on the Relation between Logos and the Science of Logic"; McNulty, *Hegel's Logic and Metaphysics*.

There is much value in the different proposals of these authors, each of which deserves a treatment of its own, given the significant differences among them, despite the common elements here highlighted.[190] I am sympathetic to the project of seeking a more 'inflationary' understanding of the task of philosophy beyond a transcendental understanding. But for what it is worth, reading the concept of the concept in metaphysical-realist terms stands in tension with much of what I find original in the philosophical project of Hegel's Logic. I have quoted at length since Knappik provides an overview of the central elements of the family of conceptual realist readings. For (at least some of) these authors, as Knappik summarizes:

(a) Hegel's logical notion of the concept is the key to understanding his 'metaphysics of finite reality', where 'finite reality' stands for nature and the social world ('spirit').

(b) Such a reality (nature and the social world) is 'articulated by objectively existing universals' which are the concepts, kinds, or essences.

(c) The concepts provide an 'objective ordering' or 'structure' for reality.

(d) The concepts 'constitute the nature or essence of the individuals by which they are instantiated'.

(e) 'The Concept' is either the totality of all the objective concepts, or the 'general structure' shared by all the concepts.

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[190] For further elucidation of relevant differences within conceptual realist accounts, see the responses to Kreines' book by Knappik and Stern, as well as Kreines' own reply in the author-meets-critics May 2018 edition of the *Hegel-Bulletin* (39.1).

The work of Robert Stern has had a profound influence on the development of this neo-

metaphysical reading. In his 1990 monograph *Kant, Hegel and the Structure of the object,*

Stern describes the difference between Kant and Hegel's idealisms as follows:

> Kant's idealism is subjective for Hegel in employing the activity of the synthesizing subject to explain the genesis and structure of the object, while Hegel's idealism is objective in treating the substance-universal which it exemplifies as constituting the unity of the individual. As a result, whereas Kant's philosophy is idealistic because it treats the unity of the object as dependent on the structure imposed on experience by the transcendental subject, Hegel's philosophy is idealistic because it operates with a realist theory of universals, which have a fundamental place in his ontology.[191]

For Stern's Hegel, the realization of the object 'does not depend on any synthesizing

subject, but rather on a universal substance-form that underlies the "externality" of nature'

such that natural phenomena are '*inherently* unified', thus not requiring, for their

constitutive unity, any *activity* on the part of the subject.[192] Hegel's absolute idealism, in

Stern's reading, holds that the unity of the subject (and thereby the intelligibility of reality,

or reality in general as an intelligible totality) 'arrives at a realist account of universals,

according to which objects are structured by concepts; but (in contrast to Kant) both the

concepts and the objects exist *independently* of the activity of the subject.'[193] Broadly in

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[191] Stern, Hegel, Kant and the Structure of the Object, 110.
[192] Stern, 111.
[193] Stern, 111–12. In a late writing defending conceptual realism against an objection resting on the indeterminacy of nature for Hegel, Stern (co-authored with Weiss) further explains the 'realistic' dimension of conceptual realism by contrasting it not only with Kant's subjectivism ('whereas the former [Kant's 'subjective' idealism] takes the cognitive subject to be the source of the order we find in the world, the latter [Hegel's absolute idealism] treats that order as inherent to the world itself, which we uncover through our inquiries – but this still counts as a form of idealism, as what that order involves is not mere matter but matter informed by various conceptual structures, such as laws and kinds', 16) but furthermore to a 'nominalist' account, which they take to mean 'the view that universals are (1) mind-dependent concepts and therefore (2) do not carve nature at its joints.' (Stern and Weiss, "The Feebleness of the Concept in Nature: A Challenge to Conceptual Realism?" 16, footnote 2). I think either nominalism or realism is a false dichotomy.

line with Stern's proposal, Knappik and Kreines argue for conceptual realism as providing

the elements for a metaphysical grounding for *explanations*. The concepts of things are

their explanatory ground, which supports the metaphysical need to postulate reality as

structured by 'objective concepts'.

What is the nature of natural kinds or 'objective concepts' which 'provide an

objective ordering of reality'?[194] Although the accounts differ, what is crucial is that such

objective concepts stand for *content* which is self-sufficient in its determinateness, often in

the form of a closed, exhaustive set of features, necessary and sufficient conditions, or

'marks'.[195] In Knappik's version, although he recognizes a substantial difference between

the concepts of inorganic and those of organic nature and spirit, he nonetheless claims that

the objective concepts of nature and spirit are a set of given 'modal facts': 'There is a set P

of properties P1, P2, …,Pn such that the following is true for every x: necessarily, iff x

fully realizes C (i.e. iff x is 'a good C'), it possesses every member of P.'[196] What is

essential here is the order of priority between the essences and the objectivity of the

cognition. The fixed content, which is the 'essence' or 'natural kind' of an individual,

determines what counts as a proper explanation. An explanation or account is objective

insofar as it agrees with the fixed 'modal-factual' content.

A necessary element of realist readings is the *stability* of the content of 'natural

kinds', 'essences', 'reasons' or 'objective concepts'. That is: if that in virtue of which

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[194] Knappik, "Hegel's Essentialism" 1; Cf. Stern and Weiss, "The Feebleness of the Concept in Nature", 17: 'the natural kind of animal requires to be instantiated in individual animals'.

[195] Hegel did not have high regard for the form of conceptual generality obtained via 'distinguishing marks' (*Merkmale*). He makes the following amusing (at least to me) remark: 'Nichts ist so sehr selbst das Merkmal der Äußerlichkeit und des Verkommens der Logik als die beliebte Kategorie des *Merkmals':* 'Nothing is so much the distinguishing mark of the externality and decay of logic than the cherished category of the distinguishing mark.' (E §165 A)

[196] Knappik, "Hegel's Essentialism" 13.

thought can explain (say) the animal is the mind-independent essence which contains the determinations in the shape of an immutable set of features (as per the realist interpretation of the concept), then there is a unique, trans-historical manner how an explanation of the animal can 'get at' the animal correctly. The contents of the natural kind are *metaphysically fixed* and must likewise have *priority* over our accounts of such natural kind: they are their 'truth-maker', as these govern how the instances particularize or instantiate the concept. The objectivity and truth of an account are thereby dependent on the purported coincidence with the natural kind's mind-independent, immutable content. The objectivity of the explanation relies on the invariant, self-sufficient unity of the concept. The invariance of the content, crucially, cannot simply be axioms of coordination or other forms of purported (mind-dependent) a prioricity, either relativized or immutable. To have a properly *metaphysical*, rather than merely *transcendental* or *pragmatic* import, this account must claim the invariance of content, as the definition of the objective kind as a 'set of features' expresses.

As others have pointed out, an externalist reading leads to the implication of a conceptual stagnation, a lack of closure of the gap between thought and being. [197] A

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[197] Wolf, "Rethinking Hegel's Conceptual Realism." For further arguments against the conceptual realist line of interpretation, especially as applied to existing 'kinds' in nature, see Lindquist, "On Origins and Species"; Martin, "From Logic to Nature." In their defense of conceptual realism as applied to species in nature, Stern and Weiss appeal to Hegel's critique of empirical taxonomy in the natural sciences, and fully recognize the implication that the thoughtless observation of crude empiricism is devoid of awareness of the concept, while attempting to argue that conceptual realism 'cuts nature at its joints'. They attempt to retain realism by weakening the criteria for what counts as an 'objective kind', such that the existence of universals is compatible with the fact that empirically-observable individuals do not measure up to the concept: 'Hegel argues that the observable properties exemplified in an individual should be viewed as the result of an underlying activity which determines the kind to which the individual belongs. Universality that is "concrete" in this sense pertains primarily to the sort of life an animal lives and only secondarily to the properties it exemplifies in the course of doing so.' (24) But weakening the criteria for concrete universality observable *in nature* presents the problem that *if* the objective universal departs too much from the empirical instances, then it is unclear how the concept is meant to 'cut nature' at *its* joints, i.e., at a universality which is meant to be a *mind-independent* feature. If indeed 'any attempt to directly conclude from the resultant properties to the underlying genus-specific activity

necessary implication of the invariance of content is that there is a single shape which the 'right account' shall assume. Objectivity, the mark of success for an explanation, is defined by an account's expressing, embodying, and repeating (what Hegel would call being a *reflection of*) such a unique right shape. This form of understanding objectivity (aside from seeming to contradict Hegel's commitment to the historical dynamicity of thought[198]) leads to some broadly recognized philosophical problems. When we center *empirical concepts*, we primarily have the following issue: the development of concepts is *historical*; the concepts are developed and refined over time. Our concept of 'water' now differs significantly from the concept of 'water' two thousand years ago. We would have to claim that everyone before the scientific refinement of *water* was mistaken when conceiving *water*, since they did not have the 'correct' concept which satisfies the fixed set of conditions determined by its mind-independent fixed kind or essence. Perhaps the essentialist bites the bullet and claims that, indeed, everyone before us was mistaken. But if history displays so many 'conceptual errors', how can we trust the content of our concepts *now* to be right or true? The historical revision of scientific concepts seems rather to offer ample ground for pessimism about the possibility of 'getting at' the objective concepts thusly conceived.[199] There seems to be little room for the objectivity of scientific concepts (or other forms of cognition, for that matter, if objectivity is necessary for cognition, and objectivity is thusly understood) which is compatible with *historical conceptual change*, except perhaps conceiving change in a purely negative light-- as history teaching us a

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is bound to fail' (25) in which sense of 'mind-independent' existence is the conceptual realist affirming the universal kind as 'governing' the individuals and their properties?

[198] Cf. Lau, "Absoluteness and Historicity"

[199] In philosophy of science, this problem is known as the 'pessimistic meta-induction', and it is used as an argument against scientific realism. For an introduction into how the historicity of science disturbs scientific realism as a metaphysical doctrine, as well as possible responses, see Psillos, "Realism and Theory Change in Science."

lesson about how *not* to think things, but never affirming the validity of our objective kinds. There does not seem to be closure of the gap between thought and being. This lack of closure might be a bearable result for finite forms of cognition. But not for absolute knowing, Truth.[200]

5.2.

The philosophical worries outlined in the preceding section motivate an internalist reading. But the internalist reading is also motivated by many of Hegel's systematic claims. If the objectivity of the concept depended on its 'mind-independent' existence, then this fact would conflict with Hegel's claims regarding the immanence requirement for philosophical truth. The concept's truth or validity, against the externalist interpretations, cannot hold in virtue of 'existing'. For (i) 'existing' is too weak to capture 'truth in the highest sense', the sense we care about in a philosophical account; (ii) if truth depended on 'existing', and if existence is understood as being 'instantiated' in (our experience of) finite reality, this would take us back to a criterion of truth other than thought itself. We are familiar with these claims now. If I am correct, following interpreters who reject that thought-determinations (and with it, the concept as the category which makes thinking explicit) can 'exist' without the activity of thinking, then the existence of concepts cannot be equated to concepts or reasons existing *prior to* such activity.

We have the following claims:

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[200] The account of the difference between finite and absolute cognition is given in 6.4 and 6.5.

(a) On the logical side, the thinking over the concept of the concept shows its intelligibility to require logical self-externalization.

(b) On the 'reality' side, (a) involves the existence of entities or states of affairs that have *the concept* as their basis.

(c) Things cannot have the concept as their basis independently of the activity of thinking.

In the remainder of this chapter, I attempt to defend a reading of the 'reality' of the concept that makes these claims compatible. To block conceptual realism, I address what, following Hegel, we can call the *self-positing* of the concept. The self-positing of the concept occurs in virtue of *purposive activity*: the activity which shapes the real per the order of thinking. Thought explicitly introduces conceptual form into the world, the real, in a manner that philosophy *recognizes*. In the *temporal* order, the purposive activities of subjects, including the purposive structures subjects participate in with more or less awareness of their contribution (such as the state, science, art, the market, the nation's history) posit the order of the conceptual. Such an order thus does not 'exist' prior to such purposive activities; were such activities not at play, philosophy, as conceptual comprehension, would have *nothing* to cognize. Thus, a philosophy of the real will turn out to be an activity of cognition not as correspondence, but of *recognition* of what is constitutively conceptual in the real. We can then affirm the 'reality' of things with the concept as their basis, and their logical necessity for the very intelligibility of the concept, without having to rely on any thought-external truth-maker for the making true of the cognition of objects qua objects.

By claiming that purposive activity stands at the basis of the existence of the conceptual order, my proposal does not involve 'taking us back' to a standard of truth other

than thinking itself. If conceptual structures were something *outside,* or *independent of* thinking, then the philosophical cognition's truth would rely on corresponding to something thought-external, which I have shown *not* to be how Hegel understands philosophical truth. But here, as I argue, the recognition of the concept as the basis of a concrete thing, thinking is not recognizing anything *outside* itself. Thinking recognizes *itself* in its other: through comprehension, it identifies nothing other than *itself* as the principle of the thing. This is what shall block a philosophy of the real from obtaining a metaphysical form of satisfaction.

Before turning to the account on Teleology, where I locate the philosophical argument for the self-positing of the concept, in this section, I provide further systematic and textual support for the 'internalist' reading of the objectivity of the concept. The clearest path is through Hegel's understanding of *Geist*, action, and history. Through the modification of externality, thinking *makes itself* the indwelling principle of spiritual reality; the identification of the concept in the real is not arbitrary. It is not disconnected from the singular thing being conceptualized. The reality of the concept ought to be read as follows:

> Concepts obtain reality insofar as thought modifies externality in accordance with
> the logic of purposiveness, thereby positing a properly rational, conceptual order.

In the (in)famous Preface to the *GPR*, Hegel justifies the need for the philosophical treatment of right. This philosophical treatment would follow the logical method to show the rationality of the subject matter. That '*right, ethical life* and the *state*' have a claim to truth and validity is immediately recognized in '*public law, public morality, and religion*' –

but, Hegel claims, these immediate or familiar forms of recognition do not suffice: the validity requires 'to be *conceptualized* as well' [*sie auch zu* begreifen] because 'the content which is already rational in itself must win the *form* of rationality' (GW 14,1:7, Cf. GW 24,1:20).[201] The rationality of the content cannot simply be 'given': the state, for example, is not an atemporal structure whose validity fell from the sky and has been recognized as a true formation from time immemorial. Rather, the state is an inherently rational entity *because* its human creation follows a universal purpose, a purpose which ought to be reflected and concretized in the whole apparatus of the state. The state, as a historical institution purportedly created with a universal aim in mind (to be actualized freedom or whatever, Cf. PR §260) has the principle of thought at the basis for its very existence. As we have seen from the disjunctive syllogism, the proper form of rationality requires the recognition of universality as mediating each of the moments: this makes the thing a *whole.* The purposiveness of the principle ought to permeate and be expressed in each of the state's particular formations such that it continues to have a claim to rational validity across time. Then, when it comes to right, ethical life (human social formations) and the state, the content being rational means that it has the concept, universality as the basis for being the very thing it demands to be recognized as being.

Such is the meaning of the claim that, in ethical life, right and the state, reason is present in the world. It entails that the world is not conceptual in isolation from thinking. The presence and existence of actual rational structures means that certain actual, real

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[201] Cf. 'Was bedarf diese Wahrheit weiter, insofern der denkende *Geist* sie in dieser nächsten Weise zu besitzen nicht zufrieden ist, als sie auch zu *begreifen*, und dem schon an sich selbst vernünftigen Inhalt auch die vernünftige Form zu gewinnen, damit er für das freye Denken gerechtfertigt erscheine, welches nicht bey dem *Gegebenen*, es sey durch die äußere positive Autorität des Staats oder der Uebereinstimmung der Menschen, oder durch die Autorität des innern Gefühls und Herzens und das unmittelbar beystimmende Zeugniß des *Geist*es unterstützt, stehen bleibt, sondern von sich ausgeht und eben damit fodert, sich im Innersten mit der Wahrheit geeint zu wissen?' (GW 24,1:7)

things only exist because of a posited purpose (unless, that is, we want to reject the existence of teleological structures such as houses and states, which we are free to do. More on this in the conclusion of this chapter). Indeed, Hegel defines purpose as 'the concept itself in its concrete existence' (GW 12:155), and famously defines right as 'the realm of freedom made actual, the world of spirit brought forth out of itself as a second nature' (PR §4).[202] Unlike the 'laws' of nature, the laws of right 'are something *posited* [*Gesetztes*], something *originated* by human beings.' (26, 2: 771)[203]

The posited nature of these laws is a necessary condition for the intelligibility of their status as *rational*. In conceptual formations of actuality, unlike in (inorganic) natural formations, the validity of the object does not derive from its mere existence. The natural scientist is required to grant validity to a determinate theory if the theory predicts the phenomena, if it anticipates something that shows itself by appearing. The only thing the content of an empirical cognition must do to be valid is to *be there,* to *appear*. (Of course, as we have seen from chapter 4, the possibility of judging any possible content as 'being there' in a manner that could be meaningfully incorporated into a scientific program requires a whole inferential network of meaning enabling the determinate apprehension of this content. As argued, syllogistic reason makes reality truth-functional, and the truth-functionality of possible observations is essential for scientific verification.) But 'in right, the human being must encounter his own reason' (GW 26,2: 772) –right's validity is dependent upon the thought-mediated recognition of the justification of the thing in virtue

[202] Cf. Novakovic, *Hegel on Second Nature in Ethical Life*; Lumsden, "Habit, Sittlichkeit and Second Nature."
[203] If the relevant contrast here is between the laws of nature and the laws of right, and if Hegel seems to be claiming that the laws of nature are not conceptual as these have not been *posited* by thinking, and if there can only be philosophical cognition of that which is conceptual, how could there ever be a philosophy of nature, a conceptual apprehension of nature? I provide an answer to this problem in chapter 6: a philosophy of nature is justified because nature realizes the idea of life.

of a universal principle, only *rational thought* (not thought taking itself as observation or classification) can apprehend. The validity of a principle such as 'it is right to respect the property of others' (or whatever), given that it has its principle in reason, cannot be 'seen'. It is not simply 'there'. Its validity is only accessible through comprehension.

These claims suggest that human beings (and, arguably, any other beings who purposively determine their movement)[204] are the agents for the introduction of the order of thought into concrete existence. The form of this introduction requires a determinate kind of movement within the world: *action* as purposive movement. Now, that this form of movement introduces the order of thought could only hold if *action* itself is a *form* of thought: something like the means through which thought's order is explicitly introduced into the fabric of the real. Indeed, Hegel does not mark a strict separation between thought as action and thought as cognition. Action is thought expressing itself as will; it is thought materially appropriating that which is thought-external.[205] These are two expressions of the same fundamental activity: thinking as the activity of form, determinate negation. In a

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[204]It is important for Hegel that human beings are essentially different from other animals in that *we think*. Yet he grants that animals are *also* practical. But he is reported to claim that, despite also being practical, animals possess no 'will': 'An animal acts on instinct, is driven by an inner impulse and so it too is practical, but it has no will, since it does not bring before its mind the object of its desire. A human being, however, can just as little be theoretical or think without a will, because in thinking he is of necessity being active.' (PR §4 Z) Here we have a problem: Hegel is claiming that the practical is another modality of thought, that animals are practical *and* that they do not think, insofar as thinking involves 'bring[ing] before the mind' objects of desire. This opens a dilemma, which Hegel does not seem to resolve. Hegel either grants that animals think (insofar as they are practical) or he grants that not all forms of being practical constitute thinking proper. In line with the first option, I claim Hegel uses two sense of thought, one strong and one weak: thought in the *emphatic* sense (or thought that can incorporate the claim of its own thinking, apperceptive thinking), which is the sense which is the essential determination of *Geist*, and thought as the possibility to inhabit determinations through determinate negation. This weaker sense, which living beings share, is a sufficient condition for practical action. I further develop this possibility in 6.3 ('problem'). For a similar claim: 'Living beings are agents, and so are not unfree in the way non-living nature is, but they are not yet free spirit; their freedom is not pure self-determination, but is a reciprocal determination of the individual and the general kind to which it belongs.' Lindquist, "On Origins and Species" 6. Against the view that animals act, see Quante, *Hegel's Concept of Action*, 88.

[205] Although I cannot elaborate on the claim here, the 'appropriative' dimension through which thinking makes something 'mine' illuminates the centrality of *property* (*Eigentum*) within Hegel's Philosophy of Right. See PR §§ 41-58. For a defense of the centrality of property in Hegel's PR, see Houlgate, "Property, Use and Value in Hegel's Philosophy of Right."

remark to the GPR, we read: 'The distinction between thought and will is only that between the theoretical attitude and the practical. These, however, are surely not two faculties; *the will is rather a particular way of thinking, thinking translating itself into existence, thinking as the urge to give itself existence*.' (PR §4 R, my italics) While theoretical purposiveness introduces thought-determinations through judgement and cognition, practical purposiveness *forms* by subordinating matter to an end. This unity between thought and will enables Hegel to argue for the *efficacy* of thinking, its capacity to externalize itself. The claim would be unintelligible if action did not belong to the order of thought, if we were to understand it as another form of natural causality. When I determine myself through a purpose, my aim anticipates and determines the whole chain of activities that shall follow.[206]

As we can appreciate, the key distinction for understanding the self-positing of the concept is that between the logic of causality and the logic of purposiveness.[207] Koch nicely spells out such a distinction for Hegel. In causality, the effect is to be understood as 'the expression of the cause, but in such a manner that the cause holds as having disappeared, or in Hegel's terminology, as having been subsumed.'[208] The cause only survives in the effect, as the rain, once it has stopped raining, only survives in the wetness of the ground. In contrast, in purposiveness, the purpose is not subsumed in the means for its realization 'but rather the unity of the purpose is first to be produced through the means

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[206] I am not sure if determining how much of human movement is action *proper* is an 'empirical matter', as well as if it is also an empirical question *which* living entities can act (thus, by implication, think). Luckily, this point is not too important for the argument. Even if most of us, most of the time, failed to act and rather were determined by blind natural forces, this would not make the logic of purposiveness any less 'true'. These empirical issues could only generate problems for my proposal if there has never been a single action in the history of reality. This would be a problem, as conceptual constitution depends on actions actually taking place and modifying reality in accordance with purpose. But I am confident there have been at least some actions.

[207] See Kreines, *Reason in the World,* especially chapters 1 and 3.

[208] Koch, *Denken in Zwecken,* 279.

[for the realization of the purpose].'[209] For this reason, Koch claims, a teleological entity cannot be adequately understood through causal means: what has constitutive force in the outcome ('effect') does not disappear, but is the concept transparently expressed in the very constitution and activities of the entity. So, if we aimed to understand certain objects as the specific things we think them to be (a house *as* a house, the state *as* a state, a living being *as* living), we require the logic of purposiveness.

The logic of purposiveness is the logic of the concept, where '*externality* and *conditionality*' have been sublated. (GW 12:153) Thought requires passing through the stages of mechanism and chemism to finally reach the stage of purposiveness, where it is possible to understand the meaning of the concept as 'a totality unconditioned by externality.' (12:153) The concept attains such a form of liberation, according to Hegel, by 'sublating' as 'external all the moments of its objective existence', thereby positing them 'in its simple unity'. (12:153) The 'objective externality' to which it refers, while being necessary for the constitution of purpose, is demoted to the status of being an 'unessential reality'. Hegel's account for the process of this liberation is his account of *teleological objectivity*.

5.3.

I hope to have sufficiently motivated an internalist reading and showed its basis on Hegel's understanding of how right is constituted and apprehended in the realm of spirit: we require reason (the concept) to understand right, because right is essentially rational insofar as its constitutive principle is the universal concept. Now we turn to the argument of how the

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[209] Koch, 279.

concept self-posits in the section on Teleology within the Objectivity chapter of the Subjective Logic.

We want to understand how purposiveness demonstrates the subjugation of externality to the order of thought *in reality's terms*, thus allowing for objectivity as reality.[210] We have seen before (and will continue to see, most immediately in the transition from external to internal purposiveness) how reality can be subjugated to the order of thought *in thought's terms:* by (appealing to our chapter 2 example) refusing to understand the death and humiliation of Christ as anything but the expression of his willed divinity, thinking is not annulling reality, but preserving it in a sublated manner. Similarly, as argued in chapter 4, thinking shows the concept (self-referential thinking) to stand as the condition of reality's stability, thus its capacity to be truth-functional, thus the first sense of objectivity. The difference here is the following: when subjugating reality to thinking in *reality's* terms, the alterations to reality by thinking have materially observable *causal* consequences. Since mechanical causality is the logic of the 'external determining' (GW 21:157), the logic of the lower fields of natural reality, when thought alters reality in reality's terms, there is a certain recognition by reality of the fact that it has been *affected*. This relative recognition is the mere observable ('reflected') fact of offering the material resistance required for finite purposes, such that finitude can *sustain* purposes, insofar as it

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[210] Many secondary literature debates on Teleology center a question in the form of: what entities did Hegel *have in mind* in external teleology? Which things *best fit* what Hegel is describing through logical means, such that we can say what the Teleology chapter is *about*? Actions, objects, living beings or something else? In my view, the question itself reveals a misunderstanding of the Logic: the Teleology chapter is not *about* something *external to* whatever Hegel is logically describing. The correct version of the question, rather than what Hegel is 'talking *about'* with a determinate logical form, would be: once we fully understand the logical intelligibility of purposiveness, what concrete entities/phenomena demand to be adequately cognized through these logical forms? I consider both actions *and* objects, and actions belonging to both nature *and* spirit, could in principle fulfill this logic. The regimentation is not to be 'found' *within* the Logic itself, at least not directly, lest we compromise its claim to purity.

can. Given that the logic of the real offers its resistance against purpose, the logic of

purpose must continue to develop more and more elaborate ways of subordinating

externality to its own logic. The learning process whereby thinking acquires increasingly

more sophisticated manners of using externality to impose its ends is what some would call

technical progress.[211]

But, in Teleology, Hegel does not argue for the claim of ultimacy of such a manner

of viewing reality, namely as the means for the realization of external purposes (be it ours,

or those of some purported external artificer). Although necessary and categorically

adequate for finite objects fulfilling finite ends, Hegel shows this perspective to remain

finite and thus *untrue*: it is implicitly supported, for its intelligibility, by a further category:

the idea as the self-corresponding concept, the realized purpose.[212] The finitude of teleology

as external purposiveness will enable us to understand the transition to the idea as the true

category, and thus to finally understand what all the talk about the 'highness' of the idea, as

the inherently true category, is supposed to mean –what in fact *fulfills* the 'aspirational'

sense of Truth.[213] In line with these claims, the remaining sections of the chapter have two

aims: (i) to argue in what sense the teleological self-positing of the concept enables the

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[211] *Progress* of course being one of the most controversial concepts in Hegel and beyond. Hegel's philosophical legacy, for better or worse, is deeply intertwined with this notion. I delve into some of the concerns raised by Hegel's view in chapter 6 and in the general conclusion, when considering the implications of Hegel's account of the realized purposiveness of the idea of cognition.

[212] In this sense, as I further argue in the final chapter, Thompson is correct in his critique of the ultimacy of a certain understanding of teleology: the finite teleology of external purposiveness. Thompson, "Contra Teleology: Hegel on Subjective and Objective Purpose." In line with this rejection, Hegel is reported to emphasize the importance of *not* collapsing all purposiveness to external purposiveness: 'The external purposiveness stands immediately before the idea [true purposiveness] *but sometimes what thus stands on the threshold is more insufficient than anything else.'* (E §205 Z, my emphasis.) Unfortunately, contra Thompson, I do not believe appealing to the infinite purposiveness of the realized purpose will help us much when it comes to avoiding the charges of logocentrism in his philosophy of reality, especially Hegel's 'political' philosophy. On this point, again, see my general conclusion.

[213] See chapter 3.

concept's reality in reality's terms; (ii) to exhibit the limitations arising from external purposiveness, paving the way for a novel category.

Objectivity follows Subjectivity, the focus of chapter 4. 'Objectivity', as we have seen from the disjunctive syllogism, refers to the *syllogistically articulated* immediacy logically abbreviated under the concept of 'object'. 'Teleology', as a form of the object, follows as the 'truth' of mechanism and chemism.[214] The logics of mechanism and chemism are logics of externality. Under the mechanical perspective, items indifferently relate to each other. The indifference is partly overcome in chemism, and most completely in teleology. The 'overcoming' rests in the dialectic that shows the later moment to stand as the implicit support for the complete intelligibility of the prior moment. So, teleology shows itself to be what is implicitly presupposed by the complete intelligibility of mechanism and chemism as forms of the object.

The teleological object is still burdened by its determination as an *object* –it is a syllogistically-articulated immediacy, but an immediacy, nonetheless. Thus, since it has the status of an immediacy, 'it is still affected by externality as such and has an objective world over against to which it refers.' (*von der Aeusserlichkeit als solcher noch afficirt, und hat eine objective Welt sich gegenüber, auf die er sich bezieht.*) (GW 12:159) The very fact that teleology 'is still affected by externality' and 'refers' 'against' the objective world shows that the account of teleology helps answer our question regarding the subordination of externality to the order of thought. The logic of externality does not simply disappear, but must be necessarily integrated to assure the *existence* of teleological objects. This point can

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[214] I do not address the meaning of teleology as the 'truth' of mechanism. Koch outlines relevant interpretations and offers a plausible alternative interpretation of this priority claim: object presupposes individuation, which cannot be fulfilled unless we understand the synthetic activity of the concept, which is necessarily a purposive activity. See Koch, "Mechanism, External Purposiveness, and Object Individuation."

be made clear if we consider the structure of a living being, say, a cat: although the cat as a whole is adequately understood as a purposive entity (albeit internally purposive, rather than externally), there are many aspects of its material constitution which abide by the laws of physics (mechanism) or the laws of chemistry (chemism). Even if we wanted to think of the organism as necessarily relying on the logic of purposiveness, it would still be necessary to grant the existence and validity of physical-chemical elements and relations for the very *support* of the existence of the organic structure. Then the suggestion is: the conceivability of purpose *as a form of determinate existence* (and not only a *logical* form) will necessarily depend on the capacity for it to productively interact with 'lower' logical structures.

Thus, 'mechanical causality (…) still makes its appearance in this *purposive connection*' (GW 12:159). How? First, the relation between purpose and mechanism is *external*: the first moment maintains the 'formal' nature of the relation, for the purpose does not take itself to belong to the order of the real, where the logics of mechanism/chemism dominate. It is thus a 'subjective' purpose:[215] a purpose which takes itself as shut off from the world, as something akin to a *drive*, a *desire*, or, in spiritual-mentalistic terms, an *intention* (*Absicht*). Purpose is initially 'the subjective concept as an essential striving and impulse to posit itself externally.' (12:160) In that purpose is an *inner* impulse, something coming from within the sphere proper to subjectivity, it is 'exempt from transition'. This point marks a significant difference between categories of being and essence and properly conceptual categories: the categories of reflection have always a conditional standing: 'force' requires expression to have standing, 'cause' requires effect,

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[215] A momentary return of the 'bad' sense of subjective which thinking has of itself at the beginning of the Subjective Logic, as outlined in 4.1.

'substance' requires accidents, etc. They have 'existence' only due to a reflected

externalization, they thus 'do not maintain themselves' in freedom. (12:160) Not so in the

case of purpose: purpose's existence is not conditional on how it reflects or expresses itself.

Indeed, at the first moment, the very determinateness of purpose consists in being wholly

subjective, inward, non-reflected.

The difference between mechanical movement and teleological process rests in that

this second process is not occasioned by a force or an efficient cause. It rather begins in the

moment of a determination based on the perception of a lack. This perception can be

understood as a *want, a need, an ought*, a *striving,* but also more 'spiritually' as

intention.[216] Given its 'inner' nature, when purpose becomes activity, it directs itself

towards the presupposition of an outside of itself. The fact that purpose requires want

renders it finite: 'its finitude consists in its having before it an *objective*, mechanical and

chemical world to which its activity is directed as to something *already there*' (GW

12:161). It finds a limit in the external objectivity that is not satisfactory for its want:

indeed, the possibility of its want, thus the very existence of purpose, depends on the

determinate unsatisfactory nature of what is 'already there'. So, a purpose, to have any

content whatsoever, must negatively relate to the determinateness of reality –any striving

must possess at least the minimal content of the externality *not being* a certain way, namely

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[216] Against this point, the purpose-denialist might object that there are no real wants or desires, but everything is *actually* a cause: your 'desire' for coffee, the true cause of you moving towards the kitchen to serve yourself another cup of coffee, is in actuality just the effect caused by certain physical reactions. We can for now ignore such a line of reasoning, since it is an example of thinking 'stopping' in virtue of a logic-external metaphysical prejudice. But here, we are attempting to make sense of the logic of subjectivity and how it is intelligible that it can harmonize with mechanism, rather than arguing that such logic is 'in fact' the best explanation for some or all human movement. The Logic examines pure thinking's power through a disregard of metaphysical prejudices in virtue of which thought would be demanded to stop.

in the way that would make it so that no want arises.[217] No want would arise if the conditions that would lead the want to arise were always already fulfilled.

So, the subjective moment of purpose is predicated upon dissatisfaction: the contradiction between the ideal and how the ideal takes the state of affairs to be.[218] Purpose initiates activity by the requirement to 'sublate' the 'presupposition': to determine its activity to annihilate the 'immediacy of the object' to determine 'through the concept' (*durch den Begriff bestimmt*). (GW 12:161) Given the want, the activity is to overcome dissatisfaction.[219] Sublating the presupposition of the dissatisfying situation, Hegel explains, is not merely a negative relation towards the immediate state of affairs. It is furthermore a negation of the one-sidedly *subjective* character of purpose. By acting to sublate the objectivity (say, by beginning the process to make myself some tea, or the process of molding clay so that it becomes a cup), purpose begins to gain a form of concreteness, rather than remaining closed off within subjectivity. Hegel describes it as the purpose's 'unification' of objective being with purpose. The concept thus begins the process of its *self-positing*.

In its initial stage, the purpose is *urge*, the determination to self-posit. But the illuminated presupposition of the concept's self-positing is the concept 'repelling'

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[217] Against this first determination of purpose as requiring an oppositional stand towards the state of affairs, one could offer the counterexample of a pathologically desiring person, one who already has (for example) fulfilled her desire to have a car (by getting a car), but she still has the *desire* to have a car. But this is no actual counterexample, for her desire is not the same as the one that has just being fulfilled: her desire is a new thing, something which she does not have, something that the world as she perceives it has not satisfied. Maybe it is a different car, or having two cars, or having an infinite number of cars. In any case, the existence of the desire is predicated on the perception of a lack, no matter how misguided or unjustified such a perception might be.

[218] Cf. Michelini, "Thinking Life. Hegel's Conceptualization of Living Being as an Autopoietic Theory of Organized Systems," 88.

[219] Anything that fulfills the form of the awareness of a dissatisfaction between itself and its situation is the subjective moment of purpose, so it does not need to be necessarily characterized as *intention*, but can also be *drive* or *urge*. Indeed, Hegel uses such terms. Thus, animal unconscious action can be categorically adequately described under external purposiveness: the lion hunts *because* it has the urge to eat, and thereby overcomes the opposition between itself and the reality where it is hungry. See ft. 210.

(*entschlussen sich*) itself from itself: leaving its simplicity in the subjective unity to gain

concreteness. This self-repellence is the *particularization* of the concept: 'subjectivity

mak[ing] itself into particularity [*macht sie sich zur Besonderheit*]'. (GW 12:162)

Externality, the originally 'indifferent, external objectivity' becomes incorporated into the

subjective unity of the concept by becoming something *for* the appropriation of purpose

under its principle. After the subjective purpose in mere intention, externality stops being

the hostile moment of opposition to become *the means* (*das Mittel*).

Under purpose's novel attitude towards the object, the externality is now that

through which the intention shall be realized; negating the original state of externality is the

determinate condition for the fulfillment of purpose. The means is thus the object as the

'beginning of the realization' of purpose. (GW 12:162) It serves the function of unifying

objectivity and subjectivity and is thereby the very condition of possibility of the thought-

external standing of the concept. As its etymology reveals, Hegel views the means (*Mittel*)

as the 'middle term of the syllogism', namely, as the implicit enabler for the conclusive

unification between the major term and the minor term. The means is necessary for the

realization of intention, Hegel explains, given that purpose is 'finite', in need of 'a middle

term that has at the same time the shape of an *external* existence indifferent towards the

purpose itself and its realization' (12:163). An infinite form of purposiveness or teleology

would not need a means external to itself. That the means is external to purpose, therefore

finite, marks the syllogistic form as *formal*: 'it is something external to the extreme of the

subjective purpose as also, therefore, to the extreme of the objective purpose; just as

particularity in the formal syllogism is an indifferent medius terminus that can be replaced

by others.' (12:163) As we saw in the cases of formal syllogisms, here the terms are related

through a medium which is, to a certain degree, indifferent to the universal: if I want to

make tacos, I do not need to use *these* specific beans, or *these* specific tortillas. All that matters is that I use *some filling* and *some* tortillas. The beans and the tortillas are mechanical objects to which purposiveness relates as an externality: they do not have, as their constitutive form of being, the 'destiny' of being my tacos. Similarly, the clay used to make a cup does not have as its constitutive determinateness its being a cup.

By determining the object as means, we posit that externality is 'penetrable' by the concept: the logic of externality can be subjugated to the determinateness of purpose. Hegel claims: 'with respect to purpose, the object has the character of being powerless and of serving it; purpose is the subjectivity or soul of the object that has in the latter its external side.' (GW 12:164) When we use externality for the means of our purposes, not only does the explicit positing of the concept in reality begin, but also the *demotion* of mechanism as reality's imperative logic: it can be seen as the non-essential, and its resistance to purpose can be overcome through development of increasingly complex means of subjugation.

That the purpose is something external is essential for the understanding of the finitude of the means and of external purposiveness in general: insofar as every teleological object requires matter that is logically indifferent to the realization of the intention, we will never have the possibility of a complete harmony between the objective element and the subjective. There are, certainly, degrees of adequacy, depending on how much the object expresses what purpose intended; a cup without a handle might be less structurally satisfying than a cup that has one. But, as long as the means, as mechanical objectivity, are

essentially *indifferent* to the logic of the concept, there could never be a perfect adequacy between purpose and object.[220]

Now, a problem arises. If thinking takes reality to rise to the means for purpose, this might suggest that purpose obtains a reality similar to that which we ought to grant mechanical objectivity, as the imperative logic of the thought-external. This is not so. The concept as purposive, although it demonstrates its power over externality by subjugating it to its own logical principle, is essentially something *inner*, belonging to the realm of thought. Purpose is not 'added' to the world as a new thing through the means –we do not have, in a teleological object such as a book, its constitution as the set of pages, plus the ink, plus the glue, plus the purpose of being read. To see purposiveness as one more added thing in the metaphysical inventory of the world is to misunderstand purpose: purpose is rather the *forming element* that is the *principle* of the object as the object it is. The concept is not something that lets itself be grabbed by the hands, it cannot be exhausted by reflective categories. This claim entails that even a wholly purposively modified reality, a reality which has been used as mere means towards the concept's ends, will not subsist as *teleological* if all activity of thinking, the activity that *captures* purposiveness, were to end. For the concept is 'the subjectivity or soul of the object' (GW 12:164), a chair is only recognizable as a chair for those who can identify purposiveness in the world: indeed, objects are an ideal moment in the real. To extract conceptuality from reality, it is not sufficient that reality has been materially modified, but the capacity to recognize the self-referring negativity in virtue of which the object is unified, as we have seen in chapter 4.

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[220] Cf. E §24 Z2: 'all finite things have an untruth: they possess a concept and a concrete existence that is, however, inadequate to the concept. For this reason, they must perish, and by this means the inadequacy of their concept and their concrete existence is manifested.'

Were the activity of conceptual recognition to cease, a chair, a city, a road, would just be stuff. Even that which is constitutively conceptual does not survive *as* constitutively conceptual if there is no thought to recognize it *as such*.[221]

Then, in what sense is the concept objectively 'real' in the object? It is here that we turn to Hegel's introduction of the 'cunning of reason'.[222] Hegel introduces the notion of the 'cunning of reason' (*List der Vernunft*) to explain that 'the purpose posits itself in a *mediate* connection with the object, and *between* itself and this object *inserts* another object.' (GW 12:166) What, under this description, renders reason as 'cunning'? Why would this be a smart move on the part of reason? First, we have seen the finitude of purpose to consist in that it requires presupposing externality, mechanism. If purpose entered objectivity *immediately*, then it itself would be lost within 'the sphere of mechanism and chemism and would therefore be subject to accidentality and to the loss of its determining vocation [*Bestimmung*] to be the concept that exists in and for itself.'

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[221] The reader might here question if this concept-dependence proper to teleological structures is any different from the claim that we need thinking to conceive of anything *as* anything, i.e., a more general *idealism* about all determinacy (à la Pippin's 'to be is to be intelligible', or McDowell's 'unboundedness of the conceptual', discussed in 1.3). If my interpretation of Hegel's idealism is as a form of 'antirealism', then would this dependence on thinking for the correct framing of something not simply apply to *anything determinate*? Why do I make such a big deal when it comes to *purpose*, teleological objects? The difference is between the fields of reality where thinking is *constitutive* and where it is not. (Remember I am committed to the claim that there *is* absolute externality in nature, Hegel's relative realism. See 1.4.) As the textual evidence in 6.3 clarifies, (inorganic) nature is not conceptually constituted, so the thinking that makes sense of this field of reality aims to capture *that which is external to itself* as it is, in its thought-external form. Of course, the manner how it captures this externality is by raising it to thinkable content through its own purposive activity ('theoretical reflection', which Hegel introduces already as part of *life* Cf. GW 12:186). But, in contrast, the fields of reality which have a purposive basis count as objects (or ideas), unified by the concept. The 'higher' form of thinking (*begreifen*) that does not aim to capture 'given' natural regularities, but rather identifies objects by reunifying thinking with itself (see chapter 4), is appropriate for purposive fields of reality such as objects, as these objects have the basis of their being in purposive thinking itself. Thus, were thinking incapable of identifying its own principle in the object, it would cease to identify any teleological form whatsoever, while it could still capture natural regularities, insofar as these do not have their basis in thinking. This fact marks a significant discrepancy between the determinations which emerge when thinking takes sensibility as its standard and those which can only emerge when thinking recognizes itself (a principle of purposiveness) as what unifies the object. Cf. 12:23-25.

[222] Cf. Fulda, "List Der Vernunft"; Koch, *Denken in Zwecken,* 201ff.

(12:166) But 'cunning' reason does not relate to externality immediately, through an immediate fulfilment of purpose, but it rather 'send[s] an object as a means ahead of it and lets it do the slavish work of externality in its stead, abandons it to the wear and tear while preserving itself behind it against mechanical violence.'[223] (12:166) So, in its cunning, reason *uses* the logic *proper to* externality for the fulfilment of its own logic. It is a dialectical relation insofar as it is both positive and negative: it *positively* relates to the logic of finitude because it affirms mechanical and chemical relations as they constitutively hold. We do not simply negate such relations, but *use* them, in their own standing, for our purposes, which involves a 'cunning' understanding of their proper nature. It is negative because the affirmative moment is predicated upon their negation through *subordination* to purpose. To subordinate something's logic to purpose is to *instrumentalize*. I instrumentalize the dog not by negating its being as a dog (killing it), but by understanding its own logic (that it will respond to incentives) and using such logic for my purposes (having it respond to my commands). Instrumental relations can then retain the independence of purpose from the object it uses: my domesticated dog dies for me, and, since the purpose stands on my side, I can get a new dog to train so that it too dies for me when I need it to. The cunning of reason is the affirmation of reason's relative independence, in the face of the objects it creates, which require being worn off and perish for the sake of the fulfillment of purpose.

    All of this is quite weird. First, it is hard to conceive what an immediately fulfilled purpose would look like, or what Hegel has in mind here. Perhaps something like being a desire-granting genie, that the moment I determine I want, say, a tea, the tea appears

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[223] 'So aber stellt er ein Object als Mittel hinaus, läßt dasselbe statt seiner sich äusserlich abarbeiten, gibt es der Aufreibung Preis, und erhält sich hinter ihm gegen die mechanische Gewalt.'

without the need of me having to go through the teleological process of standing up, heating water, getting the herbs, etc. But even then, one could say the tea is an *object* for the fulfillment of the purpose, namely: to drink tea. How could 'to drink tea' (or: to eliminate my desire to drink tea) be fulfilled or satisfied immediately, without any mediating process whatsoever (perhaps the process of the very action, drinking the tea)? And even if, in some odd manner, it could be fulfilled immediately, would there not still be a separation between the subjective and the fulfilled moment, such that the desire can remain different from it? Further, and perhaps more to the point: it is difficult to understand what Hegel thinks he needs to preserve by appealing to the idea that reason's use of externality is a form of *cunning* (*List*). In my reading, what Hegel aims to preserve seems to be something like the purity of the subjective, the separation between the logic of thinking and the logic of reality, so that the ideal moment can never *as such* become contaminated with all the contingency that reality (as mechanism-chemism) necessarily involves in the concretization of purposes in the object. As with the dog example, even if all existing teacups eventually, given the passage of time, become dust, the intention behind them remains untouched, such that a new teacup could still arise in a different age of the world, as long as there is the concept, such that the concept retains a necessary independence from the existence of the means realizing it.

If these claims are accurate, then the 'cunning of reason' seems to be the exhibition of how finitude's own logic is instrumentally required for the fulfilment of purpose, which at the same time can preserve purpose's claim to purity. 'Purity' is here meant as the concept's right to its irreducibility to whatever object results from it. This claim sounds much in line with the 'absolute right' of ethical self-consciousness Hegel discusses in the *PS*. (Cf. GW 9:252-3) Yet the infinite inner purposiveness of the self is not what is at stake

in the teleological object: here, we care about the *finite* purpose of *external* purposiveness, where the means (as the external middle term for the realization of purpose) stands 'higher' than the finite purpose it realizes:

> To this extent the *means* is higher than the *finite purposes* of *external* purposiveness: the *plough* is more honorable than are immediately the enjoyments which it procures and which are the purposes. The tool lasts while the immediate enjoyments pass away and are forgotten. It is in their tools that human beings possess power over external nature, even though with respect to their purposes they are subjected to it. (12:166)

So, in finite purposiveness, there does not seem to be a right of interiority, since the very determination of a finite purpose (say, to drink tea, to be clean, to be fed, to sleep, to have a dog that protects me, etc.) is that it ought to be fulfilled in externality, so an enjoyer can use objects as means. Interiority retains a right only insofar as purpose itself is not exhausted in the necessary perishing of the finite object. The sacrifice of externality for its own purposes, without the need to pass over into perishability itself, is why reason is 'cunning'. Further, since the objectivity of the means is relatively indifferent to purpose, it allows for a complete mismatch between objectivity and the subjective purpose –what constitutes teleological *failure*. If I use the wrong means, say, rotten beans and moldy tortillas, end up with a horrible end-product that cannot even be recognized as tacos, the finitude of externality has had the upper hand over my subjective purposiveness.

We now have sufficient elements to understand the self-positing of the concept in teleology: the relation between *subjective purpose* and *means* expressed in the 'cunning of reason'. The concept enters a 'free concrete existence [*Existenz*] via the *negation* of immediate objectivity' (E §204) since, through the means, purpose affirmatively subjugates the initially indifferent externality to concretize and particularize itself and thereby attain the satisfaction of a finite purpose. Through such a purposive activity of negation, the

concept enters existence by becoming the principle for the teleological objects, without having itself become another finite, perishable thing. The contrast is between an *ideal* and a *material-causal* genesis: proper teleological objects can be most properly understood based on their *ideal* principle, as *means* for the realization of an *intention* posited outside the matter, rather than as effects of a mechanical cause. When we attempt to account for a teleological object (say, a cup), this object cannot be adequately understood by merely appealing to its materials, and the mechanical processes by which such materials became formed in this determinate manner. Such an understanding would fall short of what the cup *constitutively* is: materials negated in their original materiality, while simultaneously instrumentalizing such materiality, *in its own logic* (the mechanical and chemical relations), to be formed *after* a purpose: to have something to drink hot beverages from. The concept as purpose is then the *conceptual principle* of the teleological object. If an ideal element can indeed be the core principle without which certain objects cannot be adequately understood (a book is not *just* pages put together), and if indeed finite purposes cannot be satisfied without the instrumentalization of mechanic-chemical objectivity (even in action, through the use of one's corporeality[224]), then the concept can be the constitutive principle of that which is thought external, without having itself to become thought-external. Conversely (and as Hegel will later exploit for the transition to the idea), that which is

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[224] That corporeality can be understood as the means for the purposes of the will, thus as a form of vehicle external to the will which 'commands' over it (contra certain naturalist interpretations rejecting the significance or necessity of any conceptual separability between 'mind' and 'body') can be read from PR §40: '*personality* [the attribute of the self that can recognize itself as abstract 'I', Cf. PR §35 A] alone confers a right to *things*, and consequently that personal right is in essence a *right of things*, 'thing' [*Sache*] being understood in its general sense *as everything external to my freedom, including even my body and my life.*' (Last emphasis mine) Body and life are *external* to the freedom of personality (thinking qua will), even though I can only exercise the freedom of my personality through my body and life.

thought-external proves itself not to be categorically hostile to the concept but means for its own logic.

So far, so good: the objective world can encompass purposes without having such purposes (contra the externalist accounts) as pre-given, as part of the structure of reality as it is 'mind-independently'. It is in thinking that the principle of teleological activity has its basis: if we want to have the concretization of concepts, a purposive process with its basis in thinking requires 'sublating' the thought-external qua thought-external through the cunning of reason, where 'sublating' entails the negation of the primacy of externality's own logic, while preserving such a logic under the dominium of purpose. But now a crucial question arises: if there is a necessary difference between the logic proper to thinking (the concept) and that of externality, and if the logic of externality is a logic of finitude, and finitude is open to perishability, contingency and failure, is any purpose ever even realized in an object? The question might strike one as silly. Obviously, purposes are realized and satisfied in finitude! Even though they are subjected to degradation in time, beds satisfy our aim to have a place to sleep, cups satisfy the purpose of drinking beverages, and hives satisfy the bees' needs for shelter. But, as Hegel clarifies, the logical problem does not rest in the objects –if well-executed, the objects rise to being the means for our finite purposes. We thank the objects for that. The problem rests in the *finitude* of our purposes themselves: no object, no matter how well-made, can ever satisfy the purpose of 'drinking a beverage', for that need, given its finite origin, will arise over and over. Thus, if the object is the means for the satisfaction of a *temporal, finite* need, for that very reason, it will never conclusively satisfy it. So, according to Hegel, the product of finite purposiveness reaches, at best, the status of *means*: 'only a purposeful means would result, but not the objectivity

of the purpose itself.' (GW 12:165)[225] This problematic result, proper to the dialectic of teleology, brings about three modes of consideration of the true realization of purpose, which shall culminate with the perspective that enables the transition towards the end of the Logic in the idea.

Before turning to Realized Purpose, I briefly mention two significant implications of my reading. First, finite, external purposiveness is the only form of purposiveness that has constitutive norms transparently epistemically available for us. These constitutive norms are available to us, since our finite purposive thinking itself is the source of these purposes. Teleological objects are subject to evaluation insofar as the concept constitutes them *against* their externality: it comes as an *imposition*. Since it is based on finite, limited purposes, the cup *is correctly* normatively evaluated by the standard of containing hot beverages; the house is *correctly* normatively evaluated by the standard of providing shelter. These norms are transparently epistemically available for us insofar as *we* (beings who act) are the source of finite purposiveness. Given that the constitutive norms are sourced in our finite nature, we can regard these objects as *failures* insofar as they do not measure up to such standards. Because in finite objects the concept is an *imposition*, rather than a free relation of self-determinacy, objects (again, including actions, institutions, and whatever else fulfills the logical form of the teleological object) are objectively answerable to norms. Things get significantly more difficult when we move to the non-finite form of purposiveness, that proper to life, art, or freedom in history.

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[225] This point applies also to the reading which encompasses actions into the teleological object: the action of *drinking water* (to alleviate thirst), where the means for the realization of the action is one's own body, insofar as it fulfills a finite purpose, will also never constitutively satisfy the subjective element.

Second, in line with the well-known Aristotelean doctrine of the causes, this understanding of teleology provides a different form of necessity than the causal necessity of mechanism.[226] While the causal necessity of mechanism displays its power in the *anticipation* of the effect, the speculative necessity of purposiveness is *retroactive*: we can only understand a teleological object *as necessarily* based on a purpose (that is: as necessarily *what* it is) *after* the constitution of such an object, or the execution of the action. This result follows from, as we have seen, the fact that the 'matter' for the fulfillment of the intention does not contain its purposive destiny *within itself*: the beans and the tortillas are not essentially determined *for the sake of* being in my tacos, the physical material that I use for building a bed does not *contain within itself* the determination to become a bed. But once the teleological process ends and we do, in fact, have a bed, it is *necessary* for its understanding *as what it is* to appeal to purpose.

Teleology's logical form, as we can see, differs radically from the causal necessity of mechanism: dropping a ball *necessitates* that (under normal circumstances) the ball will fall. Thus, efficient causality has predictive power. External teleological logic has a form of necessity that does not entail progressive predictive power; it is a necessity that can only be identified by the ideal principle that dwells within the *end.* In contrast to the mechanistic necessity, conceptual necessity is not 'blind', but appeals to the *self-determining* nature of thought as subjective purpose. This difference does not mean that it is impossible to successfully predict the actions of teleological agents, the outcomes of teleological processes. We often can indeed predict such actions, and to be a socially competent agent in the world requires developing skills of 'social deduction' based on a predictive

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[226] Aristotle *APost*. 71 b 9–11. Cf. *APost*. 94 a 20; *Physics* II 3, *Metaphysics* V 2.

understanding of action (some of us are not too good at it). But the action, if it is indeed an

action, is not necessitated in the linear temporal manner how it is necessitated that,

according to physical laws, all variables being equal, the ball will fall if I drop it.

5.4.

When accounted for at all, the transition from external to inner purposiveness (from

Teleology to the idea as Realized Purpose) tends to be interpreted along the following lines:

the condition for the intelligibility of teleology is inner purposiveness, since without beings

which are ends in themselves (life) there would either be no ends (since there would be

nothing needing or wanting the end), or there would be an infinite regress of finite

purposes, such that a finite purpose is posited by another finite purpose, ad infinitum.[227] We

then need an entity that is internally purposive as the condition of intelligibility of finite

purposiveness. Although there is something undoubtably correct about the transcendental

element of the account (as it is broadly the case with any logical transition, that the 'higher'

category demonstrates to be what implicitly sustains the intelligibility of the 'lower' one),

the text seems to rather suggest a different, significantly weirder, account. To understand

this weirder account is to understand the true transition towards the idea as 'the true as

such'. For this, although the means is enough to understand the self-positing of the concept

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[227] This account is broadly influenced by Kant's account of inner purposiveness in the third *Critique*. Cf. Kreines, "From Objectivity to the Absolute Idea in Hegel's Logic," 318–19; Koch, *Denken in Zwecken*, chap. 6; Maraguat, *True Purposes in Hegel's Logic*, 166. DeVries has the following puzzling claim: 'In order to argue for the need to consider the world-whole teleologically, [Hegel] argues that teleology cannot be applied in a fully satisfactory way to anything less than the world-whole.' "The Dialectic of Teleology", 66. Ng gives an account of the priority of inner purposiveness in terms of what enables objective judgement, which is fine for the purposes of her argument, but, contrary to what her title for section 6.3 ('Objective Judgment: Internal Purposiveness and Transition to the Idea') suggests, it does not seem to be an argument *about* Hegel's transition from Objectivity to the Idea via Realized Purpose. Cf. *Hegel's Concept of Life,* ch. 6.3.

(the first aim of this chapter), we require thinking through the manners of considering the realization of purpose to understand the transition to inner purposiveness.[228]

A. The immediate consideration is a 'negative attitude' on the part of purpose towards the object. (GW 12:165) Hegel characterizes the attitude as one of *violence* insofar as 'purpose appears of an entirely different nature than the object' (12:165-6). I see the means for the realization of my purpose to drink water as essentially external to this purpose itself, and I must do violence to externality as it appears for the fulfillment of purpose, as such an externality is deemed as standing in *opposition* to purpose.

Thought that sees the opposition between subjective purpose and the object determines the primacy of the subjective moment: the concrete object is the unessential, as what is substantial in it is not the object itself (this specific cup, this specific house), but the 'purpose as *content* is the determinateness as it exists in and for itself' –that content is what 'remains identical' in the process of the realization of purpose. (GW 12:166) Indeed, what guides the whole teleological process is *that universal content*, the purpose itself, and it is thanks to that content that the object can even be recognized as the object it is, *not* in virtue of the mechanical externality. It is due to the determination to have something to drink beverages out of, rather than in virtue of being made of clay or porcelain or plastic, that the object is recognized as a cup. Under this consideration, the subjective moment has the upper hand in the necessary opposition to the external material of the object.

B. The second consideration emerges from this first, insofar as the first opens the question of how the mechanical content (the objective means for the realization of my

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[228] The 'manners of considering' the realization of purpose is my terminology for an understanding which Hegel conceives as of forms of the syllogism: forms in which thought unites the major term with the minor through a middle term.

purpose) can sustain the determinate content which is '*for itself*', the content which the first consideration posited as the essential for the fulfilled purpose. How can these two moments, the mechanical and the ideal, be connected if they are mutually opposed to each other? We require a 'third' to serve as their connecting element. Under such an external immediate connection, the means require, to become fulfilled purpose, to be themselves something mediated by another purposiveness: if the connection is external (and our analysis of the teleological object has demonstrated it must necessarily be), to determine a cup as the means *for* purpose, the material of the cup must be determined as means *for* the cup, then matter itself must be determined as means *for* the material, such that the '*infinite progress of mediation*' would be set in motion. (GW 12:168) There must always be a third mediating between the opposed extremes, as these cannot conclusively or immediately connect themselves by themselves. Insofar as it is essential for external purposiveness that the objectivity is opposed to the subjective purpose, the purpose is never formally realized: we only go as far as *means*, instrumentality, and expediency. The cup, the house, and the bed, are not the realization of a purpose, but mere means to connect with a purpose which is never completely realized.

The mutual externality of the terms is teleology's mark of finitude. A second aspect that renders this form of purposiveness finite, and thus incapable of true satisfaction, is that the object as a means serves purpose only through its *self-negation*, its being 'used up' until it perishes, as we have seen is the cunning of reason. (GW 12:169) The means is not in harmonious agreement with purpose, but rather it is essential that the means degrades its constitutive externality for the sake of purpose. Through reason's cunning, finitude's own logic is used up –the spatiotemporal mechanical processes (such as the solidity of the glass, combustion for cars, etc.) are instrumentalized *in their own necessary terms* for the serving

of an externally-imposed purpose. Thus, according to Hegel, 'it [the means] likewise fulfills its purpose not by a tranquil, self-preserving existence, but only to the extent that it is worn out, for only to this extent does it conform to the unity of the concept' (12:169). That the means fulfill their vocation through their negation generates an inner tension between externality and the ideality of purpose: the ideality of purpose survives insofar as externality is negated through use, such that only by self-negating an essential part of itself (the matter of the means) can the object come to a relative correspondence with what it ought to be.

     C. The first and second considerations have resulted in a tension within the teleological object: externality is essential for purpose, for only by using it as means can it satisfy itself, and externality is inessential to purpose, for the subjective element is what constitutes its unity, and the external element of the means only achieves its vocation by self-negating through tear and wear. The tension likewise is expressed in the limitation proper to the teleological object: its vocation is to satisfy purpose, but, given the finitude both on the subjective side (the purpose is finite) and the objective side (externality as mechanism is finite, it degrades in spacetime), the object never conclusively realizes purpose.

     Thought that attempts to think through this tension reaches the realization that the 'truth' of the teleological object as externality use as means for purpose is that the externality is *already* implicitly the satisfaction of purpose in virtue of thought's simple 'resolution'.[229] Let us remember: the teleological object, in virtue of the opposition between

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[229] Contrary to the not-so-weird reading of the transition, Taylor points out the need to understand the move from external to inner purposiveness as a 'switch' in perspective. But Taylor seems to rather elucidate the need for such perspective, rather than provide the argument of how and why such perspective is realized. He claims: 'We may see some unity between agent and means by examining external purposive production. But what is

externality and purpose necessary for the 'using up' of reality as mere means, could not

connect the two terms in an immediate manner. Rather, a third always had to mediate –how

does the cup fulfill purpose? By being externally determined as the *means* for drinking.

How is it determined as the *means* for drinking? Because its matter is externally determined

as the *means* for cupness. How is the matter determined as the *means* for cupness? Because

matter itself is externally determined as the *means* for object-making. Where could this

form of reasoning lead? It can only lead to the realization that thinking determines reality

itself as *means*. This form of thinking leads the thinking that wants to think through the

tension to the realization that it *itself* has already determined externality as means: it is not

due to some third, external connection that, ultimately, some determinate sphere of

externality can be included in the object. Rather, purpose itself has *posited* externality as its

own necessary moment, 'not as anything that stands on its own against it.' (GW 12:170)

Externality's capacity to serve purpose is the result of purpose itself, of its 'resolution' to

determine it within itself. So Hegel:

> As a result, the determination of the object as a means is altogether immediate. There is no
> need, therefore, for the subjective purpose to exercise any violence to make the object into a
> means, no need of extra reinforcement [*Bekräftigung*]; the *resolution* [*Entschluss*], the
> resolve [*Aufschluss*], this determination of itself, is the *only posited* externality of the object,

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needed is a change of standpoint altogether, whereby we see the whole as purposive. The switch of perspective
to the whole brings us back to Internal Teleology. We must now see the activity of man, and the course of the
world, which is the backdrop to it and which it affects, as one great course of life; as forming itself. But in this
vision, all the oppositions fall away. What is worked on is no longer separate from the agent. The forming agent
is internal to the formed.' (Taylor, *Hegel,* 233-324.) This is all well and good, but *what* accounts for the need
to move to a higher perspective, nor what this perspective consists in such that 'what is worked on is no longer
separate from the agent'. In which sense? Why? This form of elucidating Hegel appears to provide an overview
of the things which we would be committed to *after* arguments, but not such arguments themselves. Although
Winfield too seems to agree that the transition from object to idea requires understanding the 'immediate'
realization of purpose ('the very starting point to the whole process sets up the realization of the end because
the indifferent objectivity, which is presupposed as being susceptible of determination by the subjective end, is
its realization', Winfield, *From Concept to Objectivity*, 303), his account also fails to provide the argument (cf.
303-4).

> which is therein immediately subjected to purpose, and has no other determination as against it than that of the nothingness of the being-in-and-for-itself. (12:170)

The connection becomes immediate, thus without needing an exercise of violence against the object, because purpose realizes that it itself is the ground for the determination of anything as means, not externality itself nor a hidden third thing. Externality is then not purpose- or concept-hostile, but the *free perspective* gained by purpose allows it to think that the only condition for externality's capacity to fulfill purpose is that there is a *resolution* to determine it as such. The only hindrance for the rock to be *my chair* is that I would not resolve to determine it as something where I can sit. I do not even need to change its materiality for it to become means. And, contrary to an action-theory reading, I do not even need to actually *use* my body as means and *sit* on the stones for these to be determined as means.[230] Reality, for thinking, is always already means. And this is what the *true purpose* wanted: to have means for its ends. The true purpose of purpose was to realize itself, and so it reaches satisfaction from the simple understanding that it *can* realize itself via a simple resolve, the resolution.

Now, the realization that purpose has all along been determining externality's capacity to serve as means (while still necessarily retaining its difference from purpose) is equivalent to the concept 'sublating' objectivity in its own terms in such a manner that the purpose is finally realized.[231] Let us try to make sense of this. Hegel claims that the product, on the one hand, does remain, as before, a means. But now, given the new

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[230] Contra Scholz, "Teleology and Basic Actions: A Reading of the Chapter on Teleology in Hegel's Subjective Logic in the Terms of Action Theory."

[231] In that I read the transition from Objectivity to the Idea as exhibiting the form for true inner purposiveness in the Realized Purpose, I share an important commitment with Maraguat, for whom ''Teleology' constitutes the true introduction to the final, definitive section of *The Science of Logic*, which Hegel dedicates (…) to what, following Kant and Plato, he calls 'the idea'. In 'Teleology', a non-provisional truth about ideality is established and for all.' *True Purposes in Hegel's Logic*, 168. I outline the differences between Maraguat's interpretation and my own the footnotes of next chapter, when we reach the realized purposiveness of life.

perspective, we (strictly speaking, thought) see that its being means for the fulfilment of purpose has been posited by thought. Purpose's true, essential determination, the determination under which there could be restricted finite purposiveness at all, was that reality was means for thought's satisfaction. *That* was the true purpose of purpose, not any finite purpose such as drinking hot beverages, having a cozy pillow, having the dog protect me, or being able to transport quickly from one place to another. All these finite purposes were predicated upon purpose's determination to posit reality as means, thus to 'sublate' the notion that reality had a content constitutively opposed to purpose. The true purpose of purpose is to have the means for its realization. And, in the teleological relation to objects, *that* purpose is indeed immediately realized: because, when overcoming the standpoint of opposition, purpose can see that in that it can in fact determine externality as means it has 'the reality itself of purpose.' (GW 12:170) The true purpose of purpose, *not* any finite, determinate purpose, is always already realized insofar as I am something for whom externality can be means.[232] And, for thought, resolution is all it takes for reality to satisfy the true purpose of purpose.

Thus, if my interpretation is correct, Hegel shows that the realizability of purpose in the means is predicated upon the realization of the true, infinite purpose. The resolution to use externality is all that is necessary to 'sublate' its 'external indifference' (GW 12:171). This can be read, once more, as turning a Kantian doctrine upside down. It is not that the presupposition that nature is the realm where we can realize our ends is a regulative

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[232] This exhibits the 'dual' nature of the transition, according to my reading. It is dual as the transition is not merely the 'deduction' of a new object, an object which has the structure of life. But we do reach a new form of intelligibility, *separate* from the object: the living being. It is because of the shift in perspective (from the world as mere means to realize purpose insofar as the world *can be* determined as means) that thought realizes that it can now think beings for whom objectivity is the matter for their self-realization, or beings who have their objectivity thoroughly permeated by subjectivity: *Selbszwecke*. The perspective of realized purposiveness can only be one *for* a being whose existence is purposively oriented.

principle for all free action, yet it can never be affirmed that nature *in fact* is constituted such that our moral ends can be realized. (Cf. CPR A651/B679; A800/B828ff.) Rather, the very existence of teleological objects (including actions) is predicated upon an infinitely realized purpose: resolution determining reality as means is the implicit sublation of the illusion that infinite purpose is not yet accomplished. In this third consideration that incorporates the self-determination of resolution, we have the 'sublated externality *posited as inner* [innere gesetzte Aussserlichkeit], or the *certainty of the unessentiality* of the external object [*Gewissheit der Unwesentlichkeit des äussern Objects*].' (12:171) Again, thought leads to the perspective that, to sublate externality, we need not modify externality in externality's own terms by, say, using mechanical violence to generate a world according to our finite aims, or there ever being an object so perfect that our finite purpose finds immediate satisfaction in it. Thought is not True *because* it can demonstrate it, too, can be external and 'exist', as if externality and existence had utmost worth. Thinking only needs to realize what is already implicit in the use of anything as means –namely, purpose positing the external moment as necessary qua moment, and necessarily other than that which thinking is.

To summarize, the 'transition' argument is: by considering external purposiveness in the teleological object, thought is led to the view that true purpose, to fulfill purpose in reality, is already realized in the very resolution of positing externality as means. The true purpose is to realize itself, which, insofar as it can do so by the resolve of using reality as means, is already realized. Hegel is reported to claim: 'To accomplish the infinite purpose is thus merely to sublate the illusion that it is not yet accomplished.' (E §212 Z) This argument is weirder than the argument that objects, insofar as they are means to ends, presuppose or require for their existence beings who are ends-in-themselves (the form of

inner purposiveness), argument which, to its credit, exhibits a direct connection between the final moment of the object (Teleology) and the first moment of the idea (Life).[233] Then, if my rendering of the argument is correct and the argument is in fact weirder than commonly appreciated, the question is: how does the argument bear on the transition from external to inner purposiveness, from object to idea?

Well, as we can see, the third consideration of the truly realized purpose has provided thought with the novel possibility of thinking an 'identity': the identity between purpose and immediate objectivity –'the moment of externality is not just posited in the concept, the purpose is not just an *ought* and a *striving*, but as a concrete totality is identical with immediate objectivity.' (GW 12:172) A determinate something that fulfills its purpose through its objectivity is something whose very *objectivity,* its very being, is the fulfillment of purpose –it 'uses' itself to mediate and concretize the purpose which is to be itself. So, a consideration of the requirements to consistently think through external purposiveness ultimately leads to the truly realized purpose, which can no longer have the form of a purpose external to the means, such that the existence of purpose in the means is a violence to them, but is rather a purpose that only exists insofar as it is fulfilled, i.e., insofar as it is constitutively united with the very means of its realization. This is precisely the form of inner purposiveness: the self-adequate concept, the concept which is one with its objectivity, and whose very existence is the mediation of itself, with itself. It is the form of truth: an intimate, internal correspondence between concept and objectivity. The form of inherent truth in the idea is thus a form of *realized purposiveness*.

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[233] Nonetheless, in the Encyclopedia Logic, Hegel does claim that there would be an infinite regress if all purposiveness was external. Cf. E §211.

5.5. Conclusion

I argued for an 'internalist' understanding of the objectivity as reality of the concept in Teleology. Thought modifies externality by introducing its own order into the real via the cunning of reason. It provides objects with the form of the syllogism by mediating externality through universality, such that we can say, if we consider objects to be real, that the concept stands at their basis. For these claims to hold, externality must be so that it can be appropriated by thinking. Externality is appropriated by thinking by its possibility of becoming the *means* for purpose. The realized purpose realizes that the infinite purpose is always already realized in the resolution to posit the world as means. This moment of realized purpose marks the transition to the idea, the object of our final chapter.

I now address what might seem like a limitation to my account, to further highlight its originality within the relevant literature. To be an object is to be a unity that has the concept as its basis via a finite purpose. To have the concept at its basis means objects are constituted through the logic of purposiveness, as Koch nicely puts it: 'relations of purposiveness individualize objects'.[234] But, based on my interpretative commitment to truth's unconditionality, I could not argue for the primacy of purposiveness based on reality being otherwise unintelligible. Although I provided a sense in which concepts can be real in reality's terms, my account does not amount to a 'proof' of the necessary existence of purpose. I depart from Koch, Kreines, deVries and others in that, for me, it is not *necessary* to see reason and purposiveness in the world if our purpose is merely to understand it –it is

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[234] Koch, *Denken in Zwecken,* 279.

perfectly conceivable that the world as purposeless is intelligible, even for beings 'like us'.[235]

Let me argue for this position. If someone, based on a commitment to a physicalist metaphysics, claims that they indeed believe there are no purposes in the world, and the purposiveness we identify in living beings, teleological objects, and action itself is illusory, and that she does not care that she cannot 'comprehend' teleological objects and actions in their proper rationality, I do not see on what grounds the purpose-defender could mount his case. There are coherent metaphysical proposals which articulate an understanding of the world where nothing in fundamental reality is close to 'reason' or 'the concept'. Many contemporary metaphysicians reject that objects are part of reality in virtue of their commitment to, for example, the fundamentality of the physical.[236] For some versions of 'naturalized' metaphysics, the appearance of purposes is an illusion –what we experience as

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[235] Cf. deVries, "The Dialectic of Teleology," 61; Koch, *Denken in Zwecken*; Kreines, *Reason in the World*; Kabeshkin, "Hegel's Anti-Reductionist Account of Organic Nature"; Knappik, "Hegel on Objective Kinds and Teleology: From Nature to Society." Maraguat *might* be read along the lines of what I argue, insofar as he claims that 'the description in teleological terms does not strictly speaking contribute anything to the explanation of what there is.' (*True purposes*, 159) But he still seems to have a stronger reading than mine, insofar as he claims that 'causal relations not only fail to explain the behaviour of human beings but also the behaviour of other living entities.' (161) One might here object that categorical adequacy *also* entails explanatory necessity, thus I should accept that certain entities are inexplainable without teleology. But no: the claim that mechanism is categorically inadequate for living beings is not equivalent to the claim that the things which we might perceive as 'living' cannot possibly be intelligibly accounted for ('explained') in non-purposive terms.

[236] Examples abound. We can consider Mark Balaguer's 'non-factualism' --the position that there is no fact of the matter about metaphysical questions that could in principle resolve them. He argues for 'a fictionalist view according to which there's an objective kind of correctness that applies to our mathematical and scientific theories, even if those theories aren't strictly true; (…) on the view I develop, whenever realists about abstract objects and material objects say that a mathematical or empirical theory (or an ordinary-discourse claim) is true, non-factualists can say that the given theory (or ordinary claim) is for-all-practical-purposes true. And I use this result to explain why our mathematical and empirical theories are useful to us, why they seem right to us, and why it wouldn't matter— i.e., wouldn't be harmful to our purposes—if they weren't strictly speaking true.', *Metaphysics, Sophistry, and Illusion*, 3. So, Balaguer argues, the rejection of the existence of objects (more specifically: the rejection of the claim that there is a fact of the matter such that the question regarding the existence of objects could be resolved) is perfectly compatible with our continuing to live and cognize as if objects and theories about objects were true. I consider this compatibility prima facie plausible, which is why I believe (contra Koch) there is no performative contradiction arising from the rejection of the existence of purposive structures in the world.

'objects' are nothing but the middle-sized amalgamation of physical particles that we have evolved to see as if unified. The teleology-defender (call him TD) could tell the physicalist (call her P) that he (TD) does not believe her (P's) account of her lived experience of the world as purposeless. But to refuse to accept the person's own account of her lived experience seems rather condescending –that argumentative ground is weak, as people can and do experience all sorts of things. Indeed, we have seen Hegel himself exhibiting the weakness of the syllogistic connection which appeals to 'observation' (see 4.5)—the same can be said about attempts at authoritative appeals to 'lived experience' or 'intuitions'. Appeal to empirical or scientific evidence would also not work (has teleology been successfully 'naturalized' yet?) and, more to the point, appealing to naturalized teleology presupposes agreeing to the terms of the debate set forth by the physicalist, namely that the criterion for accepting or rejecting the existence, objectivity, validity, or truth is determined by what we (or rather: 'our best science') take 'the physical' to be.[237] Appeal to intuitions or consistency claims also seems weak, for people (as I have observed) often act in the world as if things we do not believe exist in fact existed, for a variety of possible legitimate reasons. A seemingly stronger point is that denying the actuality of purposiveness constitutes, as Koch puts it, a 'performative self-contradiction'.[238] One cannot claim to have a theory of reality that does not include purposive beings, since the very possibility of creating a theory of reality presupposes purposiveness. But I do not find the 'performative contradiction' argument too convincing. Many people do not believe entities such as

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[237] For this reason, I believe it is mistaken to attempt to show Hegel to be in line with a 'naturalized' understanding of normativity for both teleology and spirit, as defended by Corti, "The 'Is' and the 'Ought' of the Animal Organism: Hegel's Account of Biological Normativity"; Gambarotto, "Teleology and Mechanism: A Dialectical Approach." For further critique of the program of a 'naturalization' of *Geist*, see Gottschlich, "Domination and Liberation of Nature", Stein, "A Naturalist Taming of Supernatural Subjectivity? The Kantian and Fichtean Origins of Hegel's Idealist Account of Cognition".

[238] Koch, *Denken in Zwecken,* 204.

'money' or 'gender' fundamentally exist, and the rejection does not hinder them from still acting as if such entities existed. Further to the point, often acting as if such entities existed (say, asking one's institution for research funds to fund a project about how money is illusory) is a condition of possibility of us creating theories about how those entities are *not* fundamental. Beyond an aesthetic aversion to hypocrisy, I see nothing wrong there. Perhaps purposiveness is different, for every action is predicated on its existence, so you could not even act *as if* you believed purposiveness existed while claiming it does not, for the very capacity to *act* as such is already a purposive action. But then the purpose-denialist could reply: 'fine, strictly speaking, I am not "acting", I am moving under the illusion of action. Or better: there is something that moves under the illusion that it is acting as if it believed purpose existed.' What could the Hegelian friend of purpose reply?

So, in my view, we cannot tell our physicalist friend that she cannot understand her own experience without purposes, nor that she must accept purposiveness because teleology is metaphysically real (in any terms she would be willing to accept), nor that if she does not accept the existence of purposes, she would be falling into a performative self-contradiction. We are free to reject a theoretical commitment to the existence of objects, and indeed of anything which would be dependent on the logic of purposiveness for its concrete existence, including thought itself.[239] This freedom entails that intelligibility is not necessarily *rational* intelligibility, which is clear from the fact that it is possible to remain within the perspective of the understanding in our view of reality. Nothing *forces* thinking to make the 'resolution' to theoretically accept what might be implied in any determination

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[239] Physicalism regarding mind indeed appears to be the majority position among professional philosophers, at least according to the 2020 PhilPapers survey. To the question: 'Mind: physicalism or non-physicalism?' 51.93% of respondents answered 'physicalism', 32.08% answered non-physicalism.

of reality as purposeful, not even in the case of those objects whose very existence as what they constitutively are depends on a purpose.

If this holds, it sheds light at the problem with 'transcendental' or 'metaphysical' accounts for the reality of the concept as an intrinsically purposive category. The capacity to act within and make sense of experience irrationally (in Hegel's sense, implying a rejection of purposiveness) is not a problem for my interpretation of Hegel. For, I argue, Hegel's argumentative strategy is neither one-sidedly transcendental, nor based on any claim to better make sense of the observable phenomena: it is not *because* we could not otherwise explain phenomenal reality *that* the concept is true. On the contrary, if truth is indeed *unconditional*, something's status as being true is not dependent on being the best explanation of appearance and the world, without which nothing would exist or make sense.[240] The abstract concepts through which the world appears as rational, as abiding by a purposive logic, do not have their legitimacy conditional upon being conditions of possibility for experience and reality.[241] A purposeless world is intelligible.

A purposeless world is intelligible, but, as the argument from the final chapter will show, it is not true: it does not exhibit the relevant form of self-correspondence. As far as my defense goes, as I will argue, this claim does not entail that the world or the self or any other purportedly internally purposive structure fulfills, or will 'in the end' fulfill a pre-given purpose, as a common understanding of 'teleology' would have it. Indeed, as the

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[240] This is not to claim that Hegel happily tolerates 'irrational' forms of understanding reality. He is quite explicit in his denunciations of those writers who reject the primacy of reason and the concept for the understanding of ethical life. (See the Preface to the PR). But importantly, such denunciations do not rest on the argument that, without accepting the purposive logic of the concept, the world as it appears would make no sense or be somehow incapable of being understood. Rather, we would deprive certain structures of their rationality, a rationality that is proper to their own universal content, thereby flattening reality to its (in Hegel's view) poorest determinations, i.e., categorical inadequacy.

[241] To quote the poet: 'Reason is faith in what can be understood without faith, but it's still a faith, since to understand presupposes that there's something understandable.' Pessoa, *The Book of Disquiet*, 260.

argument from chapter 6 will show, if the purpose was pre-given, outlined in advance by an external artificer (God's pre-determined plan, or an alleged *logos* governing the world independently from our thinking), then it would be external to the being of the object itself. The world, the self, would exhibit a finitely purposive form: the form proper to teleological objects, and would therefore not go beyond being *mere means*. Now that we have reached an understanding of external purposiveness, we can better see the requirements for a true *inner*, realized purposiveness:

> It is not just that the subject matter [*Gegenstand*], the objective and the subjective world, *ought* to be in principle *congruent* with the idea; the two are themselves rather the congruence of concept and reality; a reality that does not correspond to the concept is mere *appearance*, something subjective, accidental, arbitrary, something which is not the truth. [*diejenige Realität, welche dem Begriffe nicht entspricht, ist blosse* Erscheinung*, das Subjective, Zufällige, Willkührliche, das nicht die Wahrheit ist.]* (GW 12:174)

Chapter 6

6.0. Introduction

In this final chapter, I argue that the idea of the inherently true category justifies ('grounds') philosophical comprehension. I argue that the idea in its three modalities, life, spirit, and absolute idea, justifies the application of philosophical categories to determinate real phenomena. The form of the idea has been exhibited in the transition to this chapter: *realized purposiveness*. The idea as life and cognition justifies these philosophies by showing the logical shape of that which has the concept as its inherent basis, such that their proper intelligibility entails existence. The absolute idea, as the philosophical method, justifies the form of unconditional cognition itself, without which the inherent truth of nature and spirit could not be comprehensively recognized.

In section 1, I present the argument for how the idea, as realized purposiveness, expresses the form of inherent truth. I show how it is crucial to think of realized purposiveness as different from a teleological object: the idea must articulate an *inseparable* bond between the concept and objectivity, inseparability which, I show, does not obtain in the case of teleology. Teleology's bond, insofar as it rests on a third for connecting the concept and objectivity, is contingent: it can be dissolved. Thus, the idea's infinitude must be thought differently. Hegel shows that such a difference demands thinking of the idea's mode of existence as *becoming*. In section 2, I present the idea as entailing a form of ontological argument such that if something is determined as idea, then the very recognition of its intelligible form entails the recognition of its existence and objectivity. This claim highlights the relevance of the ontological argument for my

understanding of the inherent truth. In sections 3, 4, and 5, I show how Hegel justifies the three forms of the idea as realized purposiveness: life, cognition, and absolute idea, respectively. I end the argument by exhibiting, in section 5, how the pure logical idea as thinking thinking thinking (TTT) grounds the possibility of the recognition of truth in life and cognition, thereby grounding, through categorical adequacy, the philosophies of nature and spirit. In section 6, I address a possible concern regarding the 'divine' status of the logical idea as thought thinking itself.

6.1.

According to categorical adequacy, conceptual comprehension is demanded by subject matters that have the concept as their constitutive ground. Teleological objects have the concept at their basis. But, as I showed in chapter 5, the teleological object is an inherently finite category. If all things that had the concept at their basis were teleological objects, then all conceptual comprehension would be *finite*. But in the final sections of chapter 5, we have also seen the possibility of thinking a category where the concept is not separable from its objectivity: the concept of a *realized purpose*. Realized purpose was the implicit condition sustaining the intelligibility of any finite purposiveness. In chapter 3, I argued that the inherently true category would require nothing beyond itself to sustain its intelligibility. In this section, I show how the idea, understood as realized purposiveness, requires nothing beyond itself to sustain its intelligibility. It manages to do so by articulating a manner in which the concept and its objectivity stand in an *inseparable* relation. If this holds, the idea is the inherently true category, and those structures that are

determined as idea will require an infinite form of conceptual comprehension for their categorically adequate account.

First, I argue that we should not think of the idea as another teleological structure or object. As we have seen from Teleology in chapter 5, objects are best understood through teleological comprehension: by appealing to the imposition of the concept as their constitutive principle, objects are the *means* for the concept. Yet the purpose, the conceptual moment in the objects, is *extrinsic* to them: the materiality, the sustaining objectivity, is not 'free'. The teleological object is subservient to a purpose that does not have its source within itself. This subservience entails that objects are objectively (truth-functionally) answerable to their constitutive norms: a house that will not shelter is a *bad house*, an action that does not achieve its purpose is a *bad action*. Insofar as *we* (or purposeful beings like us) are the source of finite purposes, the norms of the objects are epistemically available to us.

Now, the limitations of external purposiveness lie in the impossibility of a true realization of purpose. This impossibility has led thinking to identify inner purposiveness, the realized purpose, as the truth of teleology. In my account of the end of the Teleology section, this entailed gaining a novel logical perspective: the capacity to determine the world as means for purpose via a simple resolution is the truly realized purpose, as the concept of purpose was to have means for the realization of its ends. The purpose-external is thereby shown as *already* a necessary moment within the truly realized purpose: the purpose whose purpose is to realize purpose.

The realized purpose, or the purposiveness that only exists as such in virtue of its being realized, is a novel possibility of intelligibility which pure thinking has uncovered. In chapter 3, I presented an argument motivating an internalist criterion of truth as the correct

manner of understanding Hegel's method of categorical evaluation. There, I established the conditions for a correct interpretation of a category's claim to 'inherent truth', significantly at odds with a traditional understanding of the 'correspondence' theory of truth and its reliance on traditional metaphysical realism. But it is only now that we can present the argument of how the 'idea' expresses the self-correspondence proper to inherent truth. I first defend the argument, and then, in the next section, outline its significance for the grounding of a philosophy of the real via a form of ontological argument. In brief, the argument is:

(1) Thinking over inherently finite categories reveals finitude through the incapacity of the category to sustain its intelligibility without the aid of a further thought.

(2) Insofar as realized purpose is the *expression* of its intelligibility, it does not require a further thought to be thought thoroughly.

(3) Thus, realized purpose would be the form of an inherently true category.

(4) But if teleological objects rise only to means, never to realized purpose, then the realized purpose cannot have the form of teleological objectivity.

(5) And: if the subjective concept's highest achievement has not passed over into the necessary realization of the necessity of externality as means, then the subjective concept remains unrealized purpose.

(6) Rather than mere subjective purposiveness or teleological objectivity, the realized purpose must therefore have a form where intelligibility and objectivity are not separable.

(7) The idea is the form where intelligibility and objectivity are not separable.

(8) Thus, the idea as the inseparable correspondence between concept and objectivity is the inherently true category.

Premise 1 has been established in chapter 3. Premise 2 follows from chapter 5, thus premises 1 and 2 justify 3 via definition. Premise 4 follows from chapter 3, and premise 5 from our analysis of the limits of the subjective concept in chapter 4. So, I must defend 6 and 7 to justify 8. I will do so by answering two questions. First: *why* is it a requirement that intelligibility and objectivity are not separable? Second: *how* does the category of the idea achieve or embody such inseparability?

I turn to the first question. If, in the realized purpose, intelligibility and objectivity were separable, this would entail a third to be doing the mediating labor between the concept and its reality. In our example from the end of chapter 3, we considered the untrue house. In thinking over the untrue house, thinking found that the actual house was not sustaining the concept: it was a pictorial representation of houseness that enabled the identification of the objective moment with the concept. But now consider a normatively *good* house, a house which rightly expresses the concept such that not much besides the objectivity itself, the material house in its concrete existence, enables the judgement of the concept. Still, the material house does not need to *actually realize* purpose to subsist. Indeed, even if we build a very good house, it could nonetheless fail to realize purpose by the mere contingency that nobody ever *lived* there. The third sustaining the concept and objectivity is here the determination that identifies the house as *means*. Only insofar as the house rises to *means* and is used up accordingly does it realize its proper finite purpose: the good house, by itself, cannot realize the purpose that enables it to require little outside itself to sustain its intelligibility. This implication illuminates a logical gap: no matter how well

the object embodies purpose, insofar as it is an *object*, the realization of purpose will depend on the mediating labor of an external third. Since the actual act of being determined as a means (to realize relative purpose) is not a necessary moment of the very being of the house, the object does not itself, by itself, *realize* purpose. The mere existence of the good house does not entail that it will be *in fact* used for its essential purpose. We might make the arbitrary choice never to live there.

Thus, the finitude of an object as means means that the correspondence between its concept and its objectivity, the realization of purpose, depends on an external third. Insofar as the external third sustains the bond, and insofar as the persistence of the bond is not guaranteed (as it is not *entailed* by the being of the object itself), the correspondence between concept and objectivity is contingent. Insofar as the bond sustaining correspondence is contingent, the category cannot be thought of as *self*-corresponding. Thus, even when we have an object that adequately expresses and sustains its own intelligibility, insofar as it is an *object*, it could always fail to do so at some point, if the external third stops doing the mediating labor.

A similar logical gap can be seen if the bond between the concept and the objectivity relied on subjective excess, an overreliance on thinking's idealizing activity.[242] Let us say I have a crush on someone, P. Let us say P writes me a poem. Let us say the poem is not too good, in fact, it is quite bad and barely meets the minimum standards to be objectively understood as a poem. But let us say, given that I have a crush on P, my impressions become so charged with subjective excess that I cognize the poem as a perfect embodiment of a good poem: as a self-corresponding object. Here, the identity between the

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[242] On the different senses of 'subjective' which incorporates this 'bad' sense of content belonging merely to the subject, see PR §26 A, +Z.

concept (*poem*) and the objectivity (*P's poem to me*) is mediated by the third term of my crush on P (more specifically: that my crush on P influences my thought's formative possibilities), which conceptually compensates for that which the object, in fact, lacks. As with the last example, the problem here rests in the *contingency* of the bond as mediated by the third: the moment my crush on P fades, so does the bond between the concept and the objectivity. Given that my crush can always inevitably fade, a correspondence that depends on such a factor makes the objects judged therein always contingently a 'self-corresponding' example of what they are.

The ease with which the bond sustaining the relative correspondence between a concept and objectivity can dissolve is the mark of the finite. (Cf. GW 12:175; E §211) The decay entailed by time dissolves any teleological object's claim to relative correspondence with the concept: time itself will make any house degrade, no matter how 'good' it might be, eliminating its claim to self-correspondence. The contingency and arbitrariness of our finite interests and needs makes it so that any correspondence based on them is always exposed to the possibility of dissolution: as with the example of my crush, the moment our current standards for (say) what counts as a 'good car' change, so will the claim of self-correspondence of any car that might before have counted as good. So, if we want to think through realized purpose, we need a form of connecting the concept and objectivity where these would not stand in an in-principle *separable* relation. We cannot rely on an external third to do the job. Having established the requirement for inseparability between the concept and objectivity for the truly realized purpose, the question is: *how* does the idea achieve the inseparability we are looking for?

Before providing the answer, I appeal to textual evidence to understand the requirement better. In the transition from teleological object to idea, the 'movement of

purpose' has attained that 'the moment of externality is not just posited in the concept, the purpose is not just an *ought* and a *striving*, but as a concrete totality is identical with immediate objectivity.' (GW 12:172) In this transition, the concept is 'to be distinguished, as an identity existing for itself, from its *implicitly existing* objectivity, and thereby to obtain externality, but in this external totality to be the totality's self-determining identity.' (12:172) These formulations sound weird, but they enable us to better understand the requirement: the *concrete external totality* is the totality's own *self-determining identity*. Rather than relying on mediation through a third, the very individuality of the totality as the totality it is must itself be an expression of its own 'self-determining identity'. That which sustains the intelligibility of the objective moment can be nothing but the self-determining expression of the concept. Only in this way can we understand the purpose no longer as ought or striving, as something the object is *meant to* do, or the universal which the particular is *meant to instance or exemplify*, but as that whose immanent realization individualizes the object precisely as what it is.[243]

So, the idea must embody the inseparability between the concept and objectivity by being the form where the very objectivity is the self-determining work of the concept, rather than being a mere 'instance' of it. Hegel characterizes the idea as the concept concretely existing '*in its own free form*' (GW 12:175), in contrast to how the concept exists in mechanism, chemism, and the teleological object. What is 'free' about the idea's mode of existence? As we have extensively seen, objects have the concept *as conditioning*, as an imposition from an external purposiveness. They are subservient to the external concept; to be a finite realization of purposiveness requires their being identified as *means*

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[243] Unsurprisingly, the relevant contrast emphasized by Hegel is to Kant's ideas of reason. Cf. GW 12:173ff.

by an external third. Further, as the concept is, for the teleological object, a *fixed* moment determined outside of the object, the object possesses objectivity in an immediate form. It requires no self-determining process to be what it is, for what it is has been imposed upon it.

The idea is meant to constitute the inseparability between concept and objectivity by being a form of self-determination where the activity's moments serve towards sustaining purpose in its being. To remain conceptual, this form needs to be unified under a universal. For otherwise it would not possess an ideal, immaterial unity, but would be rather another pre-conceptual finite determination, devoid of the concept. I defended the need for the universal moment of the concept in chapter 4: in the concept, the universal moment grants content the form of necessity proper to the self-referential I. Only a form which is united under universality can be adequately individuated, just as it is due to the object's being an articulation of the concept that finite objects can be individuated as what they are. And herein lies the problem. Hegel clarifies that the idea indeed has objectivity, thus 'it has the moment of the *externality* of the concept in it and is in general, therefore, the side of finitude, of alteration and appearance' (GW 12:176). So, if the form we are seeking is inevitably tied with finitude, then it seems to be conditional upon finitude's upholding of purpose. But we know finite means break away and fade off with time: their destiny is to be exhausted through wear and tear. Thus, if the way the idea integrates externality to posit its objectivity is the model of the 'cunning of reason', where externality is *used* for an aim other than its own, then the idea would not be realized purpose. Its objectivity would be means, but never self-correspondence. This cannot be. In the idea, the universal that provides unity and cohesion cannot stand *outside* the objectivity itself. We need to think of a different model of how the universal dominates than that of the 'cunning of reason'. To

think the unity of the idea, we must think these two things at once: first, that the objectivity is *unified* in virtue of a universal element; that the universal element has not been *given to* the objectivity, and second, that universality is not an *external imposition*, but it is rather the objectivity's own *self-determination*. If the objectivity is itself the purpose, then the very standing of the objectivity as the unity it is would be the realization of purpose. If we could think of these two aspects together, we would have the form of inseparability we seek.

To make intelligible the idea as the realized purpose, to think the two moments as inseparable, we need to understand it as *becoming*. Becoming is the answer to our problems, as it expresses a form of unity between the object and universality in a self-determining manner. The idea must be understood as a *process of self-determination*: 'the subject [in the idea] does not possess objectivity immediately in it [...] but is the realization of purpose' (GW 12:176). Hegel elaborates:

> the idea is therefore absolutely *simple* and *immaterial*, for the externality has being only as determined by the concept and as taken up into its negativity; in so far as it exists as indifferent externality, it is not only abandoned to mechanism in general but exists only as the transitory and untrue. – Thus although the idea has its reality in a materiality, the latter is not an abstract *being* standing over against the concept but, on the contrary, it exists only as *becoming*, as simple determinateness of the concept by virtue of the negativity of the indifferent being. (*gegen den Begriff für sich bestehendes Seyn, sondern nur als Werden, durch die Negativität des gleichgültigen Seyns als einfache Bestimmtheit des Begriffes*.) (12:176-7)

Externality 'has being' in the idea only as 'determined by the concept and as taken up into its negativity'. As we can see, externality can exist in the idea as 'indifferent' to the concept, but insofar as it does so, it is 'transitory and untrue'.[244] This is still not too

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[244] This claim also helps clarify in which sense the idea, despite being a true whole, has *restricted content*: not *everything* can be an expression of the idea *as such*. So, externality can be within the idea something substantial

different from the teleological object: we can think that the externality which is 'substantial' to the house is that which has been determined by the concept of house (through our purposive activities), rather than the contingent elements making up the house's peculiarities (such as if I put a mat here or there, if the kitchen is a determinate color, if the windows have accumulated dust, etc.). But, since here we cannot think of the concept as an imposition on an indifferent externality, the only way the universal concept can dominate is through a different relation to objectivity than the external imposition of a pre-determined ideal. This different relation to objectivity obtains by understanding the way the idea 'exists' as *becoming*: by determining through a *process of self-determination*, thereby coming to itself through externality by 'negating' the indifference of externality. I propose we understand the idea as:

> The self-determining self-specification of the concept through its objectivity, which exists *only as becoming*.

Let me argue for the necessity of the idea's existence as becoming.[245] If the idea did not exist as becoming, it would exist as something finished. If it existed as something finished,

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only insofar as it is determined by the concept –i.e., insofar as the reality itself serves an explicitly conceptual role within the whole.

[245] Of course, it must be highlighted that *becoming* (*Werden*) is a category from the Doctrine of Being. Here, Hegel remarks on the 'meaning' of becoming as follows: 'But the meaning of its [the concept's] *becoming*, like that of all becoming, is that it is the reflection of something which passes over into its *ground*, and that the at first apparent *other* into which this something has passed over constitutes the *truth* of the latter.' (GW 12:11-12) In the 1820-1 Lectures on the history of philosophy, Hegel, appealing to Heraclitus, further comments on becoming as the foundation for all posterior definitions of the absolute: 'Darin ist also enthalten; nicht das Seyn ist das Wahre, sondern die Wahrheit des Seyns ist das Werden. Betrachten wir, was im Werden enthalten ist, so sehen wir, daß dasselbe Seyn und Nichtsein enthält. Werden ist zugleich eine ganz einfache Bestimmung. Dies ist die abstrakteste, einfachste Dialektik; Werden ist die Dialektik selbst; dies absolute Umschlagen, die absolute Unruhe. Hiemit ist also der Prozeß, das Dialektische als Idee ausgesprochen. Dies ist das Große Heraklits; die Idee muß freilich noch weiter bestimmt werden, allein in jeder Gestalt der Idee ist das Werden

and if it is the unity of concept and objectivity, then the concept would have 'stopped' the process of its self-determination (or, indeed, never have been through such a process) to find itself in restful equality with the object. But if the idea were to stop self-determining and exist in virtue of the realization of self-determination, then the 'free' concept would no longer be the *sustaining source* of the objectivity. For the concept has finished itself through its reality, but by having fulfilled itself, the concept separates itself from the objective moment. It separates itself, as now the concept is 'complete', and the objectivity now gains the character of being its outward *expression,* its *instance*, the concept's *support*, but not the concept *itself*. For example, let us say a state finishes the process of its self-determination towards freedom or whatever, such that we can say it has fully realized its purpose. Now the concept is finished: the state has fulfilled its purpose. There is no more self-determination to do, for it has achieved its peak, its culmination, its perfect stage. Then the concept and the object separate, for the object itself (the specific state we have claimed is the realized purpose, the Ideal State) is the mere material sustainment of the ideal: it becomes an *instance* of a concept which has already achieved its perfection *through* it. And, as an instance of an idea which has arrived at its culminating form, the particular state that realized the idea can from here on either decay (thus breaking the bond between concept and objectivity by failing to live up to its ideal), or try its hardest to continue to live up to a universality that it now has as a normative imposition, an ideal coming from something which has broken off its equality with the objectivity itself. In either case, the two moments would become separable, as the concept, as finished, stands on the one hand, and the objectivity, as the means for the upholding of the concept, on the other. As we

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vorhanden und bildet dessen Grundlage. – Das Werden ist zwar immer noch eine abstrakte Form des Absoluten, allein sie bleibt in allem weitern als Grundlage.' (GW 30,1: 279)

know from the teleological object, having the two moments separable is a mark of finitude, since their correspondence is dependent upon the mediation of a contingent third. The only manner how the moment of objectivity can be the internal expression of the concept is if the idea exists as a *process* where the concept is articulating *itself* through its becoming.

Thus, were the idea not to have a form of existence *only as becoming*, it could not fulfill the form of an inseparable unity between the concept and objectivity, thus, it would not be the realized purpose, and thus, it would not be the inherently true category. So, the idea must exist as the *becoming* of self-determination of the concept through its objectivity.[246] It is in this way, I propose, we understand Hegel's claims that the idea exists 'only as *becoming*', that the '*identity* of the idea with itself is one with the *process*' (GW 12:177), that 'the idea is essentially a *process* (…) the course [*Verlauf*] in which the concept as the universality that is individuality determines itself to be objectivity and to be the opposite of objectivity, and in which this externality that has the concept as its substance leads itself back into subjectivity through its immanent dialectic' (E §215), and that this processual being of the idea is necessarily tied to the form of *freedom* the concept has attained in it:

> the thought that liberates actuality from the seeming of purposeless mutability and transfigures it into *idea* must not represent this truth of actuality as dead repose, as a mere *picture*, numb, without impulse and movement, as a genius or number, or as an abstract thought; the idea, because of the freedom which the concept has attained in it, also has the *most stubborn opposition* within it; its repose consists in the assurance and the certainty with which it eternally generates that opposition and eternally overcomes it, and in it rejoins itself. (12:177)[247]

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[246] It is not hard to see this structure as constitutive of the self. I explore this implication in the general conclusion.

[247] Aside from expressing the nature of the idea as the process of self-rejoining through the eternal generation and overcoming of opposition, key from this quote, for my antirealistic purposes, is that that which 'liberates actuality' from the 'seeming of purposeless mutability' by transfiguring it into *idea* proper, the expression of realized purpose, is *thought*: *thought* is doing the 'liberating' work, not anything existing 'out there'. Achieving

The concept attains freedom through the idea by being the active *self-determining* source of its individuality, rather than having individuality imposed upon it. Thus, if my defense holds, only as becoming can the purposiveness constituting the universal element be inherent to the objectivity, while simultaneously not being pre-given or pre-built as a form of external purposiveness.[248]

6.2.

In this section, I outline the relevance of the ontological argument and argue for its functional role in the idea. Readers have wondered if Hegel aims to show, via logical 'deduction', the necessity of the existence of God –if, in short, the Logic supplies an ontological argument (OA) in the sense of an 'a priori' attempt to demonstrate God's existence based on a conceptual definition or determination.[249] Some interpreters claim that the OA is not only present in Hegel's philosophy, but is the key for understanding Hegel's

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the perspective of the idea is not finding a new content in the world which external reflection must recognize to understand the real. It is rather an achievement of pure thinking, to find a manner of identifying unconditional freedom articulating itself purposively through its objectivity.

[248] As it is clear, not all purposes can exist 'only as becoming'. Inherently finite purposes (mere means) have their essential determination, their form of satisfaction, precisely in that they *end*.

[249] Those identifying an OA (or an analogue to an OA) in Hegel propose a variety of possible points of focus. Some equate God with 'the elaborate network of interconnected concepts that unfolds in the Logic' (Inwood, "Hegel," 134) which ends up being encapsulated in the figure of the idea at the end of the subjective logic (Cf. Inwood 136). For Henrich, Hegel's rehabilitation that the OA represents the very idea of the logic: what renders (or ought to render) its whole movement meaningful. (Cf. Henrich, *Der Ontologische Gottesbeweiß*, 216–18.) Redding and Bubbio consider it in line with the self-positing act of the I manifest in the recognitive practices of human beings, "Hegel and the Ontological Argument for the Existence of God," 482–83. Calton reads the OA as advancing a 'divine ontology' which must be grounded on the reworking of the method of proof itself: the Logic develops 'a new kind of proof that is suited to the special object of God's being' Calton, *Hegel's Metaphysics of God,* 38. Williams, as I do, concentrates on the doctrine of the concept, and he sees the OA specially at play in the passage from the subjective to the objective concept. Williams, *Hegel on the Proofs and the Personhood of God*, 113. Others (for example, Moss, *Hegel's Foundation Free Metaphysics*, 340; 452) identify something akin to an OA in the transition from Logic to nature attacked by Schelling. Inwood (*Hegel*) touches upon possible intimations of the OA within all these different parts of Hegel's philosophical writings.

Logic as a form of metaphysics. The most relevant contrast, for my purposes, is McNulty's

recent account of the functional role of the OA within the Logic. While we share the

common ground of affirming that the OA is key for understanding the validation of logical

categories, we approach the issue from opposite directions.

For McNulty's interpretation, the OA provides the answer to a problem he identifies

concerning the validity of the logical categories, namely, that Hegel's set of categories

could be 'a scheme of abstract concepts with no concrete, existential import' such that the

Logic would be nothing more than 'a mere game thought plays with itself, without ever

making contact with reality'.[250] As a response, he proposes that 'Hegel's categories avoid a

merely subjective status because they are concepts of God: more specifically, the God of

the ontological argument. It is part of their essence or nature to exist, so that if their

existence is even so much as possible, it is necessary.'[251] The argument for the 'necessary

instantiation' of the categories hinges on the claim that, if the Logic begins with a concept

which is necessarily instantiated, a concept which cannot but exist, and if the progress of

the Logic is indeed immanent, then this first concept's ontological import will be

'transmit[ted]' to all successor concepts, thus guaranteeing the necessary instantiation of all

subsequent logical categories.[252] McNulty identifies 'Being', the first logical category, as a

category which cannot fail to be instantiated: 'If any concept is instantiated in the world,

then the concept of Being must be. Everything is a being or entity, and in this sense a

limitation of the unlimited Being.'[253] As it is in virtue of being 'necessarily instantiated'

that the categories 'avoid a merely subjective status', the 'entire chain' of categories is

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[250] McNulty, *Hegel's Logic and Metaphysics*, 29.
[251] McNulty, 29.
[252] McNulty, 29, Cf. 106-7.
[253] McNulty, 95

'protect[ed]' from remaining 'wholly out of touch with reality.'[254] Thus, the OA in the Logic serves to secure the validity of the categories via their inheritance of 'necessary instantiation'.

As should be obvious now, I do not share the presuppositions motivating this argument.[255] First (as outlined in 3.2), I reject that the categories need to be validated by virtue of 'existing', or that their 'instantiation' would in any way contribute to their proper validation. If, as I have argued, the Logic has the evaluative function of providing a derivation that displays inherently true categories, and if, as I have shown through textual evidence and argumentative support, the evaluation of logical categories considers them *in and for themselves*, by taking in their *own logical content*, then the categories having 'concrete, existential import' cannot be the means for securing their logical validity, much less their claim to inherent truth. Thus, even granting that we can establish the existential import of categories, showing that these 'exist', it would be of little consequence for the project of Hegel's 'true critique' of the categories –a critique that considers them in accordance with their own logical content.[256]

Second, granting that Logic indeed demonstrates the objectivity of conceptual categories, I reject the implication that 'instantiation' is an adequate model for understanding the relevant sense of objectivity. Rather, under the reading here defended, conceptual categories express 'objectivity' by, first, exhibiting the concept to be the condition for the truth-functionality of judgements and representations, thus enabling any

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[254] McNulty, 30.

[255] Of course, we might also have good grounds to reject or at least question the truth of the premises of the argument itself. On both textual and philosophical grounds, I find objectionable (1) that being must necessarily be, by definition, and (2) that necessary instantiation, if provable at all, is an attribute or trait which can be 'transmitted' from category to category, as if some sort of ontological chickenpox.

[256] See 3.2 and 3.2.

meaningful engagement with reality, and second, by showing the capacity of the concept to be the immaterial formative principle of the teleological object through the cunning of reason which elevates externality to means, as shown in chapters 4 and 5. Thus, granting that Hegel *does* demonstrate the objectivity of thinking, his Logic neither shows nor is it designed to show that any concept or category is 'necessarily instantiated', or 'instantiated by definition'.[257]

   In my view, the problem McNulty's appeal to the OA is designed to solve only emerges due to a commitment to the *metaphysical* path for categorical justification: if thinking is not 'out there', then it lacks validity. I reject the metaphysical path for categorical validation because, in my reading, thought has content –it does not need to inherit 'existence'.[258] But then, if I radically depart from McNulty's reading of the role of the OA for the standing of the categories, and if indeed the OA appears to have significant metaphysical implications (after all, it is meant as an argument *for* necessary existence), what is the OA doing in *my* account? Does the OA not attempt to prove, after all, that something must necessarily 'exist'? I agree that the OA is central for understanding how Hegel justifies infinite categories for infinite objects. But we must understand this correctly. Rather than being immediately available from the first category onwards, the inherently true category to which the OA applies is an achievement of thinking only articulated by the end of the Logic. The idea, as the inherently true category, is the category which articulates a form of

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[257] McNulty, *Hegel's Logic and Metaphysics*, 106.

[258] The contrast with McNulty serves the purpose to highlight how my interpretation of the role of Hegel's OA parts ways from a metaphysical form of categorical grounding. I do not mean to 'refute' or argue this manner of reading the Logic is 'wrong', while mine is 'right'. I think it is productive that interpreters approach the same text with radically different philosophical interest and commitments. Against this ecumenical spirit, I suppose I could advance textual arguments for why my approach makes more textual and systematic sense, by, for example, appealing to Hegel's location of the OA at the end of the Logic, not at the beginning. I tried to do so in an unpublishable manuscript.

conceptuality that must incorporate the existence the concept has given itself through its necessary becoming. Thus, to be understood, it must be understood as existing, for it is through its existence that the concept, qua idea, articulates itself –and reversely, if it exists as the thing it is meant to be, then acknowledging it is what it is meant to be entails acknowledging that it must be.

   It is textually clear that the OA Hegel endorses only emerges with the concept. Hegel claims so explicitly: while there are many prior moments when Hegel *alludes to* the OA, in the passage from the syllogism to objectivity Hegel returns to the argument and considers this transition (namely, from the subjective concept to objectivity) to be 'essentially the same' as the OA, or 'Descartes's sublimest [*erhanbenste*] thought, that God is that whose concept includes his being within itself [*dessen Begriff sein Seyn in sich schliesst*]' (GW 21:127). Here, he again critiques past treatments of the proof based on their insufficient attention to the 'essential subject matter': '*the connectedness [Zusammenhang] of concept and existence* [which is] the concern of the treatment of the *concept* just concluded and of the entire course that the latter traverses in determining itself to *objectivity*.' (12:127-8)

   My claim thus is that the inherent truth of the idea entails a form of OA: a category is inherently true if it is a self-corresponding concept. A self-corresponding concept is a concept that articulates itself in its becoming, due to the self-determining unity between the concept and the objectivity (its *connectedness*). Thus, self-corresponding concepts must exist, for otherwise their conceptuality would not be intelligible, and conversely, their existence is essentially a conceptual one, such that they could not be understood as what they are if they were not.

      In whatever has the form of an idea, the objectivity and the concept are united in such a manner that the loss of the concept *necessarily entails* the loss of the object, or the

loss of its very existence *as* whatever the thing is supposed to be. Let us take an anticipatory example from the case of the idea of life: if the universal concept (the living being as the species of being it is) were to disappear, this would not only amount to the fading away of a principle of intelligibility of the object (as, for example, the logical transformation from the organized chair to the broken materials), but it would further amount to the material dissolution of the thing itself.[259] For those objects which are idea, the loss of the concept is the loss of their being.

From these criteria, we can extract further consequences. Hegel is clear that 'wholes' are the proper objective form in the concept, since only wholes can be articulated as the unity of universality, particularity, and individuality –that is, as complexes unified under the principle of the universal. This claim entails that all proper objects (chair, cup, water, bird, spirit, the state, etc.) are, in principle, candidates for being ideas: they are conceptually unified wholes which have the concept *qua* universal as the principle of their unity.

But, of course, most of them are not. Not all conceptually articulable wholes with concrete existence *must* exist. Only those for whom the concept is *internally* and *constitutively* determining can display the relevant claim of necessity in their existence. We have seen this to be only sustained by existence in the form of becoming. To establish the connection between the internal constitution of the concept in the idea and the necessary existence that is claimed through the OA, let us consider once more the example of the chair. On the one hand, the chair depends on the concept: the purpose of being an object to

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[259] Cf. GW 12: 183-4: 'when a living thing is taken to be a whole consisting of parts, something exposed to the action of mechanical or chemical causes, itself a mechanical or chemical product (whether merely as such or as also determined by some external purpose), then the concept is taken as external to it, the individual itself as something dead.'

sit on is what supplies the unity to the external manifold, such that the moments can be subordinated to the universal. Yet, the universal moment is here not the matter's own self-determining work: its substantiality as a chair is rather supplied by an externality. In this sense, the loss of the universal does not entail the loss of the objective substantiality: if, hypothetically, all concept-users lost the universal 'chair', a materially organized individual thing would nonetheless subsist. The dissolution of the concept does not amount to the annihilation of the singular. And if, hypothetically, an externally organized matter (say, a rock with a flat surface) displayed a shape which fulfilled the purposes of the chair, then, in the moment of being used for chair-like purposes, such matter would be 'informed' by chairness, despite the lack of agency the organized matter has over how it becomes determined. This example shows that the determination of an individual object as a chair does not entail that, if thought determines it *as a chair*, it entails the determination of it *as existing*.

In contrast, objects *internally* constituted by the concept entail a form of necessity, for here, there is no concrete objectivity without the active principle of the concept. Let us take once more the natural living being as an example. A bird's constitutive movements and activities are dependent on the bird's *life-form*: its activity is purposive not because the bird intentionally sets goals and aims, but because its life-activity is ruled by the bird's form of being. As inner purposiveness, the individual bird does not 'externally' obey the orders of a creator-subjectivity. Rather, the demands that enable a bird to reproduce its life-form are *intrinsic* to its very substance –the bird is what it does insofar as its activity is the realization of its concept. If, say, a chicken stops identifying seeds and bugs to eat and avoiding perceived danger, it no longer has the concept as the ruling principle of its movement and activity. But, for wholes which are idea, the loss of the concept necessarily

entails the loss of *being*: when the universal stops having a hold on the individual's

movements, the consequence is not merely the subjective loss of the concept for the

external judger (as it happens with the chair), while the material existence continues after

the disappearance of all subjects. With the loss of the concept, the animal *dies*: it stops

being what it is.

Another example: 'Wholes like the state and the church cease to exist *in concreto*

when the unity of their concept and their reality is dissolved' (GW 12:175). What do

'wholes like the state and the church' have in common with the living organism, such that

these all can be logically categorized as 'idea'? Like the organism, the state's very

existence depends on 'the power of a concept' (12:176): if a determinate state continues to

have 'concrete existence', this means the concept continues to have a hold on the singular

moments constituting the material body of the state. The state, like the living being, has the

form of a system where the moment of individuality is subordinate to the whole, yet the

whole cannot exist without the purposive work of these individualities.[260] This mutual

dependence makes the internal singular moments not mere parts, but *members* (*Glieder*).

(12:184) Furthermore, the moment the concept stops having influence and power over

individuals such that there is no recognition whatsoever of x as a state, then there is no

more state. This exemplifies once more the meaning of the self-determinateness of the

concept in the idea: the concept, in wholes which are ideas, is the inner ground sustaining

and ruling over concrete existence. In the case of those wholes that display the form of the

idea, the separation of concept and objectivity is the annihilation of the total determinacy

itself. In line with these claims, we read:

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[260] See 2.3.

The idea is *the rational* in this sense; it is the unconditioned, because that which has condition is that which essentially refers to an objectivity that it does not determine itself but which still stands over against it in the form of indifference and externality, just as the external purpose had conditions. [*sie ist das Unbedingte darum, weil nur dasjenige Bedingungen hat, was sich wesentlich auf eine Objectivität bezieht, aber eine nicht durch es selbst 30 bestimmte, sondern eine solche, die noch in der Form der Gleichgültigkeit und Aeusserlichkeit dagegen ist, wie noch der äusserliche Zweck hatte*] (12:173)

Now the idea has shown itself to be the concept liberated again into its subjectivity from the immediacy into which it has sunk in the object; it is the concept that distinguishes itself from its objectivity – but an objectivity which is no less determined by it and possesses its substantiality only in that concept. [*Die Idee hat sich nun gezeigt, als der wieder von der Unmittelbarkeit, in die er im Objecte versenkt ist, zu seiner Subjectivität befreyte Begriff, welcher sich von seiner Objectivität unterscheidet, die aber eben so sehr von ihm bestimmt und ihre Substantialität nur in jenem Begriffe hat*.] (12:176)

Thus, we know that if we determine something as idea, if it has concrete existence, it has so necessarily, for only through its existence does the concept articulate itself. This places significant weight on which matters at hand ('wholes') we shall determine as having the form of the idea. Indeed, to claim something is idea entails claiming it is *true*, that it possesses an unconditional form of being *what* it is. But now we can see that to determine which of the concretely existing wholes are actual ideas is equivalent to determining *what is true*. So now we have elements to understand further the grounding role of the Logic regarding the philosophy of the real: the Logic provides us with the meaning and the form of the truth, which shall be the responsibility of a philosophy of the real to concretely demonstrate by a *philosophical* articulation of the whole to express and thereby verify its constitutive ideality. If philosophy mobilizes ideas, then it serves the function of testing and making explicit the ideal content of reality, to measure objectivity with the standard of the true.

6.3. Life

We turn to the moments of the idea. If the form of life is a form of the idea, then its concept entails its objectivity. If life is a form of the idea that requires the 'lower' structures of mechanism and chemism for its objectivity, then, to understand life, these structures must be subordinately integrated into a conceptual cognition of life. If nature entails life, then a conceptual cognition of nature as a whole is justified as categorically adequate, for all of its different stages can be comprehensively placed as moments in the logical self-determining becoming of life. In this section, I defend this argument.

To advance the argument, first, we need to show life is a self-adequate concept, an idea, having the form of a *realized purposiveness*.[261] The problems arise immediately. Although life is the immediate idea, Hegel claims this form of the idea is a 'presupposition' necessary for *cognition* as the concept's 'comprehension of itself'. (GW 12:179) In the very introductory remarks to Life, Hegel asserts that '*truth* as such lies essentially in *cognition*.' (12:179) These claims would seem to support the anticipatory character of life (akin to the

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[261] Thus, in my view, Ng's argument for the primacy of life is party correct, partly overlooks that the work is being done by the inherently true form of realized purposiveness itself, not *life* as such. She claims, for example: 'the Subjective Logic presents a series of arguments that retreat into the ground of the determinations of subjectivity (Concept, judgment, and syllogism) and objectivity (mechanism, chemism, and teleology), where Hegel's aim is to demonstrate that these determinations are ultimately grounded in the unity and activity of form characteristic of life. The thought-forms of subjectivity, objectivity, and their reciprocal relation are revealed to presuppose life as their mutual ground, and the positive outline of life as ground and first actuality is presented in the opening chapter of the final section of the Subjective Logic on the "Idea"', *Hegel's concept of life*, 168. It seems to me a lot of the work is not being done by life per se, but through the form of realized purposiveness, form involves in all moments of the idea (indeed, the form how, in my account, the idea achieves inherent truth). Ng, like Maraguat (*True purposes*) and other interpreters interested in Hegel's concept of life, places a lot of weight on life being some form of 'primitive normativity'. (174ff) I understand the interest in reading Hegel's concept of life in this way, and equating it with realized purposiveness: it enables an opening to solve the issue regarding the continuity of life and spirit, thus addressing some worries some have regarding the possibility of naturalized normativity and establishing continuity between nature and mind, also allowing for neo-Aristotelean arguments for the objectivity of ethical norms. (Cf. Joe Saunders, "Hegel, Norms and Ontology.") I do not personally share this version of the concern. (On the first point, I basically agree with Gardner, "The Limits of Naturalism and the Metaphysics of German Idealism.") The version of the concern I share, and outline below, centers on the question of how a conceptual form (life) can justify the mobilization of conceptuality for the whole of nature.

anticipatory nature of nature vis-à-vis spirit): what we truly want to understand is cognition, where truth 'as such' is supposed to lie, and so life is important only as an essential logical presupposition for the logic of cognition.

But life is idea, thus, if we follow Hegel, it has the character of being an inherently true category. Despite Hegel's emphasis on its anticipatory, 'immediate' character, and the relative limitations of the idea in this form, we need to try to understand life positively as a self-corresponding concept, not simply as either a necessary logical condition for cognition (spirit in its logical form), nor as the condition of the logical intelligibility implicitly supporting teleology. To first see how life is True, we need to articulate the precise form of its own mode of self-correspondence. Initially, Hegel claims that simple life is the 'one and only *subsistence* an *immanent substance* of its objectivity', as 'subjective substance' it is *'impulse'*, the 'one and only universal impulse of the specific that leads its particularization back to unity and holds it there.' (GW 12:180) From these initial remarks, we can see that life shares some characteristics with teleology: it particularizes itself through its objectivity. But, contrary to teleology, in life subjectivity is the *immanent substance* of objectivity, not an external imposition. We see here too the persistence of *impulse* and *drive*, which we observed before in the subjective purpose. The impulse is what enables life to hold itself in its unity.[262] These claims provide a minimal understanding of the form in which life shall be self-corresponding as realized purposiveness: the living makes of its objectivity a presupposition for its subjectivity, where the complete totality of objectivity is the means for the realization of the concept of life. Something is only alive insofar as objectivity is a

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[262] Cf. Kisner, *Concept Drive Class. Ger. Philos.*

means for the concept, thus, only insofar as there is an inner correspondence of the concept with itself.

Life as idea has three moments: the living individual, the life-process, and the genus-process. The individual living being, as a form of singularity, is '*soul*': 'the concept of itself, fully determined within itself, the initiating self-moving *principle*.' (GW 12:183) The soul must be corporeal, as it is through such corporeality that it 'links itself to external objectivity.' (12:183) The living individual has corporeality necessarily in its subjective unity. Corporeality, if it is truly linked with the soul as the impulse of self-realization, must be the immanent *means* for the fulfillment of purpose. Then, corporeality is not external to purpose, but is to be understood as an *organism*: 'the *means and instrument of purpose, fully purposive, for the concept constitutes its substance*' (12:184). As here, in contrast to external purposiveness, the means for the fulfilment of purpose are at one with the purposive element itself (the soul as the active principle), the organism is a realized purpose.

At this point, a reader might raise the worry that the living individual is not one with its end, thus not a realized purpose, because its corporeal needs are *finite*, and thus never conclusively satisfied. The cat wants to eat, uses its body as the instrument to hunt, and in this way fulfills a finite purpose. But we know the shortcomings of the structure of finite purposiveness from chapter 5; if all there is to the cat's purposiveness are finite needs, the cat is never conclusively satisfied in its need to eat, thus its organism is not realized purpose. But let us remember the lesson from Realized Purpose (5.4): the true purpose of purpose is to have the means to satisfy purpose. Here, the true purpose of purpose is to have the means to satisfy *life*. In the determination of the organism as the means for the realization of life, we find the purpose of purpose always already realized: the cat is *one*

with that which allows it to hunt and feed itself, to reproduce its concept through the perpetuation of *itself*.

By being embodied in such a manner that it is one with the means for the realization of life, the living individual would appear to be the realized purpose. Yet the individual cat dies. The fact that living individuals die raises the following question: what is supposed to determine life's purpose? If the content of life's purpose is to continue itself as this specific living individual, then the living individual can never realize life's purpose. It can never realize life's purpose, because the living individual ceases to be alive, thus ceases the process of becoming, which I argued is the form how the idea exists. If life's true purpose was the fulfillment and persistence of the individual, then, in the individual's death, life would not be at one with its purpose, so it would not be self-corresponding, so it would not be idea, so it would not be inherently true. The answer must then be that the living individual does not exhaust life's concept. Rather than exhausting life's concept, Hegel argues, the living individual must be understood as *a moment* in the determination of life; the living individual is not the concept of life *as such*. The living individual is only life *as* the particularizing of a life-form. (Cf. E §221 +Z, §222) The cat's living urges, needs, and capacities are of her *as cat*, her whole habitus is not merely to live, but to live in a cat-like form; her life comes imbued with a specific shape. Then the determination of life, which stands as a condition for the intelligibility of the living individual, is its *determinate form of life*, what Hegel calls the *Gattung*, 'genus'.[263] Reproduction (*Begattung*), as a constitutive moment within the process of life, displays life's purposiveness to rely on the overcoming of the particularity that pertained, and finitize, the living individual: 'Its particularity

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[263] We have encountered *Gattung* before, in the subjective concept. See 4.4 and 4.5.

consisted in the disruption whereby life posited the individual life and the objectivity external to it as its species. Through the external life-process, it has consequently posited itself as real universal life, as *genus*.' (GW 12:189)

Life is 'real universal life' in the *Gattung*. Realized purposiveness is retained because the true purpose of life is the life of *Gattung*. Hegel makes this point clear: *Gattung* is 'indeed now the completion of the idea of life' (GW 12:190). Yet, if this preeminence of *Gattung* holds, although it allows us to understand the compatibility between the necessity of death and the idea's form as becoming, it likewise brings in a new problem. For, according to a common manner of understanding *Gattung*, the genus stands as a natural kind or a species essence with a determinate content over and above the individuals, indeed 'governing' what the individual 'instantiates'. But if life is the life of *Gattung*, and *Gattung* has a determinate content which remains external to the living being as such, then the living individual is, in fact, an *externally purposive* object. This is, indeed, how many read Hegel's concept of life as *Gattung*: as a governing pre-determination, individual life is objectively answerable to.[264] Furthermore, following a neo-Aristotelean line, if the content that determines the purpose of the individual is a fixed set of features as determined by a 'species-essence', then living organisms are objectively normatively evaluable because they

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[264] Cf. DeVries, *Hegel's Theory of Mental Activity*; Mills, "Hegel on the Normativity of Animal Life"; Stern and Weiss, "The Feebleness of the Concept in Nature: A Challenge to Conceptual Realism?" The following claims by Stern and Weiss are exemplary: 'concrete, individual oak trees are seen as realizations of a preexisting goal-structure determined by the natural kind "oak tree." (…) such goal-directedness relies on the idea that the goal is, in some sense or other, ideal or good, a standard that ought to be realized in one particular way rather than another. But, as [Hegel] also makes clear, this does not mean that such a standard is always perfectly met. Objective purposes, just like the intentional ends of agents, are approximations to a goal that is achieved in higher or lesser degrees of perfection.' (29) This line of interpretation, in my view collapsing the logical form of teleology with that of external purposiveness, establishes the normative evaluability of individual living beings based on their 'objective purpose'. But, as I showed in chapter 5, we only have transparent epistemic access to the constitutive norms of that which is finitely purposive. So, if life is *not* finitely purposive, there is no possibility of having epistemic transparency regarding the constitutive norms of a determinate individual, in virtue of which we would conclusively claim it is 'good' or 'bad'.

fulfill an external purpose: to realize a form that has been *pre-determined*, a form that has been *externally* assigned to them. The bad cat is bad if it fails to correspond to the pre-built demands of its life-form.[265] If this interpretation were to hold, then living individuals would be finite teleological objects. Their purpose would be an imposition, an *ought*. They would be mere means for an external ideal, never a realized purpose. Yet Hegel claims life is idea, not a teleological object –a realized purposiveness, not mere means. (Cf. E §365 R) How are we to solve this?

I follow Rand and others in rejecting the essentialist or natural-kinds realist reading of *Gattung* based on my interest in understanding life as *inner purposiveness,* thus, as a form of realized purpose, thus as the unconditional form of inherent truth.[266] If Hegel understands life as a form of realized purposiveness, the genus cannot be the pre-determined species-essence 'governing' life as 'instantiated' by individual living beings. Were this the case, again, life would be another finite purposiveness. Having rejected the possibility that *Gattung* stands as an externally-imposed essence, if that is not how we ought to understand genus, then how *should* we? For Hegel, the *Gattung* is a moment in the immanent production of the total life process, which necessarily incorporates the particular existence of living individuals. (Cf. GW 12:189) The presupposition of the living individual is the context of its life-form: that its impulses, wants, and capacities are those of a specific kind of life. But this 'kind of life' is not given to it. Through the processes of life,

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[265] And, even granting that constitutive norms of natural organisms could be made epistemically transparent for us, the question arises: what form of investigation would supply the transparent epistemic access to the constitutive forms of living beings in virtue of which we could make truth-functional judgements, and on what grounds should we confer such an authority to it?

[266] Rand focuses on Hegel's account of animal individuality in the *Encyclopedia* Philosophy of nature, and accounts for animal defect not as an 'evaluative concept' but rather as 'a constitutive feature of animal individuality as such.' "What's Wrong with Rex?", 9. See also Lindquist, "Hegel's 'Idea of Life' and Internal Purposiveness"; Lindquist, "On Origins and Species" Thompson, "Contra Teleology" Maraguat, *True Purposes in Hegel's Logic*, 154ff.

the background of determinacy likewise acquires its own content: the '*presupposing*' now becomes life's own 'production.' (12:190) Hegel claims:

> the individual, although it is the genus, it is the genus *in itself* [*an sich*] rather than *for itself* [*für sich*]; what is for itself is as yet only another living individual; the concept distinguished from itself has for object, with which it is identical, not itself as concept, but a concept rather that as a living being has at the same time external objectivity for it, a form which is therefore immediately reciprocal [*unmittelbar gegenseitig*]. (12:190)

Thus, textual and systematic considerations support the reading that genus, as the determinate content which enables the universality proper to a living individual, is nothing apart from the self-constitutive processes of living individualities themselves. In their *drive* to posit their own universality through life-constitutive activities such as reproduction, living individuals are, in fact, bringing forth the living process. Rather than being a static essence governing individuals, the genus can only possess determinate content insofar as these processes, fueled by the blind universal drive of individuals, serve to concretize and specify the genus as a form of becoming. Living individuals thus realize the concept by having 'in itself' the 'longing' to posit an identity between themselves and the universal as *Gattung*. (GW 12:190)[267] A contrast might help understanding the distinction between the model of universality at stake in finite and infinite purposiveness. In an artifact such as a phone, the universal or subjective moment in virtue of which the phone is individuated as an object is indifferent to whatever the phone does. Nothing the particular phones do will affect their universal constitutive norms: the norms are not in a 'reciprocal' relation of

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[267] Cf. E §365 R: 'it [the organism] therefore becomes the non-neutral identity of its concept and its reality, and so finds the end and product of its activity to be the already established beginning and origin of its being. It is thus that satisfaction conforms to reason; the process which enters into external differentiation turns into the process of the organism with itself, and the result is not the mere production of a means, but the bringing forth of an end, the unity of the self.'

determination with their universal.[268] The external artificer determines the norms based on our determinate aims (and the scientific and technological resources available). In life, in contrast, universality is *nothing apart* from such processes at the individual level; it is through *Begattung* that the *Gattung* concretizes itself.

Thus, *Gattung* is self-determining in virtue of its reciprocal relation with individual life, in virtue of which the inner identity is constituted, and thus has its form of existing as becoming. This argument, if sound, entails a kind of 'error theory' regarding all possible judgements of defectiveness in life-forms: there is simply no 'objective' fact of the matter making attributions of plant or animal defect correct or incorrect. Of course, we can (and do) normatively evaluate living beings all we want, and we might further have good pragmatic reasons for taking (some of) these judgements as valid --after all, it seems commonsensical to judge that a pigeon that cannot fly is *worse* than one which can, that it is a 'deficient' pigeon.[269] But this validity is restricted to our subjective judgmental interests: it does not cut at the conceptual *core* of life, but it is rather closer to my judging my dog as 'defective' because it fails to protect me and barks too much, or one's child as 'bad' because he fails to do his homework. If the pigeon is a life-form, and if individual

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[268] An objection: what about technological progress affecting what we take *to be* a phone, from the first big mobile phones from the late 20th century to current smartphones? But, as it can be easily recognized, the development of the universal is not due to any activity in the part of singular phones, but to something external to them: us, our finite needs, and our developing technology to satisfy such external needs.

[269] Against my argument, one could claim Hegel himself makes use of animal defect examples. For example: 'In a bad plant, a bad animal type, a contemptible human individual, a bad state, there are aspects of their concrete existence which are indeed defective or entirely missing but that might otherwise be picked out for the definition as the distinguishing mark and essential determinateness in the existence of any such concrete entity.' GW 12:213–14. But Hegel's point here is *against* using *definitions* which pick out properties or 'marks' for the categorically adequate specification of 'wholes' (forms of the idea, realized purposiveness). Thus, and in line with Rand's argument (see ft. 266 above), Hegel's point in this passage would seem to support the *opposite conclusion* than the one reached by Alznauer's reading of it: wholes like these cannot be 'defined', because to define would entail to exclude the possibility of 'defect', and the necessary inclusion of defect in the 'concrete existence[s]' characterizes wholes like living beings and the state. Cf. Alznauer, "Hegel's Theory of Normativity," 9.

living beings are the moment within a realized purposive form, then, logically speaking, there is no fact of the matter that is epistemically transparent for us in virtue of which we could make categorical normative evaluations, in contrast to how, indeed, we can objectively attribute deficiency and badness to useless artifacts like phones and chairs.

Finally, the account entails that life processes are not only compatible with, but rather require, the death of individuals. Hegel claims: 'In the process of the genus, the isolated singularities of individual life perish'. (GW 12:191) They perish necessarily, as their death is both 'generating' and 'sublating' singularity: generating, as the life-process entails reproduction, the production of another individual which is like myself, through which the *Gattung*, as the unconscious universal moment, survives and becomes further specified. 'Sublating', as the specific particularities of *this* individual show themselves determinately negated in the continuation of the species. In the Logic, the recognition by thinking that the presupposition of life is the productive universality requiring the death of the individual marks the transition towards the logical form of spirit: cognition, where this universality of the idea '*comes to be explicitly for itself*' (12:191).[270]

So far, so good: life is idea in that the total process of life shows how the determinations both of individuals and genus are mutually dependent on a process of the self-positing of *Gattung* in a medium which is no longer external. By realizing itself

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[270] Thinking through life shows life's moment of truth to be in the genus, not in the fulfilment of life by any particular individual itself. But then: life's concept is not to continue in living individuals (which is why Hegel gives *death* a prominent role in Life), but to obtain the simple universality that enables individuality itself. When thinking realizes that life presupposes, for its complete intelligibility, the sustaining universality which for the living appears as *urge* to posit self-identity, then the idea, which related to itself as a relative external imposition in the living organism, can now relate to itself *as a posited concept*. In cognition, it does not have Gattung as the appearance of a blind force ruling over its movements without an acknowledgement that the movements themselves are productive in the process of Gattung. Rather, now thinking can have 'universality for its determinateness and existence' (GW 12:191): it is aware that universality is *its own production*, and the explicit form in which thinking engages with the production of universality as *posited* is *cognition*.

through its existence, insofar as something is alive, it is inherently self-corresponding, not with itself as its moment of being a particular living individual whose destiny is to feel pain, strive to survive, reproduce, and die, but rather with itself as the *process* of concretizing and thus specifying the *genus* through these life-constitutive processes. The moment the living being stops being *what* it is, its whole objectivity also collapses. *If* thinking determines something as a form of life, then the thought of it entails its reality, because the concept *entails* its objectivity.

That is our little ontological argument for logical life, a of life's status as a realized purpose, thus self-corresponding, thus an inherently true category. Now I briefly abandon the Logic to turn to natural life, to see how the pure idea of life 'grounds' a philosophical account of nature. The necessity to justify the claim that conceptual categories can be adequate for the cognition of nature emerges from the fact that nature *is not pure thinking*, nor even a teleological object with its principle in a concept. As Hegel famously characterizes it, nature is precisely the *other* of thinking, the idea 'in the form of *otherness*' (E §247; §248 +Z), in the form of 'self-externality'. Nature's conceptual determination is *absolute externality*: it is not simply external to this or that form of determinacy, but it is *externality itself*.[271] So Hegel:

> Nature has yielded itself as the idea in the form of *otherness*. Since the *idea* is therefore the negative of itself, or *external to itself*, nature is not merely external relative to this Idea (and to the subjective existence of the same, spirit), but is embodied as nature is the *determination of externality* (E §247)

> We know that what is natural is spatial and temporal, that in nature this stands next to that, this follows after that, in brief, that everything natural is mutually external, ad infinitum; further, that matter, this universal foundation of all formations to be found in nature, not only offers resistance to us, subsists outside our mind, but holds itself asunder against its own self, divides itself into concrete points, into material atoms, of which it is composed.

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[271] See the distinction I make between *relative* and *absolute* externality in ft. 41.

> The differences into which the concept of nature unfolds are more or less mutually independent existence. (E §381 Z)

Indeed, nature seems not to express the concept *at all*, because the concept is the principle of subjectivity proper to thinking.[272] It is not formed by the concept, and, in its externality, it displays 'no freedom' (E §248). If nature is in no sense conceptually constituted, then a categorically adequate account of nature would not be conceptual. The cognition of a purely self-external field of reality would mobilize categories proper to an understanding of what is at stake in thinking externality (thinking taking itself as being or essence), as its task would be to provide an account of nature as the field of mechanical and chemical relations exhibited through *local regularities*, superficially united by the mere 'and', but possessing no self-constitutive unity in the concept.[273] If self-externality is the principle of nature as a whole, of everything that can be cognized of nature, then there can be no categorically adequate conceptual cognition of nature. If there cannot be a categorically adequate conceptual cognition of nature, then a *philosophy* of nature would be unjustified. Any investigation of nature would then have to adhere to the epistemic standard of

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[272] Cf. 'This is the impotence of nature, that it cannot abide by and exhibit the rigor of the concept and loses itself in a blind manifoldness void of concept. We can wonder at nature, at the manifoldness of its genera and species, in the infinite diversity of its shapes, for wonder is without concept and its object is the irrational. It is allowed to nature, since nature is the self-externality of the concept, to indulge in this diversity, just as spirit, even though it possesses the concept in the shape of the concept, lets itself go into pictorial representation and runs riot in the infinite manifoldness of the latter. The manifold genera and species of nature must not be esteemed to be anything more than arbitrary notions of spirit engaged in pictorial representations. Both indeed show traces and intimations of the concept, but they do not exhibit it in a trustworthy copy, for they are the sides of its free self-externality; the concept is the absolute power precisely because it can let its difference go free in the shape of self-subsistent diversity, external necessity, accidentality, arbitrariness, opinion – all of which, however, must not be taken as anything more than the abstract side of nothingness. (GW 12: 39); 'Thoughts are not coordinated in nature, for conceptlessness holds sway here, and each material point appears to be entirely independent of all the others.' (E §248 Z)

[273] Cf. Martin, "Three Attitudes Towards Nature." Martin here provides a different, though compatible, justification for the need for a philosophical perspective towards nature as a whole. For other approaches to the philosophy of nature from the 'post-Kantian' line, see Rand, "The Importance and Relevance of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Nature.'"; Pinkard, "The Prospects for an Idealist Natural Philosophy."

empirical adequacy rather than imposing the form of the rational, for there is nothing properly rational to be found therein.

The philosophy of nature justifies itself in the determination of organic individuals, which legitimizes thinking to apprehend nature as *idea*.[274] If there was no possibility of thinking of nature as a unity including organic individuals, then there would be no *idea of* nature, as the self-external form of the idea of life. If, on the other hand, there are such forms in nature whose objectivity corresponds to the concept, if there are truly living beings, self-individuated through the concept rather than by a one-sided formal subjectivity, then their categorically adequate account will demand philosophical comprehension. Hegel, in line with everything I have argued above, claims that 'Life is the highest to which nature drives in its determinate being' (E §248 A) and is reported to claim that indeed 'life may only be grasped speculatively, for it is precisely in life that speculation has existence.' (E §337 Z) Now, our thinking of nature necessarily involves our thinking of entities which concretize the form of life. Hegel claims our thinking, when directed towards natural life, 'cannot at the same time avoid witnessing this omnipresence [of the simple in the manifold externality] in the perception of life (…) must therefore grant the actuality of this idea.' (GW 12:181)[275] Thinking, in the observation of natural organism, is demanded to recognize

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[274] Hegel claims there is a 'contradiction' of the idea in nature, insofar as here the idea is 'external to itself': "one side of it [nature] is formed by the conceptually generated necessity of its formations and their rational determination within the organic totality, and the other by their indifferent contingency and indeterminable irregularity" (E §250). The 'contingent' side of nature in its absolute externality (or: the real) is what accounts for the impotence of the concept when it comes to nature, insofar as contingency and irregularity are *constitutive* of its 'real' side, and the 'real' side is likewise not accidental, but one essential aspect of it. Thus, contingency in nature has metaphysical necessity.

[275] Kant seems to argue something similar: that our reflective judgement cannot but determine organisms as *Naturzwecke* 'justifies' (*berechtigt*) our right to extend the idea of a systematic unity to the totality of nature (AA 5: 378–379; AA 5:380-1). See my Vieyra, 'La autorización de la razón teórica y los fines naturales en Kant'. Because it sounds like an empirical claim that could be easily contested by an alternative experience, I have always been suspicious of the form of this claim, and I am unhappy that my own version of the argument for the legitimacy of a philosophy of nature relies on it.

the *actuality* of the *idea* of life. Of course, as with all other conceptual categories, the demand to recognize the concept is not coercive. Thought is free to cling to the determinations of reflection and refuse to grant actuality to the idea of life, once understanding what theoretically accepting the existence of life into one's ontology entails, namely, *purposiveness*. The sheer immediate perception of a cat does not coerce thinking to understand it as a cat, a living being –for the concept does not 'appear' as a reflected determination. But, if we 'naturalize' life and reduce it to the logic of mechanism or chemism, then we do not understand living beings *as* living.[276] Indeed, we could not understand them as unified entities at all, as the principle of their unity is *the concept*.

Once understanding that thinking grants actuality to the idea through the observation of natural living organisms, the next step of the argument requires answering how we can legitimately expand the conceptuality of life from organic entities to the totality of nature. If we grant that there is indeed *life* in nature, then that entails nature is an object for comprehension, not only in organic beings, but *as a whole*. This extension of ideality to the whole of nature might seem unjustified. But it logically follows from what life *constitutively* is. Thus, for the justification of a conceptual cognition of nature as a whole, we need only attend to what life itself logically entails. As we have seen, life constitutively integrates into itself the 'presuppositions' of externality. So, if the aim was to provide a comprehension of the concept, then these presuppositions *must* also be understood through the role they play toward the determination of life: they must be understood as *moments* within the idea's necessary becoming. In the case of nature, the presuppositions are 'other formations of nature' (GW 12:181); insofar as natural life is

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[276] I here follow Thompson, *Life and Action*. Cf. Cooper, "Two Directions for Teleology: Naturalism and Idealism."

exposed to the *externality of existence*, life is '*conditioned* by inorganic nature and its moments as idea are a manifold of actual shapes.' (12:180) Thus, we are justified, by the necessity to understand life as a phenomenon of nature, in a form of conceptual apprehension of nature's different stages as oriented towards (as moments of) the realization of life. And this is precisely what a philosophy of nature means to be and do: neither an a priori deduction of all particular natural formations, nor an iteration in narrative form of the empirical results of the sciences, nor a cognition of nature whose satisfaction is predicated on being an adequate empirical representation of a field of thought-external phenomena. Rather, the philosophy of nature works over the material from the empirical sciences and other representations of nature, to provide a unified conceptual comprehension of nature as the becoming of the actualization of an idea.[277]

The argument thus is: since thinking is demanded to grant the actuality of the idea of *life* in nature, and due to the logical structure of life as constitutively integrating its 'presuppositions' for its objectivity, thinking is justified in conceiving of the whole of nature as unified by being the becoming of an idea, thus legitimizing a philosophical, properly conceptual account of nature as a whole.

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[277] As Rand puts it: 'Hegel's method aims to give the sciences a form of generality that does not exhibit the shortcomings of abstraction, by transforming the "unconceptualized concept" of the understanding into an explicitly "conceptualized" one of reason (…) As a "conceptualizing consideration" of nature, the philosophy of nature deals with "the same universals" produced by natural science, "but for themselves" (E §246); by means of a synthetically oriented thinking-through or *Nachdenken*, rather than an abstractive *Reflektion*, it "translates the universals delivered to it … into the concept" (E §246A).' Rand, "Hegel's Philosophy of Nature", 391. Of course, Hegel is often critical of the results of the sciences, so the integration of their results is not purely passive, indeed, he offers his own 'revisions', often to his defenders' dismay. See Posch, *Hegel and the Sciences*; Ferrini, "From Disparagement To Appreciation"

Problem

Before turning to Cognition, I must acknowledge an important problem for my interpretation. For, if life is idea, and an idea is exhibited as a structure within the element of *self-externality*, then not all actually existing conceptuality depends on the activity of thinking. Hegel explicitly endorses the conceptuality of natural life as compatible with their 'existence': living natures are 'the concretely existing concept' (*der existierende Begriff*). (GW 12:187-8) In natural life, we have entities which are inherently conceptual, and yet, unlike the objectivity of the concept in teleology, these entities do not seem to depend on the activity of thought to be so. If it is the case that not all conceptuality depends on the activity of thought, then the conceptual realist can claim the concept's thought-independence, at least in the case of living organisms. The existence of the concept without thinking, if it holds, scores a point if not for the 'externalist' ('metaphysical', 'essentialist', 'conceptual realist') readers, at least against an 'antirealistic' reading such as mine, where conceptuality cannot be disentangled from thinking. What can I reply to retain the claim of the necessary thought-dependence of the existing concept, despite life's ideality? Do I have to defend the claim that all living beings think, even plants? Or should I grant that life is the *exception* to the rule of the thought-dependency of the concept?

To get out of this conundrum, let us remember how I understand Hegel understands thought: minimally, as the *activity* of determinate negation.[278] Thus, if I could make an argument for life as an activity of determinate negation, I could retain the thought-dependency of the concept. Here is my attempt. Anything that is alive, in the specific manner in which Hegel understands life and thought, expresses the constitutive activity of

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[278] See 2.3 and 3.2.

negation to count as being alive at all. For life contains an *inner contradiction* (GW 12:187): the contradiction expressed in the form of a *lack* or *want,* which is sensibly expressed as *pain*, a mismatch between itself (its aim to self-posit, which is implicit universality) and the given state of affairs. We have encountered this specific logical form before, when understanding the subjective purpose (5.3). As we saw in that section, the beginning of the process of the self-positing of the concept rests on a *lack of conformity*, a mismatch, or contradiction between the self and the state of affairs. Thought overcomes the contradictory state of affairs through its activity of determinate negation. The living, insofar as it lives, it constitutively determines to *overcome* the lack, thereby demonstrating that there is indeed *activity* of determinate negation. Hegel is clear, in its self-feeling, the living being has the *certainty* of the intrinsic *nullity* of the *otherness* confronting it. Its impulse is the need to sublate this otherness and to give itself the truth of this certainty.' (12:187) By 'resolving' to seek food, the animal negates an external state of affairs (it does not *simply* take it, but takes it *as* something: it determinately negates it by determining it as *means*) and thereby reproduces its concept by 'nullifying' the given.[279] Life displays thought as the unthematized *longing* to posit universality through self-identity, which expresses itself in the activities where the living being takes reality *as a* means for itself. Thus, in a living being, insofar as life is activity, the concept depends on the activity of negation, that being alive involves, no matter how 'blindly', taking externality as an untrue being, thus taking something *as* something, thought. The concept of life in the living being cannot sustain

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[279] Cf. Hegel, *Lectures on Logic, Berlin, 1831*, 221: 'Even the animals consume grass with the gut feeling that in the grass they chew there is nothing fixed or independent standing over against them. The animals themselves thus posit this independence of the grass as something null and void.'

itself unless life displays the impulse to negate the given, and such an impulse and its overcoming in the resolution of being active is an expression of thought.

Thus, if this defense holds, to be alive is a thinking activity. This conclusion might appear in tension with Hegel's repeated emphasis that *thinking* is what distinguishes human beings from animals. Thinking is supposed to be *what we do*, what characterizes *Geist* and establishes the need to conceptually separate nature and spirit. Indeed, as Hegel makes clear: 'Life, or organic nature, is the stage of nature where the concept comes on the scene, but as a *blind concept that does not comprehend itsel*f, that is, is *not thought*; only as self-aware and as thought does it [life] belongs to spirit.'[280] (GW 12:20, my emphasis). I think these two positions can be made compatible. Other living beings can inhabit thought, live in the blindness of the concept, without the capacity to recognize the concept's activity therein. The capacity to recognize thinking as thinking is the self-conscious form of thought constitutive of *Geist*. Insofar as mind's thinking involves this conceptual possibility of self-recognition (self-consciousness, the identification of the activity of the concept in the form of the I), we can say only beings who can recognize themselves as thinking and be attributed thought in the *emphatic sense*, in the sense Hegel describes as *thinking proper*. And yet, beings who think without the possibility of recognizing themselves as thinking could be said to still 'activate', 'move within' or even 'inhabit' thought-determinations in virtue of which their practical activity, as purposive movement, is possible.

If my argument works, as life is a form of thought, accepting that natural life is 'the concretely existing concept' does not entail that concepts can exist without thinking. Of course, the thinking necessarily at play for the concept to exist as mere life is blind and

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[280] ‚Das Leben oder die organische Natur ist diese Stoffe der Natur, auf welcher der Begriff hervortritt; aber als blinder, sich selbst nicht fassender d. h. nicht denkender Begriff; als solcher kommt er nur dem *Geist*e zu.'

relatively unfree: insofar as life is not aware of itself as concept, in non-spiritual life the concept, although there, is unthematized: life is *in itself* thought, but not free thinking, thinking *for itself*.[281] This conclusion matches well with Hegel's approving quote of Schelling, describing nature as 'petrified intelligence' (E §247 Z), as with the claims which might suggest intuition (*Anschauung*) is the most rudimentary mode of thought, one which should be present in infants and animals. As the concept indeed presents itself in nature as life, the loss of conceptual recognition, which only spirit achieves, would not entail the loss of natural life as 'the concretely existing concept.' But if, as Hegel holds, life is a speculative existence, it would entail the loss of the capacity to recognize it as such.

6.4. Cognition

If cognition and will were not forms of the idea, then a purposive apprehension of theoretical science or a purposive apprehension of practical reality ('objective spirit') would be justified. If neither were justified, then a philosophy of finite spirit would be unjustified. Cognition has the purpose of universality in the shapes of the theoretical and the practical drive, or the 'True' and the 'Good'. In this section, I provide an account of how cognition can be idea, as a self-corresponding category, thus inherently true, thus demanding, for its categorically adequate cognition, a conceptual comprehension. If this defense holds, then a philosophy of finite spirit is justified.

First, a point on the distinction between life and cognition. It is correct that, if cognition is inherently true, cognition expresses the *same underlying logical form as life*:

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[281] Cf. E §552 Z: 'The content of natural things does not acquire the form of universality and essentiality through itself, and their individuality is not itself the form; only subjective thinking is the *form* for itself and in philosophy gives that universal content an existence for itself.'

realized purposiveness. Thus, cognition (as the logical form of spirit) does not involve a novel form of purposiveness, a form of purposiveness discontinuous with that exhibited in life. These are both expressions of realized purpose. But now the purpose being realized, unlike in life, knows purpose as what was *implicit* in the life process: universality. While life indeed realized universality through the becoming of its objectivity, life does so in a manner such that the individualities constituting the *Gattung's* objectivity *cannot identify universality as such* –they 'have it' in the form of the drive towards the positing of self-unity, but they cannot identify universality *for what it is*. In life as the immediate form of the idea, the universal indeed has a hold on the movements of the individuals, and the individuals indeed always already realize the universal through their constitutive activities. But, in cognition, the form of realized purposiveness has 'liberated' itself from the form of having a mere hold, and can thus identify and *posit* that which was implicit in life: that the aim is the realization of a *universal* purpose.

By the idea of cognition, Hegel understands the processes where *universality* is the element in which the idea exists concretely (Cf. E §223), but as 'initially *presupposing itself as the external universe.*' (E §223)[282] The idea of cognition thus involves a necessary *internal distinction*: that the universal moment takes itself as 'keep[ing] itself in this identical universality', while it posits the external world as 'a totality away from itself' and

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[282] The division in the greater Logic differs from that of the Encyclopedia Logic. In the greater Logic:
Die Idee des Erkennens
A. Die Idee desWahren
a. Das analytische Erkennen .
b. Das synthetische Erkennen
1. Die Definition .
2. Die Eintheilung
3. Der Lehrsatz .
B. Die Idee des Guten.
In the *Encyclopedia*, we have: Knowing [*das Erkennen*]; a) knowing; b) willing.

thus takes its own activity as a *striving* to self-posit in the presupposed externality. (E §223) The drive to self-posit has two aspects: the theoretical (subjectivity seeks the True) and the practical (subjectivity seeks to determine the world in accordance with the Good). In line with this characterization, I here focus on an account of the Cognition chapter of the idea as thought's comprehension of what it was *really* doing ('the truth of…') when engaging with its presupposed other in a thinking manner through both theoretical and practical activities as ruled by their true purpose: truth and goodness. What thought was *really* doing was introducing its own formative order into the real (via theoretical cognition and normative practices), enlivened by thought's inner drive for self-correspondence.[283]

I now provide my account cognition's form of realized purposiveness. As we saw, there is an internal division presupposed in both cognition and willing. The internal division in cognition as finite knowing rests in taking the object of cognition as *external to* cognition's own activity, as the standard for its truth. It understands truth to be that which obtains when correctly mapping the objective structure of a thought-external reality. This attitude is natural for finite cognizing: it aims to make its subjective representations conform to a standard it assumes belongs to reality itself. Similarly, yet reversely, the inner division in willing as the drive to the good is that the world is not as it *ought* to be, and must determine the world that it finds in accordance with its inner standard. (Cf. E §233)

But, if this were all there was to cognition, the search and drive to adequate itself to its other, or the other to itself, then it could not be realized purpose. If the truth of the idea

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[283] The first part of the section on Cognition, insofar as it exposes finite cognition's limitation to reconcile itself with its purpose, likewise provides an immanent critique of finite theoretical cognition: it shows finite cognition as a necessary moment, categorially adequate for finite subject matters, yet categorially inadequate for the purposes of the kind of truth we care about in philosophy, art, religion. By thus providing finite cognition's immanent critique, Hegel articulates the proper character of absolute cognition. For two accounts on finite cognition in the Idea, see Zambrana, *Hegel's Theory of Intelligibility*, 118; Koch, *Denken in Zwecken*, ch. 7.1. Koch provides a critique of Zambrana's 'critical' or negative reading of finite cognition.

of cognition were the truth as understood from the perspective of the finite standpoint of

theoretical cognition and practical normativity, then the truth of the idea would be relegated

to an *ought*. In the first-order perspective, the 'sublating' of the 'one-sidedness of

subjectivity together with the one-sidedness of objectivity' is taking place 'only *in itself*',

not in and *for* itself, or with awareness of what is going on in truth. (E §225) This aspect

that separates what cognition takes itself to be doing, versus what is doing *in its truth*,

reveals that the search, as what it *takes itself to be*, is untrue. Insofar as a scientific theory,

say, takes itself to be reflecting the mind-independent structure of nature, rather than

introducing, expanding, and testing the conditions for the intelligibility of natural

phenomena through a mixture of pure thinking and experimental observation and

representation, it sees truth as the end-goal of science, as that which we will *hopefully*

possess once every natural phenomenon is explainable within a grand unified theory, the

treasure at 'the end of the scientific rainbow'.[284] The true gets relegated to a beyond, an

ought, with only the logically unjustified *aspiration* of self-correspondence.[285] Similarly

with the Good. From the first-order perspective, the Good will be achieved if or when a

specific (first-order) moral order is conclusively realized in the world, say when everyone

becomes a consequentialist, or when there is universal peace, or when there is global

communism or whichever determinate moral absolute the finite perspective claims to be

enlightened by. From the finite perspective, the practical idea does not see that the moral

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[284] van Fraassen, *The Empirical Stance (the Terry Lectures)*, 212.

[285] To supplement my objection against 'externalist' readings of the objectivity of the concept in chapter 5, the limitations of the model of objectivity presupposed by externalist readings fall in line with finite cognition which, although valid and necessary for the first-order realization of purpose, is an inadequate model for the objectivity proper of absolute cognition. See Vieyra, 'Static objectivity and finite cognition in Hegel'.

articulation of the world through practical activities is itself the achievement of the infinite purpose of the Good.[286]

But, from the second-order perspective of the idea, we see that theoretical cognition *is true* in virtue of being the process of the realization of the infinite end of truth. The need to differentiate perspectives is for the sake of understanding the sense of the idea of cognition's inherent truth as realized purposiveness. Within the first-order standpoint of finite cognition, thought does not transparently see that what is doing is *realizing* an infinite purpose (the universality which, in its explicit mode, was missing in life, is now posited explicitly as the ideas of True and the Good). As we understand Truth to be the realized purposiveness of the idea, cognition can only be true insofar as it can be seen from the perspective where it is a self-realizing purpose: the processes of the self-realization of the True and the Good. If this analysis is sound, then it is clear how cognition is only inherently true in a second-order sense: as the activity that, by taking itself to be knowing, through the actual introduction of intelligibility into the real which the first-order standpoint takes as its external standard for adequacy, realizes the infinite purpose of knowing. And the same is the case also with the practical idea, willing. No 'first-order' theory of morality or politics is True. What is true is that thought realizes the infinite purpose of the Good by actually

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[286] A more concrete version of this same transition happens in the *Encyclopedia* Philosophy of *Geist*, from objective to absolute spirit, E §552. In the Remark, we read how Hegel understands this transition vis-à-vis Kant's assumption of God as a necessary postulate for practical reason: 'Kant has on the whole adopted the most correct starting point, in so far as he regards belief in God as emerging from *practical reason*. For a starting point implicitly contains the *content* or material which makes up the content of the concept of God. But the genuine concrete material is neither *being* (as in the cosmological proof) nor merely *purposive activity* (as in the physicotheological proof) but the *mind*, whose absolute determination is efficacious reason, i.e. the self-determining and self-realizing concept itself- freedom. That the elevation of subjective mind to God occurring in this determination is in Kant's exposition again reduced to a *postulate*, to a mere *ought*, is the perversity discussed earlier, the immediate restoration of finitude's opposition, in whose sublation to truth this elevation itself consists, as true and valid.' Hegel is explicit in that the '*mediation*' that enables this transition was originally 'abstract in its logical form, but it has now [in the passage from objective to absolute spirit] acquired its most concrete meaning.' See 2.4.

taking itself, first-orderly, to be *doing* what is right, to introduce into reality the idea that it

is not how it *ought* to be, what it is *in truth* doing (from our second-order perspective

identifying realized purposiveness) is introducing ethical content into the fabric of the real.

Thus, by perpetuating and expanding the ethical substance, predicated on what thought

takes to be right, the practical idea *is* the self-realized purpose of the Good.

From the perspective of the idea, the truth of both activities, insofar as they are the

activities they claim to be, is not conditioned by the specific first-order content of what

finite cognition assumes as its standard. But detaching the Truth of the idea of cognition

from any determinate theoretical or moral content should strike us as problematic. It seems

to open an avenue for historical relativism and other kinds of purported philosophical

dangers, if the claim of the unconditional Truth of the idea entails that (for example) a

genocidal practice which its practitioners took to be the realization of the Good is in fact

constitutive or essential to the realization of the Good, insofar as it participates in the

process of the articulation of the ethical order of reality in spirit. But we would not want to

say that genocidal practices are a 'moment' within the idea whose necessity will be

retroactively exhibited through some Whiggish rational reconstruction,[287] but that they are

False, while non-genocidal practices are True. We want to say not only that Newtonian

mechanics is a moment within the inherently true becoming of cognition, but that it is a

False theory, and contemporary quantum physics is (closer to) Truth.

If claiming the specific determinate first-order content of a scientific or normative

social theory is True in Hegel's sense, the sense which is 'highest', which we can now

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[287] I take the terminology from Brandom, who does endorse the Whiggish rational reconstruction as a model for Hegelian recollection. Cf. Brandom, *A Spirit of Trust*, 102; 438; 442; 576. For problematization, see my general conclusion.

come to see as the self-correspondence proper to *realized purposiveness*, if that is what we want, then Hegel will not provide.[288] The best we can do to ameliorate the worries emerging from such a standpoint (as far as I can tell) is to appeal to the idea's temporal self-articulation as involving a learning process where the mistakenness of past positions can be seen and retroactively articulated *as mistakes*. The possibility for normativity emerging through the becoming of the idea holds, since the process of cognition entails the historical emergence of more articulated standards for cognition's theoretical and practical adequacy. That is: the process which is science (or any objective theorizing about reality, in the theoretical idea) does not simply involve the naïve activity of postulating one alternative theory after another. Rather, it necessarily always rearticulates, questions, and improves the very standards for what is to count as 'correct', such that it can comprehend the relative untruth of past theories, while still comprehending why past theorists could coherently assume them as adequate and correct. Insofar as this is part of the scientific endeavor itself as the (implicit) realization of the infinite purpose of the True, then the truth of the theoretical idea is dependent on the actual progressive character of science.

And, again, something similar occurs when it comes to the Good. The articulation of moral and political reasons as *better than* others involves the process of understanding the source of worse reasons, seeing where they come from, and in this way being able to exhibit their limitations. Insofar as the limitations are shown, the practical idea is arriving at the values which best satisfy the form of reason. For it is the expression of thoughts which can comprehend their own claim to validity, rather than taking their validity for granted or,

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[288] I dedicated my first thesis to arguing the opposite of this claim. See Vieyra, *La ontología de la situación falsa: actualidad y normatividad en Hegel*. For an interpretation locating Hegel's genuine critical theory not in his *Philosophy of right*, but in the 'metaphysics' at play within the Logic, and specifically the Doctrine of Essence, see Abazari, *Hegel's Ontology of Power*.

even worse, as some versions of contemporary metaethical realism would have it, arbitrarily postulating some correspondence with a metaphysical realm of Moral Facts or 'normative properties' to justify morality's claim to objectivity. From the perspective here defended, it is not because it is a Metaphysical Fact about reality that suffering is bad (that suffering has the inherent property of badness, or whatever) *that* we have a moral obligation not to hurt sentient beings. There are no 'moral facts' 'built into' the structure of the real. And we do not need them to grant that there are better moral or ethical positions than others.[289] That which is better is simply that for which better reasons have been articulated, as deflationary as this might sound. The advancing articulation of better reasons for guiding individual and social practices is itself realizing the true purpose of the good, the idea of the Good itself.

But if the truth of cognition can only be identified from a higher perspective, then there is a higher perspective.[290] If indeed we are thinking the theoretical and the practical idea as what they are 'in truth', rather than as what theoretical and practical (finite) cognition takes itself to be, then thinking is taking a perspective from which it identifies reason in the spiritual fabric of the world where other perspectives might see an unachieved end, a mere '*synthesis of striving*' (GW 12:236). This new form of thinking identifies what

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[289] A pertinent quote I like: 'Why care about objective value or ethical reality? The sanction is that if you do not, your inner states will fail to deserve folk theoretical names. Not a threat that will strike terror into the hearts of the wicked! But who ever thought that philosophy could replace the hangman?', David Lewis cited in Enoch, 'Agency, Shmagency: Why Normativity Won't Come from What Is Constitutive of Action.', 169.

[290] Maraguat has what one might call a 'corrective' reading of the transition between cognition and absolute idea: for him, reaching the perspective of the absolute idea involves 'correcting' a self-conception which was mistaken within finite cognition, as, it seems to me, a necessary condition for the achievement of purpose (Cf. *True Purposes in Hegel's Logic,* 216-7). I disagree, for two reasons: (i) if the idea is True, and Cognition is idea, then this suggests there would be nothing to correct: once truth is reached, it does not come in 'degrees'. (ii) finite cognition is a necessary moment for the existence of the True and the Good, even within the one-sidedness which characterizes what individuals take themselves to be doing when pursuing the True and the Good. See Vieyra, 'Static objectivity and finite cognition in Hegel'. It is necessary, in my view, that individuals take themselves to be doing something which from the perspective of the absolute idea is untrue, for there to be Truth at all. This argument might come off as patronizing, but I think it is accurate.

is infinite (realized purposiveness) in the finite. It does so through a transition equivalent, perhaps even logically identical (Cf. 12:232), to the transition away from Objectivity in Realized Purpose spelled out in chapter 5. This is the transition to the absolute idea: the 'positing of the *implicit* identity of the objective concept and the immediate actuality.' (12:235)

It goes as follows. Once thought has realized that the realizability of purpose is itself the realized purpose in that the conditioning externality has been *nullified* by a resolve of thought, it has achieved the unconditional standpoint of the absolute idea.[291] The 'presupposition' burdening both theoretical and practical ideas, namely that there was an externality which substantially opposed them and that made the success of their endeavor conditional upon determinate particular results being reflected in actuality (in the theoretical case, empirical adequacy, 'saving the phenomena', successful calculation, in the practical case, adequation to particular subjective normative standards), has been sublated. As we know, this final sublation occurs through thinking. Thinking can think that the true purpose of the True and the Good is to realize the True and the Good, and, in the achievement of the thinking of the true purpose of cognition, the presupposition that the True and the Good are not always already realized through their being realized in our theoretical and moral practices 'falls away'. Hegel claims: 'As the external actuality is altered by the activity of the objective concept and its determination is consequently sublated, the merely apparent reality, the external determinability and worthlessness [*äusserliche Bestimmbarkeit und Nichtigkeit*], are by that very fact removed from it and it is

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[291] Again, in the passage from objective to absolute spirit, Hegel highlights the importance of *negation*: E §552 Z: 'the moment of *negation* deserves special attention, since it is through negation that the essential content of the starting point is purged of its finitude and in this way emerges freely.'

thereby *posited* as having existence in and for itself [*an und für sich seyend*].' (GW 12:235)
In that (i) we actualize 'infinite' purposiveness in the world by modifying the originally
indifferent externality by introducing conceptual order through purposive activities, and (ii)
we understand *that* activity as what it is, the introduction of subjectivity into 'external
actuality', we can further think that (iii) 'the previously discovered reality is at the same
time determined as the realized absolute purpose' which is 'no longer an object of
investigation, a merely objective world without the subjectivity of the concept, but as an
objective world whose inner ground and actual subsistence is rather the concept.'
(12:235)[292] The realization of what is implied by the *alteration* of external actuality by the
activity of the 'objective concept' leads to the sublation of its status as having a
determinateness hostile to the concept.

Claiming to achieve a logical standpoint (the inherently true category) from which
the concept is the 'inner ground' of the objective world is yet another scary thought. Is the
suggestion that we ultimately justify a perspective from which no matter how reality looks
like, no matter how morally or intellectually flawed, insofar as there are purposive practices
which have shaped the real under some vague ideal notions of the True and the Good,
reality can always already be recognized as *rational*, as *true*? I hope not. At best, we are
justifying a perspective (or better: articulating a conceptual category) that can identify an
idea as being the immaterial sustaining, self-articulating ground of determinate phenomena:
the phenomena of nature as grounded on the idea of life, the phenomena of (finite)
cognition as grounded on the idea of the True, the phenomena of morality and right as

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[292] 'die vorgefundene Wirklichkeit ist zugleich als der ausgeführte absolute Zweck bestimmt, aber nicht wie im
suchenden Erkennen, bloß als objective Welt ohne die Subjectivität des Begriffes, sondern als objective Welt,
deren innerer Grund und wirkliches Bestehen der Begriff ist. Diß ist die absolute Idee.'

grounded on the idea of the Good. What sustains the intelligibility of these phenomena *as what they are* is nothing that 'appears', but the manner of how the idea appears is part of its process of self-determination, if we follow (my) Hegel. Only that which is inherently conceptual can be conceptualized, which is why, again, there cannot be a conceptual comprehension of *all things*, as not all things are inherently rational.[293] But the ideas of life and cognition are, insofar as these are the implicit realization of an infinite purpose. Insofar as these phenomena are the intelligible expression of an idea, which is to be *demonstrated* through a philosophy of reality, they can be cognized based on their concept. In this manner, they can be *comprehended* because they are *rational,* thinking recognizes *itself,* its own active principle*,* therein. We will abandon Hegel to question the legitimacy of this move in the general conclusion. For now, I shall proceed to finish my dissertation argument.

I finish my dissertation argument with the final step: how the absolute idea justifies philosophy itself, as the form for the conceptual comprehension of thought and reality.

6.5. The absolute idea

If the absolute, which Hegel here takes to be the *logical* itself (Cf. E §236; GW 12:237), were not idea, then the conceptual apprehension of any possible object in the real, any

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[293] This point is important, for Hegel is not claiming 'everything' can be rationally apprehended –only that which is constitutively rational. Thus, claims such as 'The absolute Idea is the method *for everything*, and there is no object or subject matter that is, in principle, outside method's grasp.' (Ng, *Hegel's concept of life*, 289) might be misleading if not further qualified, and make it appear as if the method can 'explain everything', including contingent phenomena, as goes the (in)famous objection to idealist philosophies of nature as attempting to deduce Herr Krug's pen. There is a sense in which we could defend the claim that nothing is 'outside' the method's grasp, not because everything is inherently rational (as we have seen, nature is constitutively *not* rational), but insofar as even irrational things can be articulated as necessary untrue moments within that which is inherently rational.

concrete idea to be found therein, would be unjustified. If the conceptual apprehension of anything itself was unjustified, so would any philosophy whatsoever, insofar as philosophy is cognition from the concept. As we can see, all prior justifications implicitly stand or fall with the justification of the absolute idea, the idea in its *pure logical element*: if the conceptual form of cognition which apprehends the inherent truth (shown in the last two sections) in life and spirit was not justified, then the truth of these subject matters could also not be apprehended. For there would be no valid, categorically adequate framework to identify them as realized purposes. Insofar as they cannot be apprehended as realized purposes, they are not intelligible as *true*. And if they are not intelligible as true, yet if being true (as forms of self-adequacy as realized purposiveness which they, within their resources, cannot thematize) is their concept, then they cannot be intelligible *as what they are in truth*. For the concept does not let itself appear *as concept* in any other way than through comprehension. Thus, if the comprehending mode of thinking is unjustified, there is no such thing as Truth, truth 'in the highest sense' –the sense which allows us to identify nature and spirit as self-realizing purposes. Lacking such a justification, the finite perspective of finite cognition would be the last word, for there would be no perspective from which to recognize that the very constitution of the world through the striving towards the True and the Good is *already* the realization of the infinite purposes of the True and the Good.

Let us first focus on how the absolute idea is a self-corresponding concept, thus inherently true. Hegel says the absolute idea 'has *its own* objectivity for its subject matter.' (GW 12:236) Life, too, has its objectivity as subject matter, for to sustain itself as life, life makes its objectivity the means for its concept. The difference rests in the reflective character of the absolute idea as '*self-knowing truth*.' (12:236) Now, Hegel claims the

absolute idea is 'the idea thinking itself, and here, indeed, *as* thinking, as the *logical* idea.'

(12:236) So, the absolute idea is the logical idea itself. I argued for two necessary features

of the logical method in chapter 3, as emerging from the immanence requirement of

categorical derivation and evaluation. The first is *presuppositionlessness*: renouncing a

sphere of validity for thinking lying outside thinking itself, in virtue of which the categories

are said to obtain determinacy or legitimacy. The second is the *mirror thesis*, that the

logical movement must mirror how thinking *actually* develops through determinate

negation, or the *dialectical,* as the nature of thinking's developmental movement. Now we

can briefly reconstruct, in narrative form, what thinking did in the Logic, to understand the

form of self-correspondence proper to the logical idea.

Humanly speaking (or, with Hegel, 'historically' speaking, Cf. GW 12:21-22), first

we inhabit reality through thinking.[294] The thinking of the real introduces an order of

thought determinations which are immediate in their 'pre-reflective' or even 'unconscious'

character (what Hegel refers to as 'natural logic', *natürliche Logik*, 21:15[295]); the kind of

judgement which is at stake in their production, the judgement of existence, first imparts

determinacy by the emptiness of its subject, and the concretization of intelligibility through

acts of predication.[296] Second, we (thinking) achieve the thought of ourselves *as* thinking

the real. By achieving the thought of thinking the real, we achieve the thought of a

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[294] For more textual support for my reconstruction, see E §§10-14.

[295] 'The use of thought determinations that we earlier called "natural logic" is unconscious [*bewußtlos*]'

[296] Cf. GW 12:252: 'In the sphere of being, at the beginning of its content, its concept appears as a knowledge external to that content in subjective reflection.' Cf. 21:10-11: '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.'

separation between ourselves and the real which is now taken to be the 'content' of thought.

The determinations produced from this standpoint are *reflective* determinations:

determinations that take themselves to be finding substantial essence in that which appears.

Then we see thought as the mirror representation of the real, and the real as that which

gives thought its content. (This is the perspective of the opposition of consciousness, and a

presupposition for the form of finite cognition characteristic of the standpoint proper to

philosophies of reflection, such as empiricism and, to a certain extent, Kant's

transcendental idealism). Third, as exposed in my account of the objectivity of the concept

in chapter 4, we achieve the thought that the thought of a separation between ourselves and

the real has been drawn by thought itself. So what thought was thinking when it took itself

to be thinking the real were thought determinations which thinking thought were external to

its activity. Now, at this point, thinking understands that when it thinks it thinks its object,

it thinks that which in fact its own activity has generated.[297] Now that thinking has

understood that the determinations it thought as 'out there' are the thought-determinations

produced by its own activity when taking itself to be in opposition to its object, it can now

examine those thought-determinations as these occurred at the pre-reflective or 'natural'

level (that is, at the level of thinking where thinking did not think of itself as thinking), at

the reflective level (where thinking understood itself as finding essence through its

opposite), and how these thought-determinations themselves lead to the standpoint where

thinking achieves a thought of itself as the positing source of such determinations and their

own claim to universality. The reconstruction of the form-determinations of pure thinking

in accordance with their necessary progression (due to the twofold manner how the

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[297] As Martin emphasizes ("From Logic to Nature", *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*.), that we cannot think the real *as such*, that the real is not constituted by thinking, does not entail that the real is unintelligible.

immanence requirement becomes fulfilled) is the logical method. From the standpoint that identifies being and essence as thinking, thinking can now retrace its steps, and reconstruct (1) the determinations it thought when thinking took itself to think being; (2) the determinations it thought after it realized it was thinking, and thus created a separation between thought and its object; (3) the determinations it thought after it realized that what it took itself to be thinking when it thought that which it took to be thought-external was in fact the very first moment of thinking. In other words, thinking first thinks, then it thinks it thinks, then it can think its thinking *as* thinking, and reconstruct prior standpoints from the perspective of their place within the whole of its achievements. This account makes explicit the perspective from which these thought-determinations can be *retroactively grounded*: the analytic moment where only at the end can we understand what was *really* going on, implicitly, when thinking thought of itself as being, essence, and concept.[298]

But the reconstruction of the pure forms of thinking in their necessary development as according to the two requirements for logical immanence, leads thinking to take a stand on itself. For thinking not only produced the thought-determinations ('generated' a reality 'out of itself'), but those thought-determinations entailed a logical presupposition of the standard of the adequacy of their cognition, the very nature of the relation between thought and that which it took as its other. In being, the standard was so immediate (abstract) that thinking did not take itself as thinking, for it had not achieved the thought of itself *as thought*. Thinking thought of itself as being. In essence, after thinking arrives at the point of a separation between essence and appearance, it takes the standard to be *outside itself*, so it takes its activity to be successful (though ultimately self-sublating) through the production

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[298] The retroactive grounding moment was anticipated in 3.4.

of thought-determinations meant to reflect thought's substantial target. Now, in the concept as the absolute idea, thinking can apprehend what it was *in fact* doing when it took itself to be an immediate apprehension, or a mediated apprehension of an 'essence' behind appearance: it was, in fact, generating possibilities of intelligibility. All those possibilities carried the burden that they were not transparently self-aware of what they were doing when they were generating determinacy, nor were they aware of the necessity of their subordinate place within the logical evolution of thinking. In the concept, thinking thinks itself not as something else, but *as thinking*: as being and essence's '*unconditional foundation*'. (GW 12:24) When thinking thinks itself as thinking, it cannot appeal to a source for a standard for the truth of its cognition, which is 'out there', for it has seen that anything it can appeal to as its truth-maker is *a thought*. So, thinking restores the positive moment which it had in its first immediacy (being), to be the certainty of itself, but now with the self-determined mediation of recognizing the standard to lie on *thinking*. 'In this turning point of the method, the course of cognition returns at the same time back into itself.' (12:247)

The thinking of thinking as thinking is identical with itself: it has sublated the distinction between itself and its subject matter.[299] There is no further thought that thinking could have beyond the self-awareness of thinking thinking, that is, understanding all of its prior moments as necessary forms thinking had to assume to arrive at the thought that identifies those shapes as forms of *abstract* thinking –untrue thinking, insofar as thinking did not see itself as thinking (in being) or as thinking *thinking* (in essence). (Cf. GW

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[299] Cf. GW 12:252-3: 'The idea is itself the pure concept that has itself as its subject matter and which, as it runs itself as subject matter through the totality of its determinations, builds itself up to the entirety of its reality, to the system of science, and concludes by apprehending this conceptual comprehension of itself, hence by sublating its position as content and subject matter and cognizing the concept of science.'

12:248) Abstract thinking, we know, is the form of thinking that extracts a moment of thought and dogmatically clings to this moment as true, without the recognition of the self-determining whole as the source of the possibility of the moment's own stability. Only when thinking sees itself not as *mere* thinking (the thinking *of* something which is not itself a thought, the standpoint which thinking had at the beginning of the Subjective Logic, as we saw in chapter 4), but as thinking thinking, does thinking arrive at its proper self-correspondence: the thinking of thinking *as* thinking.

From the perspective of the logical idea, thinking cannot think of itself as doing anything but thinking, for the thinkability of any other form of possible apprehension is predicated upon the formal possibilities of thought. Let me defend this claim by, hypothetically and for the sake of the argument, considering a thinking that has understood all determinacies to be the product of thinking, wanted to think a further thought, a further thought from which it could overcome the perspective that when it thinks, it always thinks thought. Thinking no longer wants to think itself, but wants to think *something else*: thinking wants to think its way out of thinking of itself as always-already inhabiting thought-determinations which have their source in its own pure activity. But anything else that thinking thinks, now that it sees all its determining activity as thinking thinking, is *a further thought*. Maybe thinking thinks itself as not thinking thinking, as directly *grasping* thought-external content. But thinking cannot go back to that view of its activity: the moment thinking thinks *that* is what is doing, the thought of its activity *as* grasping thought-external content, then it is a thought, so thinking, once more, thinks itself.

Rather than trying to fool itself out of thinking that that which it does when it engages with determinacy is thinking, thinking can try to *stop* thinking: to think its way out of thought. Maybe thinking longs for the (retroactively naïve) position of thought as being,

when it took itself as simply *revealing what is*, as standing in some pre-theoretical scene of the disclosure of being.[300] Thinking longs not to identify its indwelling activity in all things determinate, and to simply *be open to* the things, to release itself from the burden of thinking that every apprehension of the things is always already mediated by itself and its parasitic thought-determinations. So, thinking tries to think its way out of thinking. But thinking's attempt to think its way out of thinking is inevitably disappointed. The moment thinking thinks that it has thought its way out of thinking, that it is now back to *being*, this is a further thought, the thinking of itself *as* no longer thinking. Of course, one is free to think of oneself *as* not thinking (indeed, one is free to think *anything*, that is part of the beauty of thinking's unconditionality!). Alternatively, one is free to find ways to *coerce* one's way out of thinking. Indeed, one is free to swim in ice-cold water to stop the thoughts. One is free to consume hallucinogenic mushrooms and roam in the wild to try to 'experience' its way out of thinking. One is free to drill one's head out of thinking. But one cannot think one's way out of thinking.

If this makes sense, the thinking of thinking *as* thinking is the final thought, the thought beyond which there is nothing further to think. Any thinking that does not take itself as thinking thinking thinking is therefore, from the standpoint of the absolute idea, an *abstract*, untrue, finite standpoint: it is a retrogression to a form of thinking that does not understand itself, or longs for a view of itself that is neither sustainable nor (arguably) worthy. In this line, I posit:

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[300] As the poet puts it: 'To not have learned from birth to attach predetermined meanings to all these things. To be able to see them in their natural self-expression, irrespective of the expressions that have been imposed on them.(…) To see the policeman as God sees him. To notice everything for the first time, not as apocalyptic revelations of Life's Mystery, but as direct manifestations of Reality.' Pessoa, *Book of disquiet*, 601.

The absolute's idea form of self-correspondence, thus realized purpose, thus

inherent truth, is thinking thinking thinking (TTT).

So far, so good: the absolute idea has an 'absolute' self-correspondence as it is the pure

form of thinking thinking itself. In turn, this form of self-correspondence grounds all other

forms of the idea, in their capacity of being possibly thought of as self-corresponding. Now,

to the final question (of this section, at least). How does the self-correspondence of the

absolute idea as thinking thinking thinking 'ground' the philosophical method for

'absolute' cognition?

At this point in my exposition, the answer should be relatively straightforward. If

there were no categorically adequate manner of thinking life and spirit as true, then these

would not be exhibited as true, even though we have seen they are, in their logical core,

inherently true as forms of realized purposiveness. The capacity to identify them as realized

purposiveness has implicitly depended on the truth of the absolute idea as TTT: for if

thinking could not think itself as thinking thinking, it could not recognize itself in the

thinking of that which is constituted and enlivened by the conceptual element.[301] If thought

could not see the productivity of the concept in the realized purposivenesses of life and

cognition, then life and cognition could not be rendered in accordance with the demands of

their concept. It then turns out that what makes any determinate content possible to be

rendered as true is *pure form*: *that* we have arrived at a concept (the logical idea) that

makes that which is true intelligible as true, as realized purpose. The pure idea articulates

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[301] See chapter 3.

the pure form of truth. Consequently, the Logic articulates that which will make any real forms of realized purposiveness comprehensible as true, as inherently rational.

The primacy of the absolute idea entails a novel form of epistemic satisfaction: one which does not presuppose a thought-external truth maker, or a correspondence with presupposed self-sufficient content. Rather, that thought that recognizes itself as thinking *is* the truth-maker, as evident from Hegel's claim that 'all otherwise determined content has its truth in form alone.' (GW 12:236) If the truth of any content whatsoever depends on pure form *alone*, truth, as the philosophical form of epistemic satisfaction, is a matter of *method*: the method which is categorically adequate for the expression of content which is inherently true *in the form* of inherent truth.

The form of epistemic satisfaction characterized by the method itself being the truth-maker of the cognition, rather than a purported correspondence with a transcendent object, is what characterizes *absolute*, in contrast to *finite*, cognition.[302] The key for understanding this form of cognition is that, in contrast to the correctness view of truth, in speculative cognition we do not presuppose a truth that subsists as true independently of the process of being identified as such through the pure form. Rather, the articulating of realized purposiveness through the categorically adequate form of the inherently true *is* the truth-maker: pure form, method, is that through which the inherent truth of that which is inherently true is exposed following its inherently true demands. Thus, the absolute idea

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[302] Again, following Werner, "Hegel's Dialectical Method" Also Wolff, "Science of Logic," 96: 'Hegel's peculiar use of the adjective 'speculative' becomes intelligible only now, at the end of the science of logic. Throughout the course of the philosophical tradition before him this word was used as a synonym for 'theoretical' and as a designation for the 'non-practical'. Hegel, however, uses it to name a third kind of cognition in which both the theoretical and the practical are contained as moments. Hegel's characterization of his logic as 'speculative science' (Enc §9R; WL GW 21:7, WL GW 11:7) is due to the circumstance that, in his view, what is absolutely true is not accessible through cognition that is merely theoretical or merely practical. At the same time, Hegel also uses this characterization to highlight the relevance of this science for both theoretical and practical cognition.'

has primacy over the other forms of the idea, since, as pure method, the other forms of the idea could not be recognized as inherently true without an adequate category, the philosophical method itself. The form of the absolute idea's primacy over life and cognition mirrors the sense of primacy the Logic has over the philosophies of the real. The Logic provides the pure method for the recognition of the idea in both nature and spirit –in the first as *life*, in the second as *cognition.*

In the Absolute Idea, Hegel goes on to explain in further detail the speculative method as the pure idea, which is then applied to the philosophical cognition of nature and spirit. We are familiar with the method, as it has been exhibited by the Logic itself, which follows the speculative order of the concept: to begin with the universal or abstract concept, and understand the whole as an 'enrichment' proceeding from the '*necessity*' of the concept, to advance by determinate negation (the *dialectical* moment), such that the advancement is not simply an abandoning of the indeterminate beginning with the abstract concept, but likewise '*getting back closer* to it', as the method entails the '*retrogressive grounding* of the beginning [the analytic moment] and the *progressive further determination* of it [the synthetic moment]' such that at the end, with the fulfilled account of the idea, these two appear as identical. (GW 12:251) Following the method of comprehending nature and spirit under the *concept* of nature and spirit is how these can display *realized purposiveness*, rather than being mere teleological objects, as these matters are comprehended *as the immanent process of the becoming of their own concept*, 'because truth is but the coming-to-oneself through the negativity of immediacy' (12:251). A philosophical account of the true in the real is then not (meant as) a teleological understanding based on an external concept, and I have sufficiently explained in which sense a separation between the concept and the process of its objectivity is a form of

external purposiveness unfit to sustain the demands of the form of the idea. External purposiveness is conceptual, yet inherently untrue. Only by grasping these forms of objectivity as the *becoming* of their concept through the philosophical method can they be determined as identical with the concept, rather than simply postulating such an identity and reading it off reality by fiat.

Problem

But now we have a problem. I have consistently stressed that we ought not 'deflate' the meaning of truth in Hegel, as, for example, interpreters who consider Hegel's Logic in a 'transcendental' manner tend to do, by granting the truth of the idea as relying on its being the ultimate condition of intelligibility or the ultimate explainer.[303] Now I claim the

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[303] Throughout this dissertation, I have appealed to the distinction between metaphysical and transcendental readings when it comes to the issue of the validation or objective standing of the logical categories. This distinction can now be applied to the question of the inherent truth of the absolute idea. Ng and Pippin seem to share the view that the idea's truth derives from there being no meaningful 'outside', or it being the most general form of all account-giving. (Cf. *Hegel's concept of life*, 289-90; *Hegel's realm of shadows*, 32, 111) For Zambrana, 'The absolute idea elaborates the necessary historicity of intelligibility by arguing that intelligibility is a matter of bindingness.' (*Hegel's theory of intelligibility,* 115) For Gabriel, 'If we are committed to there being (…) facts to be studied from the theoretical stance and facts to be studied from the practical stance, we need a unified account of the categorical structure of reality that allows us to integrate both conceptions without running into the contradictions that Kant describes in the antinomies chapter of the first Critique. Achievement of such a stance is just what Hegel calls 'the absolute idea'. "What Kind of an Idealist (If Any) Is Hegel?," 198. The transcendental (or 'meta') element, as shown in this quote, rests in Gabriel's identification of the truth of the absolute idea as reducible to achieving the stance that makes the 'categorical structure of reality', as containing facts of the theoretical and practical stance, intelligible. For Kreines, 'Hegel advocates two different forms of the priority of the absolute idea: [1] *Metaphysical priority*: the absolute idea is the absolutely complete form of reason in the world, and so prior in a metaphysics of reason. [2] *Epistemological priority*: all intelligibility of everything depends on the intelligibility of the absolute idea.' "From Objectivity to the Absolute Idea in Hegel's Logic", 329. All but Kreines here seem to be arguing for the truth of the absolute idea in 'transcendental' terms: in virtue of being a condition of possibility, intelligibility, explainability of experience, cognition, account-giving, or meaning most generally. My claim is that, although a consequence of the inherent truth of the absolute idea, the transcendental dimension cannot itself be *what makes* the absolute idea true. To this transcendental/epistemic/'meta' dimension, Kreines adds a metaphysical priority as 'the absolutely complete form of reason in the world'. (For Kreines, I take it, the metaphysical sense of priority has priority over the epistemic sense of priority.) While I think Kreines is right in making explicit and rejecting transcendental-epistemic priority, the metaphysical priority is in line with what is implied by other neo-metaphysical interpretations: that truth or objectivity is granted by the demonstration of a mind-independent

inherent truth realized by the absolute idea is TTT, the self-realized purpose of thought thinking itself. How is this supposed to be truth 'in the highest sense'? What does my argument demonstrating the inherent truth of the absolute idea to be TTT have to do with God, or with the other forms of infinite *Geist*, art, and religion? In what sense is the absolute idea, as TTT, the 'divine concept'? Is the demonstration of the absolute idea as TTT an actual ontological argument in the traditional sense, the 'proof' of *God's* existence?

Pathetically, I can make sense of the negative implications regarding how *not* to read the idea's claim to divinity and truth, without being able to offer much of a positive alternative. I emphasize the negative claims once more. It is indeed the case that the absolute idea turns out to be the condition of intelligibility of the truth of nature, spirit, and anything which is a realized purpose, as well as anything intelligible, no matter how finite, insofar as it is a *moment* in the becoming of the idea (i.e., an abstraction resulting from the self-determined unity of the concept). But this is not *why* it is true. The absolute idea is not supposed to be True only insofar as we *want* to see reason in the world, and the idea stands as the condition of possibility of identifying reason in the world, identifying the world as completely explainable. This would make its truth conditional –*if* there were a possible account of experience or reality that did not appeal to it to make reality intelligible as a whole, then the absolute idea would stop being true. The defender of the transcendental model of truth would have to exhibit all alternative accounts as incoherent or impossible to

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standing. As I have argued, this implies (i) an externally-purposive understanding of ideas; (ii) the model of objectivity proper to finite cognition.

Perhaps Rödl's proposal opens different avenue: the thought of thinking as thinking is inherently true in that it allows for *no opposite* –so inherent truth or 'absoluteness' would be here understood as the impossibility of an *alternative* or contrary. Cf. Rödl, *Self-Consciousness and Objectivity*, chap. 4. Though I believe my project is at odds with Rödl's (if I understand it, and I am not sure I do) insofar as I think there is a fundamental distinction between *thinking* and *thinking that understands itself as thinking*, while Rödl thinks all thinking is the thought of itself as thinking, the idea of inherent truth qua impossibility of an alternative is worth exploring.

ground truth in such a manner. Neither is the absolute idea true *insofar as* the real, external

world is *in fact*, independently of any thinking, thought realizing itself. This makes no

sense. Better: the sense it makes is categorically inadequate for the realized purpose. At

best, it makes sense of how the idea could be true as a form of external purposiveness.

Because an external divine mind has provided the rationally intelligible core of reality.

Hegel's Logic has the unique happy destiny to be the system of the determinations of

reality, which hits the precise manner in which these were pre-given and imposed into

nature and spirit by God's divine intelligence, then the absolute idea is true.[304] Its condition

of being true is insofar as it corresponds to reality's ultimate God-given form. But this

interpretation, again, attributes a *finite* form of purposiveness to the absolute idea, requiring

the finite category of teleology, and requiring the model of objectivity proper to finite

cognition. It is not because of something else that the absolute idea, as TTT, is 'divine':

rather, its divinity *grounds* the possibility of cognizing reality as a realized purpose.

Whatever this means.

And what *could* it mean? TTT, as it can be easily recognized, is the formulation of

the Aristotelian God, the divine prime mover, *noesis noeseos*.[305] So, one possibility to

answer the question is that the exhibition of thought, and ultimately thought that thinks

itself as thought, as the source of the determinateness and intelligibility thinking identifies

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[304] See, for example, the following formulation by Hanna of the 'super-conceptualism' he attributes to Hegel: 'By sharp contrast to Kant's [transcendental idealism], Hegel's [absolute idealism] says that the world in itself, or in its supersensible nature, is *literally constituted by or made out of* the concepts that occur essentially in the logically dialectical, inherently developmental and dynamic, and synoptically holistic thinking of a single rational, self-conscious subject, a.k.a. Spirit (*Geist*). This means that according to Hegel's AI, the logically dialectical, inherently developmental and dynamic, and synoptically holistic singular rational self-conscious thinking that immediately grasps the systematic conceptual world-essence, a.k.a. the Concept, a.k.a. the concrete universal—a very special kind of thinking that Kant, and Hegel following him, call 'intuitive understanding'—and the world in itself are *identical*, in the sense that the latter ('being') is nothing over and above the former ('thought').' "Kant, Hegel, and the Fate of Non-Conceptual Content", 6.
[305] Cf. Plevrakis, " The Aristotelian Theos in Hegel's Philosophy of Mind."

in reality and experience, is supposed to support the claim, or somehow be identical with the claim, that thought is *divine*. Perhaps, if thought is the ground for all form and determinacy, and if thought has shown its teleological might over externality both by cunningly using its logic for the support of its purposes, and finally the realization that the logic of externality is negated through a simple resolve, then thought's truth demonstrates to be the condition of anything to be true, while it itself remains without the need for anything external to articulate its own truth. While all things require thinking for the achievement of their own claims to relativized truth (as we saw: reason makes reality truth-functional), thought's claim to truth is *unconditional*. And maybe, that which does not depend on anything outside of itself to be true must be granted a divine status: it must be the best thing.[306] And consequently, contemplation (*theoria*) must be the best activity, an activity which is not done for the sake of anything beyond itself. Insofar as philosophy, religion, and art *incorporate* the certainty of the inherent truth of their objects, the realization of these activities is absolute: they are not done for the sake of any further aim, for a conditional form of utility, but satisfy their concept in their very existence. So maybe, if God has a perspective (or: if God is something), it is TTT, a perspective we participate in (indeed, a perspective we actualize or 'activate') when engaging in religion, art, and, most perfectly, philosophy.[307]

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[306] Cf. Aristotle, *NE* 10.7; Kosman, "The Divine in Aristotle's Ethics."

[307] Cf. 'Philosophy has the same content and the same purpose as art and religion, but it is the highest mode of apprehending the absolute idea, because its mode, that of the concept, is the highest.' (12:236) Plevrakis writes: 'Speculative philosophy, in that sense, is not just '*first* philosophy' in terms of a mere guiding disposition, but '*first* science', with regard to the non-philosophical sciences, and 'first science', with regard to its own autonomous development in its own (speculative philosophical) form and matter and as its own final and efficient cause. That is to say, speculative philosophy is literally the actuality of *theos*.' ("The Aristotelian Theos in Hegel's Philosophy of Mind", 15) But he interprets the idea of the Aristotelean *theos* at stake in Hegel's philosophy as a determinate scientific 'meta'-standpoint which enables a 'so to speak 'divine' contextualization of everything' (15), which to me suggests a transcendental understanding.

I am unsure of most of what I write in the preceding paragraph, and I will problematize further the inflationary ambition of this form of antirealist idealism in the general conclusion. For now, at least we know Hegel upholds something along these lines. Indeed, Hegel calls the Logic 'the science only of the divine concept' (GW 12:253). In his 1825 logic lectures, Hegel characterizes the absolute idea as '*die höchste Definition Gottes im logischen*' (23,1:407).[308] He claims the Logic exhibits 'the logical course of God's self-determination as being [*der Selbstbestimmung Gottes zum Seyn*]':

> But in the exposition of *the pure concept* it was further indicated that the latter is the absolute divine concept itself. In truth, therefore, what takes place is not a relation of *application* [*Anwendung*] but the immediate display in the logical course of God's self-determination as being. (GW 12:129)

This claim would indeed appear to be a form of *the* ontological argument, not simply for determinations whose intelligibility entail their objectivity (realized purposiveness), but properly *for* how Hegel understands God. Maybe this talk of the logical exhibition of God is not ultimately metaphorical, but the realm of the logical in its ultimate self-determining unity simply *is* what God, for Hegel, *is*: the thought that has comprehended its own claim to unconditional validity. Maybe it is a mistake to expect something 'more' from it. Of course, to pursue this line of thought consistently, we would have to account for the fact that Hegel's God is a Lutheran, decisively Christian God, not exactly Aristotle's *Theos*. To fit within my account, we must make sense of 'divinity' without the introduction of the finite

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[308] Here, too, Hegel makes explicit reference to Aristotle's *Theos*: 'But when we say that God is the knowing idea, this appears because we know, and we know that knowledge is the highest thing in us, from which we cannot abstract, which is not a particularity that one separates, and so one has opposed this to such a determination. It is worth noting that one must also be able to speak of this, and be allowed to do so from within oneself, Aristotle also says: the highest thing is the thinking of thinking, the thought that thinks itself (*der sich selbst denkende Gedanke*).' (GW 23,1:407)

form of purposiveness entailed by a metaphysical understanding of God as a thought-external Truth-maker.[309] My only concrete point here is that any positive understanding of the idea's claim to truth and divinity must be compatible with its unconditionality. Neither metaphysical nor transcendental understandings (nor a conjunction of both) seem to be.

6.6. Conclusion

The cognition of realized purposiveness through the absolute method of thinking thinking thinking is a form of *recognition*, as it ties thought *back* to itself. The Logic grounds philosophy as a form of immanent cognition that recognizes the ideal in the real, the truth in what happens, thereby grasping that which is true in its categorically adequate form. This form of cognition is best rendered as *absolute*, as it is not conditional upon thought's adequacy with *something* which it presupposes as *outside* thought's own self-articulation *as thinking*. Since its basis is thinking, the immanent recognition of the concept does not amount to truth in the form of a correspondence with an external truth-maker, purportedly required for the making-true of the cognition. The method, as the logical idea which is inherently true in virtue of the unconditional status of thinking thinking thinking, is the categorically adequate framework for the cognition of realized purposiveness. Those ideas that realize their purpose through their becoming are inherently true, insofar as they realize and determine their concept through their objectivity. Thus, through the logical method, where thinking transparently thinks itself in the conceptual form of thinking, Hegel justifies philosophy as conceptual recognition of the becoming of reason in the world.

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[309] These are the grounds on which, as anticipated in 1.4., reject the 'divine' as 'spirit-neutral' reading espoused by Tolley, "Hegel on the Relation between Logos and the Science of Logic."

General Conclusion

In this conclusion, I do three things. The first is to summarize the argument of the dissertation. The second is to frame the argument in such a way that my 'post-Kantian' interpretation appears original. I do this by motivating the 'inflationary antirealist' perspective. The third is to address what my interpretation offers for the prospects of philosophy. I approach this issue by examining the resulting view of philosophy, which I attribute to Hegel, specifically by focusing on the troubles arising from the idea of a cognition without a thought-external truth-maker.

§

I presented a defense of the foundational role of the Logic for the form of inquiry proper to philosophy, for Hegel. The main claim is that Hegel 'grounds' philosophy, as a determinate form of epistemic activity ('absolute knowing'), by providing a categorically adequate framework for inherent truth. A significant amount of work had to be done to exhibit the rationale behind the requirement to 'ground' philosophy.[310] To motivate my reading, I

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[310] As the reader who has made it this far has surely noticed, I dedicate a lot of space to motivating and framing arguments, thus arguing for what I believe the argument to be an argument *for*, before even going into the argument itself. A few examples. Most of chapter 3 is an attempt to motivate the claim of the need for an immanent evaluation of the categories. I spend many pages in chapter 4 arguing for what the argument of the objectivity of the concept will be *about* (i.e., about showing reality's truth-functionality as the meaning of the objectivity of the concept), before even getting to the presentation of the argument. In chapter 5, I spend again many pages motivating *why* one should read the argument for the reality of the concept in an internalist manner, rather than externalist one, *before* getting to the argument itself. I understand a reader might find this tendency annoying. In lieu of a *mea culpa*, I justify myself in proceeding thusly, first, since the arguments are so weird, and, second, since the interpretative debates often, in my view, talk past each other given an inadequate presentation of their own argumentative motivations and the very own understanding of what the arguments *are meant to support* (let alone the fact that, as a general pathology of those of us working at the intersection of philosophy and 'intellectual history', academically-insular epistemic communities often presuppose that everyone will be familiar with the relevant debates they happen to care about, without seemingly much awareness of the parochialism of many of the philosophical preoccupations that inform their own readings and defenses of the texts), I feel the need to argue for what I believe the argument to be even arguing *for*, as well as the need to make my own philosophical interests explicit.

brought in the 'inflationary' component of Hegel's understanding of the very meaning of philosophy: his claim that philosophy is about *truth*, in the highest sense. Hegel's project of 'grounding' philosophy only makes sense if we understand that Hegel identifies philosophy with cognition that aims at *Truth.* But what is truth? We can either say what truth is in advance or not. If we can say something about Truth in advance, we can say so as either an aspiration, a criterion, or a content. Hegel begins with philosophy as defined by the object of Truth as *aspiration*: to provide the logical means for speculative or absolute knowing.

From the end of chapter 2, it should be clear that Hegel is committed to the view that thought-determinations are one and the same content as that which is cognizable in the objects. Thus, an interpretation that holds that thought-determinations are *either* a finite mind's a priori forms and functions *or* the mind-independent structures of the real is blocked. Blocked is also what we might call a 'conjunctivist' interpretation, where these determinations are 'not merely our thoughts' *but also* these mind-independent structures. The Logic, understood as a project which exhibits thought-determinations, would be the proper project for the correct demonstration of categories appropriate for philosophy's object (Truth). If it is correct that the success of any possible cognition is dependent upon thinking's framing of its target through the appropriate categories, then the possibility of knowledge *of* absolute objects depends on the possibility of categories that are appropriate *for* absolute objects. And here I introduced the extrinsic motivation of the Logic: to determine and thereby demonstrate that there are, indeed, truth-appropriate categories, categories which are true 'in and for themselves'. This motivation is predicated on what I call *categorical adequacy*: that a proper cognition for a determinate field of reality and/or experience must approach its object with the appropriate categorical framework. If the categorical framework does not 'fit' the constitutive demands of the object, the cognition

will misrepresent it. Allegedly, the incapacity of systems to provide Truth has rested on the inadequacy of the categories, which is why a renovation of the science of logic is necessary.

In chapter 3, I argued for an understanding of the Logic as an attempt to correct the mistakes in past philosophical systems, mistakes which hindered such systems from developing an adequate philosophical logic, a logic fit to provide an unbiased, unprejudiced examination of the formative possibilities of thought. Hegel's *immanence requirement* establishes how thought-determinations are to be derived, and his Logic accomplishes this through *presuppositionlessness* and *dialectic* as the unfolding of the pure inner content of thought-determinations, which exhibits their 'finitude' in their incapacity to sustain their own content without passing over to a further category. The 'movement' of these determinations is meant to mirror how thinking *actually* develops, lest Hegel's Logic violate the immanence requirement by bringing in an 'external' operator, or a presupposed realm of validity. I claimed the Logic's exhibition of thought-determinations is *subservient to* the main aim of the Logic: the evaluation of which categories are inherently true. Taking my cue from other 'immanent' interpretations, I argued that inherently true categories would be those that are *self-corresponding,* where the relation of self-correspondence demonstrates a category that can sustain its own intelligibility.

Chapters 4 and 5 were dedicated to the first two parts of the Subjective Logic, Subjectivity and Objectivity. If philosophy is conceptual cognition, and if philosophy is meant to go beyond pure Logic (i.e., if it can have an object which is 'outside' pure thinking) then thinking that takes itself as thinking must (i) demonstrate that it is not merely formal 'empty schema'; (ii) demonstrate that it is the constitutive principle of certain 'real' objects. The Logic demonstrates thought (qua concept) not to be an empty schema by

showing itself to be the condition of the truth-functionality of reality: it is syllogistic

reason, I argued in chapter 4, which makes reality truth-functional, and which stands at the

basis of the purported claim to the 'immutability' ('a prioricity') of the concepts of the

understanding. The Logic demonstrates the concept to be the constitutive principle of

certain real objects, I show in chapter 5, since Teleology provides us with the means for

understanding how conceptuality, via purposiveness, mobilizes the logic of the thought-

external for its own aims via the 'cunning of reason': the use of mechanical-chemical

relations as *means*. If there are things in reality whose constitutive principle is the concept

(*Begriff*), i.e., objects proper, then their proper form of cognition would be comprehension

(*begreifen*).

Chapter 5 also exhibits the limitations of teleology, as the 'highest' form of the

object: the object cannot be the inherently true category, given the *separation* between

means and purpose. These limitations require a transition to the inherently true categorical

form: Realized Purpose. Here, thought identifies that the intelligibility of any finite,

external form of purposiveness is predicated upon the always-already realized true purpose

of purpose. The true purpose of purpose is to realize itself, and, insofar as thought can raise

externality to means via a simple resolve, is always already realized.

The conclusion reached at chapter 5, relying on a relatively original interpretation of

the final section of Objectivity, opens the path for the culmination of the argument in

chapter 6. Chapter 6 is dedicated to exhibiting how Realized Purposiveness sustains the

form of the idea as the correspondence between the concept and objectivity, and how this

inherently true form subsequently 'grounds' a philosophical comprehension of nature and

spirit. I argued that the form of the idea must exhibit an *inseparable* relation sustaining the

bond between the concept and objectivity. Teleological forms are, in principle, separable,

for the objectivity is constitutively indifferent to purpose. *Becoming* is the form of existence of the idea that enables the objectivity to be not a mere means, but the principle for the self-determination of the concept. The form of life, as the first moment of the idea, proves to be a realized purpose insofar as living individuals constitute *Gattung* through their striving towards the unity of the concept. The form of cognition proves to be realized purpose in that the striving to posit universality in the purposes of the True and the Good is, in fact, how these very ideas become concretized. As I argued, neither of these perspectives is transparently aware of their very own activity being the realization of infinite purposiveness. Life cannot recognize that what it strives for, and posits through the satisfaction of this very striving, is the universal. Cognition, a step closer to self-transparency than life, recognizes the purpose of the universal, but it separates itself from it insofar as it takes such a universality to obtain as the *goal* of its own striving, either as the end-goal of science once we completely map out the structure of the real via a final Grand Unified Theory, or as the culmination of its ethical striving in a perfectly 'good' world. This claim does not entail that their perspective is 'reducible to' their truth in the idea: the 'finite' perspective is indispensable for the 'infinite' realization of the True and the Good.

But only the perspective of the absolute idea can identify the 'truth of' these forms of realized purposiveness. As I argued in chapter 6, the absolute idea is the pure logical idea of the philosophical method itself: the thinking of thinking as thinking that can thus recognize a universal self-determining itself through the concrete practices of, in the case of life, living individuals and the non-organic presuppositions of life, in the case of cognition, individuals having the universal as purpose. The absolute idea is the inherently true category justifying a novel form of cognition: one whose satisfaction does not rely on a purported correspondence with thought-external content. This final conceptual form

satisfies itself in the verification of the unity of empirical phenomena, 'what happens', to rely on the concept. It is *absolute* cognition, the unconditional method of philosophy itself.

§§

Having summarized my argument, I now turn to what this entails. First, I (briefly, as I have dedicated the introductory chapter, several chapter sections, and many footnotes to this aim) outline some consequences within the field of Hegel scholarship. Second, I (not so briefly, with apologies to the reader) outline the broader meaning and problems of such a conception of the philosophical activity itself.

I call the view we obtain at the end of the Logic a form of 'inflationary antirealism'. If absolute cognition is unconditional, I take this to mean it imposes a non-metaphysical form of epistemic satisfaction grounded on the formal structure of Realized Purposiveness, as outlined in chapters 5 and 6. I consider, if we correctly understand the distinction between finite and infinite purposiveness, then the Truth gained by speculative cognition is incompatible with a traditional view of metaphysical realism. Metaphysical realism, by separating the form of the truth from its truth-maker, and making an adequate capturing of the truth-maker the standard for epistemic satisfaction, has a formal conception of truth, directly at odds with the meaning of inherent truth. I have claimed 'neo-metaphysical' lines of interpretation, such as 'conceptual realism', fall into this category.

Yet my view is 'inflationary' in that I take Hegel's conception of *thought* to be the means of the disclosure of Truth 'in the highest sense', rather than as mere form, being true in virtue of being a transcendental condition for the possibility, intelligibility or explainability of reality and/or experience. My reading offers an alternative beyond metaphysical and transcendental understandings of the 'objective' standing of the

categories. The originality of Hegel's Logic project rests in articulating a novel conception of philosophical truth through a reformed approach to logic, according to which the determinations of thinking must be evaluated in virtue of their own content. Although the originality of Hegel's method for categorical development has been recognized among interpreters, I make the connection between this evaluative function of the Logic and its 'grounding' role, vis-à-vis the prospects of a philosophy of reality. If it is the case that the absolute idea is the inherently true category, it is in virtue of this category being adequate for the cognition of 'absolute' objects that nature and spirit can even appear as realized purposes through their correct framing, a framing which must be, essentially, *philosophical*. The relevance of this conclusion for scholarly debates supports a 'systematic' reading. But, as should be clear, against common arguments for the 'systematic' approach, mine does not rest on the implication of a metaphysical view of the thought-determinations, whereby the Logic presents the 'pure structure' of reality which the philosophy of reality would fill in with empirical content. Rather, I argued how to understand the philosophies of reality as absolute cognition: a form of cognition which involves that the very conceptual articulation is the truth-maker, for objects which are idea: for objects which have the logical structure proper to life, cognition, or the absolute idea. My argument is that, to properly understand what Hegel aims to do in the philosophy of reality, we must understand the claim of the Logic's derivation of an inherently true category. And only by understanding the philosophical intention and method behind the philosophies of reality do we have the conceptual resources to immanently evaluate Hegel's own attempts.

Although I consider the 'status' of Hegel's Logic (and, consequently, the nature and standing of the thought-determinations to be found therein) the most significant contribution, there are many other contemporary debates within Hegel scholarship where

the arguments I defend are relevant. For the most, these arguments remain to be elaborated in future work. A first set of arguments would concern the nature of logical categories and the sense of their 'primacy'. A second set of arguments would follow from my account of the distinction between the logical form of Teleology and that of the Realized Purpose. As an example, the inflationary antirealist view I defend can offer an account of the necessity of the historical development of scientific and moral phenomena without undermining their relative truth. This interpretation of Hegel can thus open the path for inflationary forms of scientific and metaethical antirealism.

§§§

Say I am in luck and the reader buys the argument, and furthermore buys that my interpretation makes sense of Hegel. The deeper question is: is this a sustainable model for philosophy? What does the interpretation I defended here have to *offer* to our conception of philosophy? I approach these questions through the most pressing problem: the legitimacy of adhering to the perspective of Realized Purposiveness.

The value of Hegel's enterprise, I consider, rests in (i) defining philosophy in virtue of its object (Truth), while simultaneously (ii) providing us with a form of epistemic satisfaction for the philosophical task which does not prejudice this task by presupposing a truth-maker outside the cognition itself. In other words, it gives philosophy the shape of an *unconditional cognition* through the recognition of inherent truth as realized purposiveness. Against the view that the inherently true concept enables a perspective on reality as Realized Purposiveness, there is the obvious suspicion that a cognition whose truth-maker relies on pure form possesses no conditions for falsification beyond following the 'one true

method'. In the case of its 'applicability' to real phenomena such as history, the state, nature, it would then seem that we are falling into, at best, a *logocentrist* view, at worst, a parochially *anthropocentric* one: even if the Logic provides us with a demonstration of the true method to understand the category of the absolute idea, what right do we have to hypostasize such an idea to reality, and see 'reason in the world'?[311] If there are no conditions for falsifiability, for the possibility of discerning an idea from a mere object, or from a field of reality without any reason present in it, is this view of philosophy not just blatantly a subjective exercise of the imposition of purposiveness at best, 'schizophrenic' at worst?

These suspicions are neither novel nor ungrounded. They seem to be constitutive of Hegel's legacy. I could try to get out of the problem by appealing and contextualizing more of Hegel's claims, such as the claim of the idea's 'restricted content', or bring in the dimension of 'recognition', and attempt to exploit the relevant passages hoping that sufficient attention to them could lead to a view that appeases some of the worries. But this would be a tiresome exercise both for the reader and me, as I am not even sure the effort would pay off. So let us pause the Hegel for a second and turn to Brandom. Following his reading of the *PS,* Brandom offers a proposal of what a philosophical account of reality would be, namely, a *rational reconstruction*: an expressively retroactive understanding of a

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[311] If the philosopher has the authority of the perspective of the idea, is she not using the authority of such a perspective to identify reason in the world *against* individuals, who might not see themselves as participating in such a 'self-determination' of the concept through a world-historical process? Is the perspective of the idea then not an *imposition*? Is this not just *another* form of external purposiveness? After all, as we saw in chapter 6, the sacrifice of individual living beings is necessary for the form how these realize purposiveness in the processes of *Gattung*. If the same can be said in the case of human beings 'participating' in history against their explicit will, without the capacity to find recognition within such processes, in which sense is the concept *particularizing* itself in them? The possibility that Hegel's own philosophies of reality fall short of the very logical structure of realized purposiveness is one I take seriously, not so much because of ethical or political concerns, but rather because of my interest on understanding this logical form, and Hegel's use of it. Naturally, someone could object to this very separation between the 'logical' and the 'political'. I leave the issue open.

determinate phenomenon, which recreates the determinate phenomena in the form of a

progressive *history*. Brandom is not shy about the 'Whiggish' dimension of his

understanding of how rationality becomes revealed through the philosophical narrative. He

makes it explicit throughout the work.[312] As a characterization of his understanding of a

rational reconstruction, we read:

> Recollections retrospectively reconstruct experiential processes into expressively
> progressive traditions. And expressive reconstruction is *rational* reconstruction. For this is
> the process that explains how senses can be revelatory of referents. And it is the referents
> that determine what is *really* rational: what is really incompatible with what, what really
> follows from what, and in general, how one ought to apply concepts and draw inferences
> from those applications. So determining the referent that a reconstructed series of senses
> reveal is determining what is rational: how one ought to reason. This is a distinctively
> expressive kind of rationality. On the one hand, one *finds out* in this way (according to that
> recollection) what is rational. On the other hand, one *makes* the experiential process have
> been rational—in the sense of expressively progressive, gradually revelatory of the
> rational—by performing such an *Erinnerung*.[313]

It would not be difficult to extract a similar view from my analysis of realized

purposiveness: philosophy, as the application of the method to real phenomena to

demonstrate their conceptual basis, could then amount to a rational reconstruction, such that

the recollection (*Erinnerung*) is to 'reconstruct experiential processes into expressively

progressive traditions'.[314] The systematic worry permeating this form of reading

philosophy's satisfaction is that philosophy, for Hegel, cannot be about how one *ought to*

account for reality *if* we want to see it as rational. It is supposed to be about the *actuality* of

reason in the world –only in this manner could the form of identity at play in the becoming

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[312] Cf. Brandom, *A Spirit of Trust*, 102.
[313] Brandom, 439–40.
[314] Brandom, 439.

of the idea be achieved.[315] Yet Brandom's notion of a rational reconstruction does not mean

to be a more or less arbitrary exercise imposing our subjective perspective; rather, the

reconstruction is, he claims, 'exhibiting' how things are 'for one as governed, guided, and

controlled by how things all along were in themselves' and thus we are 'treating' the

'appearances' as 'as appearances of that one reality, all phenomena presenting one

noumenal situation.'[316]

Indeed, against skeptical worries, we could say that offering such a reconstruction is

precisely how the inherently true content of that which is inherently true is 'revealed', how

the cognition itself can be its truth-maker, thus self-satisfying, thus absolute. But, when it

comes to things as they appear, when we philosophically 'treat' them as rational through

our Whiggish rational reconstruction, for example through the philosophical account of the

state exhibited as constituted under the idea of freedom, is the very possibility of providing

the account of these phenomena *as if* rationally constituted supposed to demonstrate their

actual rational constitution? Brandom claims spirit exists 'insofar as we *make* it exist by

taking it to exist: by understanding what we are doing in normative, rational terms.'[317] But

the 'we' 'taking it' to exist here cannot simply be the philosopher. The 'we' would have to

be all the participants allegedly taking part in the becoming of the concept. In cases of real

phenomena involving highly complex hierarchical structures with agents pursuing mutually

incompatible interests, such as states and actual events in history like the French

Revolution, who is to arbitrate that we are, in fact, making explicit what 'exists' as 'all

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[315] For similar concerns regarding the kind of idealism Brandom attributes to Hegel, see Stern, "In the Spirit of Hegel?"

[316] Brandom, *A Spirit of Trust*, 439.

[317] Brandom, 576.

along implicit'[318]? And to claim that the participants, when they do not themselves recognize their activity as the actualization of the concept (as they often do not), are still 'implicitly' actualizing the concept, seems to reinforce a model of external purposiveness: the bond between the concept (say, realizing freedom) and the objectivity (the individuals acting within a state, who do not think of themselves as realizing freedom) could indeed simply be a result of the philosopher's subjective excess.[319] As in the example of my crush as grounding the possibility of seeing the bad poem as a self-corresponding object (chapter 6), perhaps the bond here is secured through the contingent link of the philosopher's crush on reason. And, as with all crushes, a crush on reason can always inevitably fade.

In my view, one of the great innovations of Hegel's grounding of philosophy through the Logic (at least in my reading of it, as here defended) is the development of the category that would not in principle allow for this gap –not because we are *absolutely certain* that the phenomena in question are conceptually self-constituting, but given the very restrictions imposed by the logical idea of realized purposiveness. My dissertation opens the path for taking the structure of realized purposiveness seriously, as distinct from the imposition view proper to teleology as finite purposiveness. And to take it seriously means not reading the achievement of philosophy as rationally reconstructing, through the philosophical meta-narrative, something that *ought to* be there, or that is there 'implicitly' (the philosopher being *certain* of it), but only becomes illuminated as such when the philosopher makes it explicit through the power of her one true rational toolkit. But taking

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[318] Brandom, 576.

[319] This worry also inevitably rises (at least for me) when encountering claims such as: 'The fact that concepts can capture the structures of nature and society (or that thinking can grasp the essence of reality) affirms the validity of the claim to absolute knowing, and indicates that the patterns of thought are patterns of actuality as a whole.' Bykova, "On Thinking and Knowing: Hegel's Response to Kant's Epistemological Challenge," 206.

this structure seriously, I think, involves a significant reevaluation of the kinds of objects for which realized purposiveness is categorically adequate, if any. Following this line of thought might lead us away from Hegel. I allow myself to briefly explore this possibility.

There is one obvious candidate for an object in the world where realized purposiveness can be categorically adequate, insofar as the particularization of its objectivity can be grounded on reason, and which can furthermore illuminate possible criteria for the falsifiability of the model of realized purposiveness. And that would be the *self*, a *person*. A person's life is, or can at least be, an internally unified process of purposive self-constitution. There are, of course, manners to live one's life as externally purposive, which could supply the conditions for the falsifiability of a person as a realized purpose. The relevant question to assess the degree to which a person is better understood as a realized purpose would be something like: is one's life constituted in such a way that its particularities can be comprehended through how these cohere as necessary moments of a unified, self-determining whole? If so, then the conceptual 'narrative' of the person's life is not a mere rational reconstruction, but the retroactive *apprehension* of actual rationality: thinking thinking an objectivity which made itself through thinking. If a person's movements make sense under principles assumed as authoritative because of their mere givenness, then the person's life will make more sense under the schema of a teleological object: the realization of standards that, insofar as these are granted immediate normative authority, come as an imposition. But it is possible to not realize selfhood in this way –it is possible that a person's actions can only make sense in virtue of his taking himself, his existence and activity, as a problem and task, such that his actions only make sense retroactively as a systematic unity, because they are, in fact, the expression of a systematic unity. The assessment could not rest on an external description of what the person *does*, as

if we possessed a list of acts which count as authentic expressions of selfhood, and those which do not. Two people can be described as doing the same actions (say, studying, marrying, voting, having children, going to church, going to the local farmer's market, whatever), and yet one could be doing them because he takes them as given, as 'what one does', while the other could be doing them because she has reasoned their necessity within the broader project of constituting a self. The difference between these two lives is enormous, yet uncapturable through sheer external means. So, contra Hegel, it seems to me that the 'existentialist' turn taken by Kierkegaard (among others) is a natural consequence of understanding what is *truly* at stake in the introduction of a novel form of purposive intelligibility beyond finite teleology. But that is another story.

Beyond this one obvious candidate, we can consider those 'spiritual' activities not done for the sake of something beyond themselves, or with an *explicit* acknowledgement of the inherent value of the activity as their constitutive principle. These 'absolute' activities would fit the model, insofar as, as argued in chapter 6, purpose here becomes concretized through the particularization of the universal in self-determining activities. But in absolute activities, in contrast to history and politics, since the activity has no aim beyond the realization of itself, those who participate in them and thus aid the particularization of the idea do not allegedly do so merely in an 'implicit' manner, which requires an external mediating work to be made explicit. The candidates are art, science, religion, and philosophy. Even if a person becomes an artist because of heteronomous reasons such as making a profit (unlikely), she is explicitly participating in an activity which has, at its basis, an *ideal* as its principle: the realization of the infinite purpose of Beauty or Art, which she helps concretize through her activities, understood for what they are. Of course, for the skeptic, these activities could all serve to finitely purposive means rather than any

'absolute' purposes of realizing the Beautiful, the True, the Good. Historically, they have done so and will continue to do so --the subordination of science to the technological development of war-machinery, the subordination of religion to monetary aims like selling indulgences for building St. Peter's Basilica, the subordination of art to 'propaganda'. A genuine ambassador of disenchantment recognizes no absolute purpose in any of these activities. But the Hegelian rejoinder could here be that maybe our ambassador lacks adequate categories to recognize them as such, with all due respect.[320] In contrast, if we recognize that at least the *concept* of these activities is an absolute purpose which any participant must be taken as endorsing (not in the 'implicit' way one could be said to 'endorse' the ruling party by being a citizen of a state, or the company's policies by being an employee, but in the *explicit* way in that there is no manner of participating in x which does not commit one to a certain assenting doxastic attitude to the *concept* of x, doxastic attitude which would require *forming a reason* for *why* it would be worthwhile to participate in x, especially when there seems to be no external utility to derive from it) then this model likewise provides us with criteria for the falsification of purported examples of these activities which are, or are not, self-corresponding. To further develop this idea is another path my dissertation opens.

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[320] Of course, I must grant that one could say the same thing about my expressed incapacity to recognize world history as the becoming of the absolute purpose of Freedom.

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