

# Kant, Hegel and the Possibility of a Speculative Logic

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Immanuel Kant claimed to have accomplished two significant tasks for philosophy. One was to provide a definitive response to scepticism by demonstrating the possibility of pure natural science in establishing the transcendental conditions for knowledge in general, and the other was to set the limits to knowledge by showing that the categories of the understanding have only empirical application, and that pure reason, despite its natural inclination to seek the absolutely unconditioned, has only the regulative function of directing knowledge towards the greatest unity. Accordingly, while Kant demonstrated in his "transcendental analytic" that a metaphysics of cognitive faculties is possible, in his "transcendental dialectic" he showed that any sort of *transcendent* metaphysics is not possible because it leads reason beyond the limits of experience to things in themselves, which in principle cannot be known.

Hegel's most extensive discussion of the Kantian "transcendental dialectic" occurs in the *Science of Logic* where, in the section on Quantity, he addresses Kant's Antinomies of Pure Reason. Instead of focussing directly on this matter, however, I wish to proceed in a different, but complementary, direction by attending to Kant's and Hegel's conceptions of philosophical logic. A comparison of their views on this subject will highlight the continuity in their conceptions of the nature of transcendental thought but also show the essential way in which Hegel here departs from Kant, especially with regard to the manner in which pure speculative logic provides systematic unity for the fundamental concepts of thought. Thus, central to my concern is to show how Kant's logic points the way to Hegel's and yet how Hegel's enterprise is possible despite Kant's critique of pure reason.

## I.

Logic, according to Kant, is the "science of the rules of the understanding in general." (A52/B76) Furthermore, he contends that a distinction can be made between "pure general logic"

which deals with absolutely necessary rules of thought—those rules the validity of which is independent of all consideration of the characteristics of objects of experience—and "transcendental logic" which involves rules of thought that do not abstract completely from the knowledge of objects. While both kinds of logic are completely detached from empirical principles and explanations, transcendental logic, unlike pure general logic which deals with the mere form of thought, retains a content in its treatment of "the rules of the pure thought of an object."<sup>1</sup> By the "pure thought of an object" Kant appears to mean the thinking about what it means in principle to be an object. We have, if you will, consideration of a "transcendental" content which consists in the circumstance that, while no particular objects in space and time are made reference to, the conditions of objecthood *per se* (relative to the pure intuitions of space and time) are the focus of analysis. These conditions are given in rules which provide the conceptual apparatus for the having of objective knowledge, be it an ordinary or simple experience of things or a more sophisticated scientific cognition of their lawlike behavior. It is for this reason that Kant refers to transcendental logic as a "logic of truth." (A62/B87)

Hegel's Logic compares with Kant's conception of a transcendental logic in that it does not make reference to empirical objects or principles and, unlike pure general logic, is not devoid of content. However, while, like the Kantian categories, the Hegelian categories are pure thoughts, it is in the specification of the nature of the content of these pure thoughts that the relation of Hegel's to Kant's logic becomes problematic. Whereas for Kant the content of pure thought is *objecthood* relative to a consideration of the the sensuous conditions of space and time, for Hegel space and time do not enter into any such definition of the content of pure thought. For, although it would be correct to say that Hegel's categories, along with the rules or principles which govern their meaningfulness, indicate how we must reason with respect to the world and the things in it, the concept of objecthood relative to sensuous experience is not within the domain of the speculative logic. What, then, does constitute the central content of Hegel's Logic?

We can turn to Kant again in order to anchor, by way of contrast, our characterization of the content of Hegel's Logic.

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<sup>1</sup>A55/B79. For Hegel's own explication of this distinction see Logik I, 46-47; 61-62.

Kant distinguished between a "transcendental analytic," which examines the function of those concepts and judgments that apply to the data of experience, and a "transcendental dialectic," which provides a critique of the use of concepts when their application goes beyond the limits of spatio-temporal experience. Kant claimed that such an application involves "dialectical illusion," and the point of his critique of this "illusion" was to show how thought will lead to unresolvable antinomies or paradoxes when it attempts to use concepts to gain knowledge of things which are not subject to sense-experience, e.g. knowledge of things-in-themselves, noumena, the "unconditioned" object, the supersensible, etc. Kant referred to these types of concepts as concepts of pure reason or "transcendental ideas." (A311/B368) Despite the fact that the faculty of reason is naturally led to speculate about such ideas and to attempt to derive knowledge with them, they cannot be used to produce cognitive knowledge at all. At best these ideas can serve a regulative or heuristic function for the systematic organization of knowledge; and any attempt to employ them further as an organon for knowledge, i.e. as an instrument for the production of objective truths, is for Kant entirely mistaken.

Hegel's Logic is a sort of "transcendental dialectic" but with an epistemological significance that Kant could not allow it to have, for Hegel takes up at least some of what Kant would call "transcendental ideas" and attempts to constitute them into an organon for knowledge. Moreover, Hegel characterizes the "movement" of concepts in his logic as a *dialectic*, although this now has a positive as well as negative significance. In other words, speculative dialectic is for Hegel neither a sophistical play of illusion by pure reason nor a critique of this illusion, as it is for Kant, but rather involves an intelligible construction of meaning *via* an immanent developmental sequence of pure thought determinations. This presumption of the intelligibility and epistemological efficacy of the Hegelian categories, in having a thought content independent of reference to the sensuous conditions of the experience of an object, is where lies the divergence from Kant's treatment of the concepts of pure reason. One discovers the significance of the thought constructions employed in Hegel's Logic in the determination of their content through the principle of negation. According to this principle, any thought determination can be properly articulated only in relation to its "other" or "opposite," such that the meaning of the given concept is expressed in a conceptual synthesis of the concept and its "other." Hegel refers to this synthesis as an "identity-in-difference" in which the separateness

of the concepts is denied or abolished, but their distinctness nonetheless preserved (*Aufhebung*).

The process by which this construction takes place is called *dialectic* and it exhibits two distinct rational moments for Hegel: a moment of negative reason in which thought comes up against a "contradiction" in the pairing of opposed concepts, and a moment of positive reason in which the "contradiction" is resolved. (*Enz.* (1830), § 48, *Zu.*; 79) The first moment is roughly analogous to the operations in Kant's transcendental dialectic by which reason finds itself producing antinomies in the attempt to give a discursive account of the "transcendental ideas." The moment of positive reason in Hegel's dialectic, however, has no correlate in Kant since for the latter it is precisely the antinomies of pure reason which signal that rational thought can proceed no further, at least not for the purposes of conceptual knowledge. Hence, for Kant, there can be no meaningful attempt to provide a content for concepts, the operation of which transcends the conditions of sensuous experience. Without the material of sense-perception, which provides the content that fills out our concepts of things, concepts remain empty, and so without some sort of conceptual reference in the transcendental account to the sensuous conditions of knowledge (e.g. the schema of space and time) the treatment of pure concepts cannot remain discursive. For Hegel, however, there is a legitimate speculative accomplishment precisely in the transcending of such considerations, and this is done by changing the focus of thought from thinking about objecthood *per se* to thinking about pure thought itself. In other words, the content or subject matter of Hegel's Logic is simply thought itself without restriction to a determination of the conditions of spatio-temporal experience.

At this point we confront a question concerning the metaphysical status of Hegel's Logic. How can a speculative logic that goes beyond the Kantian transcendental logic be possible, especially given the fact that Kant presumed to have provided a definitive critique of metaphysics that ruled out such a possibility? I will situate my discussion of this matter by considering what I take to be Hegel's own critique of metaphysics in his Logic and contrasting it with the Kantian critique. In this way I believe we can articulate the way in which Hegel's speculative logic goes beyond traditional metaphysics and, in so doing, escapes the Kantian critique of pure reason.

II.

As is well known, Hegel's Logic "begins" with the category of Being and "ends" with the category of the Absolute Idea. In between this "beginning" and "ending" are a series of thought determinations which develop in a progressive "movement." Hegel often has been accused of dealing in abstract metaphysics precisely for taking the concept of Being as his starting point: for the concept of pure Being is a concept about that which is *per se* nonexperiential, an abstraction devoid of concrete characteristics and typical of the sort of thing with which traditional metaphysicians concern themselves. If Being *qua* Being sets the theme of Hegel's Logic then it might not seem unnatural to conclude that the whole of this work must deal with metaphysical abstractions.

However, Hegel himself recognizes the philosophical deficiency of the concept of Being when he states that because of its lack of determinateness, its emptiness, it must be found to be identical with the concept of Nothing. (*Logik* I, 68ff; 82ff) Hegel is well aware of the paradox involved here, for he acknowledges that it is not the intention of thought when thinking of Being to think of Nothing, since these concepts are initially presumed to have opposite meanings. Nevertheless, when we attempt to fix a determination of Being simply as Being we find that it has none, that like the concept of Nothing its referent is pure indeterminacy. Moreover, conceptual thought is caught in a dilemma in which it must, at least according to the rules of ordinary understanding, affirm exclusively either the identity or the distinctness of these concepts, and yet it finds itself affirming both. This impasse can be described as the movement of thought to and fro between the concepts of Being and Nothing, or as the passing of each concept into the other. The impasse is resolved only when thought steps back or distances itself, as it were, from this oscillation and recognizes that there is indeed a moment of determinateness found in thinking these concepts. Thought recognizes that the very *movement of thought* in this conceptual conundrum constitutes the *content* of its thinking, and this movement is signified in the concept of Becoming. Thus, Becoming, as the first form of *dialectical* thought, can be understood as the "conceptual synthesis" of Being and Nothing.

What has just been sketched out is a rough account of what one might understand to be taking place at the first stage of Hegel's Logic. It would also be a source of difficulty, not to say

mystification, to those non-Hegelians who have problems in understanding how a determinate content can be generated from vacuousness. However, there is a refinement of this explication which may help us avoid the conclusion that the dialectic of Being and Nothing is simply a piece of fantasy. Surprisingly, this alternative or, better, enriched account, concedes that there can be no real conceptual development from concepts which are themselves vacuous, and hence that there can be no substantial transition from Being to Nothing, to Becoming.<sup>2</sup> But if this is so, then precisely what is taking place here conceptually?

Let us say that for Hegel the attempt to think determinately of Being is at the outset to be considered as an hypothesis, that is, as an attempted conceptual positing which may, or may not, be successful. Let us also suppose that the circumstance of discovering that thinking about Being converts into thinking about Nothing constitutes, at this initial level of understanding, a failure of thought to accomplish what it set out to do. The question is, what went wrong? What goes wrong here involves a mistake which is consistently made by traditional metaphysics (and for all of his criticism of metaphysics even by Kant himself). The mistake, to put it in Heideggerian terminology, is to violate the "ontological difference" between Being and things. In other words, the mistake lies in the attempt to think of Being as if it were a kind of thing or entity, apprehendable through the logic of ordinary things, the logic of the understanding (*Verstand*).

Let us, for the moment, jump ahead to the second division of the Logic, where Hegel criticizes the ordinary way of treating the principles of identity and contradiction. According to the maxim of excluded middle, as Hegel sees it, any determination of the identity of a thing requires an "essential difference" such that "Of two opposite predicates the one only can be assigned to anything, and there is no third possible." (*Enz.* (1830), § 119, *Anm.*; 172) This "maxim of opposition" holds that a thing's identity is a simple self-relation, which "controverts" the idea that identity involves relation to an opposite. Here the "abstract" understanding attempts to avoid contradiction by holding that "A must be either +A or -A." (*Enz.* (1830), § 119, *Anm.*; 172) However, the Positive and the Negative are not indifferent but

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<sup>2</sup>Cf. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Hegel's Dialectic*, tr. P. Christopher Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976) 87-91.

are "intrinsically conditioned by one another," like North Pole and South Pole. (*Enz.* (1830), § 119, *Zu.*; 173) The underlying problem, for Hegel, is that the understanding takes the very categories of reflection—identity and difference—as one-sided abstractions put into opposition to the neglect of their complementarity.

Now when we take Being as the first definition of the Absolute, then the positing of the concept of Being in a manner consistent with the maxim "either/or" of *Verstand* requires that this concept exclude from itself that which is other to it, or which stands in opposition to it. The logic of *Verstand* indeed presupposes that in any positing there must be a rigorous conceptual limitation or definition of content through differentiation from otherness. However, because of its indeterminateness the concept of Being appears, paradoxically, to be identical to its other, which is also ostensibly its opposite, the concept of Nothing. This identity violates the "either/or" maxim and thus produces a contradiction to thought: Being and Nothing are absolutely distinct and opposed in their meaning, and yet they are identical in their pure indeterminacy. In the face of this contradiction the logic of *Verstand* breaks down, that is, it simply cannot make sense of its own conceptual positing of Being.

Hegel's discussion of this failure can be read as a critique of the metaphysical assumption that in the positing of Being, which is implicitly the positing of the totality of what is (the Absolute), Being is to be thought of as an entity of some sort and thus must conform to the logic which governs the conceptualization of finite *things*.<sup>3</sup> Hegel challenges this assumption by showing that no meaningful determination of Being can take place on this procedure; but, unlike Kant, his solution is not to eliminate any articulation of such concepts but rather to substitute for the logic of *Verstand* the rule of higher reason (*Vernunft*) which operates according to the principle of dialectical negation. This principle allows Hegel to sublimate metaphysics: to annul the form of its discourse, which presents its subject matter in the form of mere objecthood, while preserving its content which is constituted in the thought of the totality of what is. This content is preserved dialectically in the concept of Becoming which indicates that the Absolute must be thought of,

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<sup>3</sup>Cf. *Enz.* (1830), § 28, *Anm.*; 48-50. Also, § 119; 171-174. See also C. W. Webb, "Hegel's Reasoning," *Idealistic Studies*, VIII (1978) 206-219; B. C. Birchall, "Hegel's Notion of *Aufheben*," *Inquiry*, XXIV (1981) 79-83.

at least initially, as *process* and transition rather than as *thing* or entity. Thus, Hegel's concept of Becoming can be viewed as the first legitimate speculative moment of the Logic, the first adequate concept for thinking about the Absolute.

Although the concept of Becoming is sometimes referred to as the "synthesis" of Being and Nothing, this is a bit misleading given our recognition that a determinate thought content cannot be generated from mere vacuousness. Rather, as Gadamer has put it, "Being and Nothing are more to be treated as analytical moments in the concept of Becoming." (89) In other words, the concepts of Being and Nothing do not refer to pre-given positional determinations but rather indicate only relative positionality with respect to the concept of process or transition. As Hegel states it, the "maxim" of Becoming is "that Being is the passage into Nought, and Nought the passage into Being." (*Enz.* (1830), § 88, *Anm.*; 131. Cf. *Logik* I, 90-92; 105-106) This means that the concept of Becoming expresses the inseparableness of the concepts of Being and Nothing such that each are moments which "vanish" one into the other in the form of a "coming-to-be" (passing from nothingness into a state of being) and a "ceasing-to-be" (passing from a state of being into nothingness). What Hegel is attempting to capture here is not an analysis of temporal movement, but rather the pure logical structure of transition itself in which the concepts of Being and Nothing make sense solely in terms of their function as polarities that signal dialectical process. In the course of this explication the concepts of Being and Nothing lose their original intended significance as absolute determinations and now come to indicate vectors within the dynamic of Becoming. Again, as Gadamer has stated it, "[t]hey balance each other out, as it were, insofar as there is no other determination than the directionality implied in 'from-to', which in turn is determined only by the difference in direction." (90) Thus, the initial attempt to conceive of Being as an absolutely self-contained and determinate totality leads, to borrow again from Heidegger, to the concept of *Be-ing* as a dynamic flowing forth, or Hegel's concept of Becoming.

### III.

I have suggested above that Hegel's observations about the attempt to think determinately of Being *qua* Being are in a fundamental way reflections on the whole metaphysical tradi-



tion.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, we can view Hegel's critique of metaphysics as a critique of its mode of discourse, a critique of its attempt to conceive of the Absolute according to the logic of *Verstand* which provides conceptual standards that are adequate to finite objects of explanation but inadequate to the very principles of intelligibility themselves. Unlike Kant, however, Hegel does not reject the intended project of metaphysics altogether, which is the attempt to conceive of and articulate the nature of the Absolute.<sup>5</sup> Rather, this project must be translated into a coherent science through a reconsideration of the nature of the subject matter of speculative philosophy. This takes place initially with the concept of Becoming as the category of Reason (*Vernunft*) which provides the "truth" or meaning of Being and Nothing; but for Hegel this is still only a point of departure. As he puts it, "as the first concrete thought-term, Becoming is the first adequate vehicle of truth....[E]ven Becoming, however, taken at its best on its own ground, is an extremely poor term; it needs to grow in depth and weight of meaning." (*Enz.* (1830), § 88, *Zu.*; 132) Thus, it is only in the full development of the conceptual relations that follow in the Logic that an adequate specification of what is implied in the initial standpoint of Becoming can be provided. Without going into a detailed exposition of this whole development I would like to offer an overall view of its significance with respect to Hegel's sublation of metaphysics.

We might notice that despite the change in perspective which is provided in the concept of Becoming, when thinking totalistically about what *is*, there is still a danger lurking with the idea that the totality of what *is* must be thought of fundamentally in terms of process or transition. The danger is that process itself can still be thought of in the merely substantial mode, that is, as a movement which subsists in itself as a simple unity.<sup>6</sup> In order to move beyond this position—which, though less abstract than the concept of Being, is nonetheless abstract

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<sup>4</sup>Cf. *Logik* I, 48-49; 63-64. See also Rüdiger Bübner, *Modern German Philosophy* (Cambridge: University Press, 1981) 164; Alain Manville, "Hegel and Metaphysics," *Telos*, XLII (1979-1980) 107-116.

<sup>5</sup>As Lasson put it in his introduction to the 1923 edition of the *Wissenschaft der Logik*: "Die Voraussetzung für ein wissenschaftliches System, man mag es ein System der Erkenntnis oder der Wahrheit nennen, bildet der Begriff der Totalität." (Meiner Verlag, xxx).

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Manville, 115.

and lacking in concreteness—the principle of dialectical negation must be enriched. This enrichment occurs further along in the Logic with the category of Being-for-self. Here the idea that a posited determination must be articulated with respect to its negation or other (as Being is articulated with respect to Nothing) is made more explicit with the idea that any given qualitative determination (determinate being) must be viewed not only in its positive aspect, as it is in itself apart from all other determinations (Being-in-itself), but also in its negative aspect, that is, as it stands in relation to other determinations (Being-for-another). Here the principle that "determination is negation" comes to the fore in the recognition that a thing or quality must be determined or defined with respect to its limits or boundaries, and that further these latter are also determined by something else, the qualitative-other of the determination. However, since a given determination has its self-identity only in the face of limitation *via* otherness, in order for this identity to be self-constituted otherness must itself be negated—a negation of the negation. This second negation does not abolish otherness but, on the contrary, incorporates it as a moment along with the original positive side of the initial determination such that we now have a relation of self-limitation or self-determination. (*Logik* I, 144-147; 157-159) Thus, in the category of Being-for-self we have the logical structure of self-relation (reflection-into-self) as a fundamental feature of reality considered absolutely.

This concept of Being-for-self not only occupies the place of a specific category in Hegel's Logic but is also a major principle governing the whole of the Logic's development. We might say that this principle is meta-logical, or in Terry Pinkard's words "a concept in which the logic of the other concepts can be stated."<sup>7</sup> In Being-for-self the reflexivity of all the logical categories is given explicit expression, along with the idea that determination *via* negation is ultimately a matter of self-determination. With this principle Hegel is able to develop conceptual unity throughout the progression of logical categories, no matter what the particular relational content may be. Although the specific focus of Hegel's discussion of Being-for-self in the Logic is the idea of a qualitative unit, the basic principle applies throughout the categories of the Doctrine of Essence, where the idea of reflection-into-self is given further

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<sup>7</sup>Terry Pinkard, "The Logic of Hegel's Logic," Journal of the History of Philosophy, XVII (1979) 427.

refinement with respect to various conceptual dualisms, e.g. essence and appearance, and finally in the Doctrine of the Concept where another significant shift in the level of discourse takes place. There Hegel provides an account of the concept (*Begriff*) of the determinations of the Absolute, which means that he gives a meta-logical account of conceptuality itself which is intended to ground his previous accounts in the divisions on Being and Essence.<sup>8</sup> This meta-logical account continues to follow the principle of Being-for-self, except that now the idea of self-relatedness operates in the context of the inner relation of the Concept (understood generically) to itself. In other words, a shift in discourse occurs from the "objective" to the "subjective" mode in treating of the content of the Logic such that the Absolute is now characterized in terms of immanent self-relation, a dynamic which is isomorphic with the structure of the "I" or pure self-consciousness. (*Logik* III, 17-19; 583-585)

However, the "subjectification" involved in the shift from Essence to Concept should not be taken to imply that objectivity has been annulled or eliminated, since the self-relatedness of the Concept, or of any specific concept for that matter, is determined through the relation to its other, to its *object*. (Thus, the Concept cannot be thought of as some sort of logical demiurge from which objects are produced). Indeed, the subjectification engendered in the move to the logic of the Concept functions much like Kant's "transcendental unity of apperception" in that it provides a principle of organization and unity for objectivity from the side of pure thought. The important difference here between Kant and Hegel on the role of subjectivity is this: whereas for Kant the unity of apperception can apply only to individuated subjects who organize incoming phenomenal representations into particular objective unities (finite objects), for Hegel the Concept is a generic principle of intelligibility which applies also to the Absolute. This is not something merely represented in thought or constructed on the basis of the reception of data from the outside but is an activity of self-making which is infinitely present to itself, and in which the "ontological distance" traditionally found between subject and object is significantly diminished. The Concept, therefore, is a principle of organization that is wholly immanent in the very objectivity it renders intelligible, *because* it is the principle or criterion of any such intelligibility, and in this way it differs

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<sup>8</sup>Pinkard, 428-429.

significantly both from the principles of traditional metaphysics, which are reified into transcendent entities, and from the principles of Kant's transcendental philosophy which, at the other extreme, remain purely formal and subjective. Once the Concept is made the object of Hegel's discussion of self-relatedness one can see that the focal content of the Logic comprises explicitly, as it had been implicitly, principles of intelligibility of the most all encompassing and far-reaching sort. In effect, the Logic can be viewed primarily as an exercise in generic theory of explanation.

#### IV.

There are two further points I wish to address in the overall characterization of Hegel's speculative logic. The first point concerns the reflexivity that is built into this speculative logic as a thinking about thought. This reflexivity is exhibited in the application of the principle of Being-for-self to various categorial levels in the Logic. When also applied to the Concept itself this reflexivity consists in the fact that what holds good for the content of speculative discourse, which are pure thought determinations, also holds good for the form of discourse itself. Thus, speculative discourse about the Concept, about intelligibility itself, takes place at a level of pure metathought in which there is no essential indifference between the content and the thinking about the content, or between subject and object. This is why Hegel uses the Aristotelean phrase "thought thinking itself" in characterizing the activity of speculative logic and why he understands such a logic to have a definite autonomy in the providing for itself of its content.<sup>9</sup> While this may well have a distinct metaphysical sound to one's ears, we must remember that what is involved here is not the postulation of supra-worldly entities or processes but rather the formulation of fundamental concepts and principles which govern all conceptual explanation. That is, Hegel's Logic is to be viewed as a project in categorial reconstruction in which, through the systematic redescription of these concepts, an attempt is made "to provide

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<sup>9</sup>As R. Bübner expresses it: "The Science of Logic may consequently be called the theory to which there is no further metatheory, because it furnishes its own metatheory." (165)

the most general conceptual framework for all the sciences."<sup>10</sup> Hegel is well aware of the self-reference involved in such a project, where the standpoint from which the account is given must also be included in that account, and he is clearly concerned that his dialectical development of categories remains consistent with itself, which requires that the rule of dialectical negation be applied so that no categorial or even trans-categorial standpoint can escape its function. Thus, at the highest stage of this development, attained with the Absolute Idea, the point at which this process of reconstruction has run its course, thought must achieve an all-inclusiveness with respect to its form and content.

The Absolute Idea can be considered as the ultimate concept-principle of the system, the point at which the method or dynamic of the entire Logic is summed up, where the reflexivity or self-reference in the development of thought determinations reaches a completion or closure.<sup>11</sup> This means that the Absolute Idea is the final conceptual standpoint at which the method of the entire system becomes reflected upon, where method becomes itself the thematic object of consideration.<sup>12</sup> However, on further reflection it turns out that the method of the system is identical with the Concept which has itself as its own subject matter, i.e. "the method is the consciousness of the form of the inner self-movement of the content of logic." (*Logik* I, 37; 53) In this notion of method, the science of logic "exhibits itself as a *circle* returning upon itself, the end being wound back to the beginning." (*Logik* I, 252; 842) This reflexivity does not imply that the principle of negation has been transcended but only that, having progressively

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<sup>10</sup>Terry Pinkard, "Hegel's Idealism and Hegel's Logic," *Zeitschrift für Philosophische Forschung*, XXX (1979) 211. Cf. Klaus Hartmann, "Hegel: A Non-Metaphysical View," in *Hegel: A Collection of Essays*, ed. Alisdair MacIntyre (Notre Dame: University Press, 1976) 110. In *Logik* I, 17-18; 39, Hegel says that "the science of logic in dealing with the thought determinations which in general run through our mind instinctively and unconsciously—and even when they become part of the language do not become objects of our attention—will also be a reconstruction [*Rekonstruktion*] of those which are singled out by reflection and are fixed by it as subjective forms external to the matter and import of the determinations of thought."

<sup>11</sup>As Klaus Hartmann puts it: "The final stance, concept, or thought or idea, stands for complete integration, for non-difference and non-indifference, for closure or all-inclusion; i.e. all these are the meaning of the terminal category. In it, rationality has come full circle." (107)

<sup>12</sup>Cf. Pinkard, "The Logic of Hegel's Logic," 431.

enriched the concept of intelligibility throughout the developmental reconstruction of philosophical categories, thought is now able to think totalistically, to think the Absolute in terms of the pure method which generates its own content—not a creation *ex nihilo* but a creation of a content of thought from systematic thought itself. Here the Absolute is conceived as a self-identical totality, not in the manner of Being which was an immediate or simple self-identity, but as an inherently unstable identity, a unity or totality permeated with "negativity," and thus, at the meta-level of discourse, a unity of identity (self-relatedness) and difference (otherness).

Due to the reflexivity of thought-thinking-thought, i.e. thought-thinking the grounds of its own intelligibility, the Absolute Idea is the grasping of thought by itself in its infinitude, in its unlimited capacity for reflection-into-self. Here "infinitude" refers to the universal activity of thought as a self-determining movement and it can be likened to a recursive function or "the representation of a sequence by a rule which shows what would happen if the sequence were followed out."<sup>13</sup> There is nothing inherently mysterious about such an infinity since it is merely a way of characterizing the structural intelligibility of a rule or principle independent of empirical considerations or finite application. Moreover, when intelligibility itself becomes the object of discussion, and the ontological distance between subject and object is thus diminished, infinity characterizes the circular continuum on which subject and object are correlates functioning as interweaving moments, rather than remaining in an absolute duality.

My second point has to do with Hegel's famous equation of thinking and reality. This identification has been a well-known issue of contention, especially with those critics who charge Hegel with holding a philosophical idealism, understood as the view that whatever exists is mental or is based ontologically upon absolute mind. Hegel in his own time was not unprepared for such a criticism when he wrote that "the identity of being and thought is not however to be taken in a concrete sense, as if we could say that a stone, so far as it has being, is the same as a thinking man. A concrete thing is always very different

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<sup>13</sup>Terry Pinkard, "Hegel's Philosophy of Mathematics," Phenomenology and Phenomenological Research, XLI (1981) 464.

from the abstract category as such."<sup>14</sup>

In what sense, however, is the identity of thinking and reality to be taken? Our discussion of the reflexivity in Hegel's Logic already provides a clue, for the operation of negativity in the positing of thought determinations has a twofold result: not only do we learn that thought destabilizes all abstract determinations such that successively higher standpoints of self-relatedness are required in order to apprehend conceptual truths, but the very nature of objective reality itself must be such that it truly contains a reflection-into-self. Thus, the process of objective reality and the process of thought which is aimed at conceiving this reality must be structurally correlative and isomorphic. Put another way, there can be no absolute indifference or antithetic relation of otherness between objective reality and explanatory thought since this reality is logically and conceptually determined in principles of intelligibility. Or again, the principles of explanation are immanent in the reality they explain, they provide the logic of what *is* and in this sense are ontological, as opposed to merely "transcendental" categories which govern the structuring process in subjective cognition without any implication as to the structure of reality in and for itself.<sup>15</sup> Thus, if Hegel's Logic presupposes anything, it is not the claim that all reality is mental in its fundamental nature but that the intelligibility of objective reality is constituted in principles that are also principles intrinsic to thought itself.

In concluding this examination, one should note that *identity* in its speculative philosophical meaning is never simple for Hegel. The identity of thought and reality is their identity-in-difference, which means on the one hand that they are identical in form *qua* process of structuration, and hence the

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<sup>14</sup> Enz. (1830), § 88, Ann.; 132. Cf. § 96, Ann.; 141, where Hegel explains the "ideality" of Being-for-self. Here it is clear that for Hegel idealism is a logical notion based on the structure of Being-for-self as an all-pervasive principle, and not a doctrine derived from a rational psychology or metaphysical dogmatism. Moreover: "Properly speaking, ideality is not somewhat outside of and beside reality: the notion of ideality lies in its being the truth of reality. That is to say, when reality is explicitly put as what it implicitly is, it is at once seen to be ideality...an ideality external to it or it may be even beyond reality, would be no better than an empty name."

<sup>15</sup> "Thought is an expression which attributes the determination contained therein primarily to consciousness. But inasmuch as it is said that understanding, reason, is in the objective world, that mind and nature have universal laws to which their life and changes conform, then it is conceded that the determinations of thought equally have objective value and existence." (Logik I, 35; 51)

Hegelian dictum that "the real is rational."<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, the distinction between thought and reality must be maintained since reality, besides containing reason, also contains contingency, accident and uncertainty. (*Logik* I, 380-385; 541-546)<sup>17</sup> The Logic, however, does not deal concretely with these other matters, nor with concrete universals of any sort (which is the task of Hegel's *Realphilosophie*). It is one of the most common and mistaken views of Hegel's Logic that as an ontology it must provide the necessary and sufficient conditions for the existence of anything whatsoever, such as this pen with which I am now writing. But nothing about what actually exists can be deduced from the Logic, for as a logic of being, or better of becoming, or better yet of the self-related Absolute, it is a logic of structure and significance, not a logic of existence, actual or possible. Because the principles of speculative logic explain not just the logic of what *is* but also the logic of thought itself, of the essence of Reason, the program of the Logic as thought thinking itself involves no reduction of matter to mind, or of the percept to the concept, but is rather a systematic reconstruction of concepts in order to establish their validity as categories of intelligibility, both subjective and objective. This is possible because in the speculative enterprise the dualisms and reductionisms of traditional metaphysical thought are transcended, and along with these the ultimately dualistic, and even sceptical, character of Kant's own critical philosophy.

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. Stanley Rosen, G.W.F. Hegel: An Introduction to the Science of Wisdom (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974) 42.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Logik II, 380-385; 541-546, and Enz. (1830) §§ 142ff., for Hegel's explication of the category of Actuality. For discussion of the role of contingency in Hegel's Logic see George di Giovanni, "The Category of Contingency in the Hegelian Logic," and John Burbidge, "The Necessity of Contingency: An Analysis of Hegel's Chapter on Actuality in the Science of Logic," both in Art and Logic in Hegel's Philosophy, eds. Warren E. Steinkraus and Kenneth L. Schmitz (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1980) 210-217 and 219-232 respectively.