



The ins and outs of his philosophy were already formulated in the Phenomenology. Largely, it deals with dichotomous aspects of being and the process of uniting them into consciousness; e.g. individuality/universality; subjectivity/objectivity, mediation/immediation etc etc. Through the Absolute Idea these dichotomies are reconciled and united after a process of ambivalent interplay. I don't know what the underlying German word was for the term here translated as "idea", but undoubtedly it's background is the Greek term "eidos" which plays an essential role in the writings of Plato and Aristotle. Not exactly sure as to what differentiates Hegel's use of "idea" in this work and his use of "geist" (spirit/mind) in the Phenomenology. The difference seems to be semantic as far as I can tell. I couldn't see what it was that distinguishes "idea" from "geist" in the two works. It seems that for all intents and purposes their role is largely the same, practically speaking.

My criticisms are largely the same as they were for the Phenomenology; namely, that Hegel overly conflates theological/philosophical distinctions. This is somewhat understandable when one notes that universality for Hegel seems to preclude all difference and distinction.

"Being is the becoming of essence" Hegel says, and by this he means that the first two sections are a dialectical recapitulation of Spinoza. But Spinoza revealed only the nature of the object, which is a negation, and so Hegel, being very positive minded, in the third and last section, reunites the object with the subject in the second and final affirmation (the negation of negation) that reveals the inseparability of the two sides (which, on the surface, appears to be a union of the profundities of Eastern combined with Western religious thought, but there's calculus and chemistry too; all the opposing forces in nature, by the way, are included, as far as early 19th century science goes, and sound less like a scientific textbook and more like, everytime, a quite anthropomorphic meeting of the Girondins and Jacobins!), or the immanent with the transcendent, and vice versa, and vice versa and again and again because every side is inseparable with its opposite, on and on.

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a headache than Hegel's Logic\|", and few, or none, can penetrate this level of technical verbosity).

In reading the Science of Logic once again, one is always conscious that the spirit of speculation which is one with the dialectic often requires us to dispense with the \|"common-sense\|" wisdom of pop philosophy; in order to appreciate Hegel's thought for what it is, we must rescue Hegel from his would-be devotees.

Notion is not actuality; it is actuality set against itself, against the rational 'could-be.' The concrete intervenes to drive away the spectre of Humean abstraction and the madness of sceptical philosophy's formalisms and sophistic word-games. Indeed: reality is incomplete without its notion, and here is a spectacular comment on the failure of the Revolution to live up to itself. As Hegel writes, \|"being and Essence are the moments of its becoming; but the Notion is their foundation and truth, as that identity in which they have been submerged and are contained.\|" (vol. 2, p. 211) Likewise, the much maligned concept of the \|"absolute\|" is never the final word, but a \|"new beginning,\|" forever and always; it is essentially, as Marx rightfully corrected it, a **historical** category (due emphasis is made upon this point, notwithstanding her overzealous prose, by Raya Dunayevskaya).

The absolute represents a new social totality, a plateau of knowledge secure in its earthly station, a new library erected in the desert, preserving its \|"absolute knowledge\|" in anticipation of redemption; but oh, let us hear from Aristotle: \|"Time crumbles things; everything grows old under the power of Time and is forgotten through the lapse of Time.\|" There is no such thing as an 'End of History,' at least according to Hegel; each end, each lapse of time, is always relative to its own immanent moment and the potentialities contained within it.

There are utterly priceless kernels of insight in Hegel's system, like those of other great philosopher's, e.g., Kant's, that can not be rightly dismissed by calling his overall work \|"idealist,\|" \|"speculative,\|" \|"positivist,\|" \|"imperialist,\|" etc.

His criticisms of Kantian idealism are cogent, relevant, and incisive; a must read for would-be neo-Kantians (including contemporary anti-realist / pragmatist social epistemology or ethics proponents in analytic, continental, and political theory programs). And his paradigmatic insights into the necessarily dialectical, and reiterative, processes of objective meaning & truth construction from voids of non-meaning, opposition, and identification are still broadly significant, and simply brilliant. Before Adorno, it was Hegel who called the ambitions of dominant epistemology into question in the name of objectivity.

There is for Hegel historical profess, kinda of like how we now recognize human rights (heck animal rights) and stuff in ways that our historical ancestors did not. German Idealism while very analytic, is a historical period to be studied today and not generally the basis for how one makes life decisions. While Hegel loves the number 3- the chapter on Judgement contains a four fold division that kinda ruins the whole trinity thing he had going on.

Attempts at defining logic before Hegel were grounded in the belief that a separation exists between the content of knowledge and its form of truth. In other words, that the material world properly existed in-itself outside of thinking. Thinking in this sense, is therefore deficient in that it is but empty speculation without drawing from this mysterious nominal physical world—in this illustration, thinking thus fills itself up with the nectar of the material world, producing \|"knowledge.\|" This presupposes that the material object stands completed in its actuality, self-sufficiently. If this reminds you of Kant, you'd be correct—Hegel makes copious reference to Kant, some flattering, many no-so flattering, making it clear that that, though he holds no high regard for Kant's antinomies of pure reason, his investigation of the necessity of contradiction in thought is admirable, even if when confronted with antinomy Kant must direct the reader to the walled garden of faith rather than the contemplation of the absolute idea. In a footnote, Hegel calls this primary facet of Kant's philosophy \|"a cushion for an intellectual indolence which takes comfort in the fact that everything is already proved and settled,\|" leaving us with nought but (unexamined) categories of understanding against a world we must beg to comprehend.

The Logic then, is a treatise against any claim to Truth provided by premises based upon simple analytic \|"A = A self-identity\|". I'd argue that it would be difficult to find an element more central to Hegel's project. Hegel is insisting that such self-identity produces meaningless tautologies... that any philosophy of self identity would need to fall back on these meaningless tautologies. Their over-reliance on being (as a fossilized category) is what produces its meaninglessness. On the contrary, contradiction is what is integral to identity. The former \|"A = A\|" identity is the analytic of identity, which, while being merely \|"correct\|" cannot bring Truth. Rather, this can only be done through the **synthetic** of identity, which sees contradiction as integral to the self-moveming activity of identity and difference. Hegel time and again brings up that Plato and Socrates waged war against those who would base their argumentation from mere posited grounds. Instead, Plato advocated for the examination of the idea, or a

fact in its concept. Real ground is therefore recognized as posited, thus returning ground... to itself... as the ground is perpetuated by the "indifference of its content."

Against this complacency, Hegel urges us to learn to liberate ourselves from the fear of the natural object is defined in terms of its ground... or, liberate ourselves from a point of view which can be summarized as "truth is the agreement of thought with subject matter," a mere "correctness" which produces an imbalance that puts undue emphasis in the completeness of the world external to us. Hegel calls this "ordinary phenomenal consciousness," but can also be named understanding (a stable system of parts in relation to a synchronic whole), separate from knowledge. The problem lies in the fact that the ordinary phenomenal consciousness takes understanding as synonymous with reason itself... what follows is a misunderstanding of the task of reason proper, taking the limitations of the understanding (as all entities understood contain an unrecognized/unconsidered underside) as limitations of reason itself. Knowledge then lapses into mere opinion. Once again, much like the war Plato waged against the Sophists, this lapse into the trap of mere subjective opinion is precisely what Hegel is trying to battle.

This "passing over" is a reciprocity between categories of understanding usually taken to be fixed which end up in the collapsing of these categories themselves though their own *internal* self development. At the center of this self-development is the "shining of reflection" which understands the subject as the realization of the predicate, which is another way of saying the subject in a real sense *determines* the predicate, thus altering it in its realization by way of its immediate categorical indifference. Reflection is the relationship which relates the absolute of either the inner (being) or outer (essence) as external to it within the formal moments of actuality, possibility, and necessity.

The propulsive power between basic categories of being and nothing is, crucially, becoming. This means that being and nothing do not have an exclusive relationship from each other, but are caused by one another in such a way that they depend on one another in an equilibrium of coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be, as becoming collects itself in what Hegel calls a "quiescent unity." Hegel says that,

"[...] becoming is the vanishing of being and nothing in general; but at the same time it rests on their being distinct. It therefore contradicts itself in itself, because what it unites within itself is self-opposed; but such a union destroys itself."

A very significant passage, to say the least. Becoming is then defined as the the transition into the unity of being and nothing, giving shape to it. This immediate unity of the "shape" is what Hegel calls "existence." Existence is a moment within being and non-being which results in "determinateness," or, qualities which make up a reality. Reality (sort of like a "real-ness" rather than "real") is a determinateness which conceals the primary negation being being and non-being. Thus, the qualities which make up this reality are preserved *only in conflict.*

This contradiction (at base, a contradiction between being and nothing realized in becoming, or stable categories as realized in movement, vice-versa) has significant consequences—every determinacy is made up of two moments, one of being for itself and another of being for another. Its simple identity is therefore contingent on its being for another.

"When reality, taken in the sense of a determinate quality as in the said definition of God, is made to transgress its determinateness, it ceases to be reality, it becomes abstract being; God as the pure reality in all realities, or as the sum total of all realities, is the same empty absolute, void of determination and content, all of which is one."

These passages struck me as similar to those found in the Phenomenology, where self-consciousness is involved a recognition of the other as self... our being for others. This is the internal contradiction within the individual, without *merely* being a contradiction. The internal collapse of the finite is not just a collapse but a resolution to a contradiction—that only through perishing, perishing itself perishes. I can't help but think of Lacan and the split subject. We are only self-identical through uniting with ourselves. Thus the unity with something "with itself, being-for-other is identical with its in-itself; the being-for-other is this in the something. The determinateness thus reflected into itself is therefore again a simple existent and hence a quality—determination."

"Such an other, which is the other by its own determination, is *physical nature*; nature is the *other of spirit*; this, its determination, is at first a mere relativity expressing not a quality of nature itself but only a reference external to it. But since spirit is the true something, and hence nature is what is within only in contrast to spirit, taken for itself the quality of nature is just this, to be the other within, that *which-exists-outside-itself* (in the determinations of space, time matter.)"

Accordingly, logic is to be understood as the system of pure reason, as the realm of pure thought. This realm is truth unveiled, truth as it is in and for itself. It can therefore be said that this content is the exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and of a finite spirit."

So, spirit is the movement of thought within the finite—though the finite is, paradoxically, not insufficient in contrast to the infinite... the determination defines the finite. While the finite cannot alone be said to strictly "exist" the finite passes over the infinite, appearing as an externality, creating an emptiness beyond the finite. As this is the case, "the limit" arises, yet the movement of the limit can be defined as a "contradiction that propels the finite beyond itself." This is illustrated as the point which is itself the becoming of the line, which is the becoming of the plane, which is the becoming of total space. Retroactively, the point has always been defined by the line, as the line has been always already defined by the plane, and the plan within total space. This establishes originary elements and principles which make up "the limit" which is immanent to something. We come to realize a *higher* principle which encompasses the point, line and place... "space"... which accounts for the continual performance of all the elements within itself. In this movement, where one principle contains the movement of its transgression within itself, means nothing other than the hour of birth of such finite things is also the hour of their death. In other words, "[...] the cause does not just have an effect but, in the effect, refers as cause back to itself."

The spirit is thus the interruption of the originary principle. In this sense, logic is a movement which, insofar as infinite and finite, predicate and subject, only make sense in relation to one and the other, and therefore find a reciprocal determination with one another, the position of the coordinates of understanding are revealed to be mere moments in the movement of the spirit. Reflection brings to bear the shining of the absolute as the absolute's identical positing of itself. The essential relation is, therefore, an expression of a whole and parts which have reciprocal influence on one another. Both the whole and the parts have pretensions to independence, yet are revealed by reflection to have equal subsistence in one another. Summarily, this is nothing other than saying that the sum of the parts is *simply* equal to the whole, yet both lesser to (in the sense that they find their subsistence in the whole) and greater than (in the sense that they complete the whole itself) the whole. Likewise, the total whole is *simply* equal to the sum of the parts, yet is both lesser than (in the sense that it requires the parts for its realization) the whole and greater than (in the sense that the parts seek a unity in the whole to realize their expression) the parts. Neither are able to subsist on their own, and thus are pressed on into an infinite progress due to the incapacity to bring together a flush fitting of the whole and the parts—a resolution which takes the form of a "negative unity" defined by Hegel as force. Force is that active, self-propelling contradiction rooted in the whole and the parts relationship to themselves as a self-referring negative unity reveals the concrete as but a passing moment... or something like that. Being posited by an other and its own becoming are one and the same.

Thus, in reflection on these moments, what we take to be "infinite" in our limited understanding is often revealed as limited in-itself, or, what Hegel calls the "bad infinite." The bad infinite is most simply defined as an infinite which is limited to the realm of the understanding. It functions as a sort cross-section of an understanding, if I may use a crude image. The bad infinite insists upon a separation between the infinite and the finite into two different spheres. Only the bad infinite is some sort of unobtainable beyond. On the other hand, the self sublation of the finite and infinite in one process is the *true infinite*. The true infinite of reason has the affirmation of its existence through lowering itself to the finite and perpetuating the motion of "the movement" through the elevation of its (finite) principle. The true infinite allows the spirit to rise up into itself to "the light of its thinking, its universality, its freedom." This is the *infinite of reason* involved in Logic.

Ideality is this process of becoming, the quality of the infinite. This is a crucial part of the book since it comes to further define what Hegel sees as the Idealist project in philosophy... the idealism of philosophy consists in nothing else than in the recognition that the finite is not truly existent. This is due to the inherent contradictions involved in Being/Nothingness. It is not so much that unity and separation (being and nothingness) are "equally correct or incorrect" but that unity and separateness are both moments of ideality within one and another. Each by negating one another receive affirmation of each other.

"Inasmuch as each moment shows as a matter of fact, that it has its opposite in it, and that in this opposite it rejoins itself, the affirmative truth in this internally self-moving unity, the grasping together of both thoughts, their infinity—the reference to oneself which is not immediate but infinite."

[...]

"The is not and infinite which is an infinite beforehand, and only afterwards does it find necessary to become finite, to go forth into finitude, the infinite is rather for itself just as much finite as the finite is infinite."

It is not that a Wholly infinite bring to light contradictions within the finite—the finite as wrapped up in the infinite, also determines the infinite. Therefore, any view which would maintain the integral separability of the finite and the infinite lacks truth and is mere sophistry as it does not account for becoming. The simple immediacies of a existent determinate moment stand against that of the void, the "abstract self reference of negation," standing outside the one as existent. In becoming, a movement of moments are involved pushed along by the spirit of attraction and repulsion.

Now, here is my big wager—that it is through the positing of the concept that thought actually tangibly participates in the Absolute (which is not some "out there" concept, but always present in reality) that the subject one day overcomes its separation from the object... that the movement of becoming is supposed to lead to this overcoming. True freedom of thought, then, is this ability to work towards this overcoming. Freedom is then not an insistence on practical liberties, but the assimilation of particulars and whole to create a perfect justice(?). OK, I *might* be projecting my own sensibilities here, but I really do think this is an important facet of what Hegel is trying to do here. I am open to being very wrong on this point, however.

It is interesting to note that this freedom consists not only in simply untethering ourselves from the antagonistic relation to the object... this would also involve untethering ourselves from ourselves as subjects. In a weird way then, it is not good enough to proclaim that "God is dead" to determine your own freedom. You must also proclaim the death of the Man.

The useful insight is that Hegel's method is not merely Fichte's thesis-antithesis-synthesis, nor Kant's syllogisms; but it involves a fourth step (or a synthesis that involves an A and B sub-section, Hegel frames it both ways). The immediate positedness is negated, then the negation is negation. That final positive negation bringing back the fullness of content from an object's other is also immediate and mediated. It's totality is that which is in and for itself containing its own self-negation and immediate and mediated moments.

Within the Logik, the three books on Being (Sein), Essence (Nature/ Concept or Wesen), and Notion (Begriff) are interdependent on each other and do not represent a linear logical sequence, but what Hegel called a "circle of circles". The conclusion defines the concept of unified Being (Dasein) he begins mentions in the preface. Remember that German Time Travel show, Dark,- "Der anfang ist die ende und der ende ist der anfang// the end is the beginning and the beginning is the end"? It be like that.

The first section, Being/ Sein, pivots around his concept of Dasein- one of those many words that do not translate well into other languages. Dasein: The Ontologic Being of the personal reality. Dasein literally translates "To be there" but it is a purely philosophic concept of Being which maintains within itself an antinomy of finitude-infinity. Hegel defines Dasein in his Encyclopedia as a specific type of Being; "die Einheit des Seins und des Nichts, in der die Unmittelbarkeit dieser Bestimmungen und damit in ihrer Beziehung ihr Widerspruch verschwunden ist, – eine Einheit, in der sie nur noch Momente sind // the unity of being and nothing in which the immediacy of these determinations and thus their contradiction in their relationship has disappeared - a unity in which they are only moments".

To this day, the general definition of "logic" usually refers to the form of Aristotelian reasoning, but not the 'content' or object, nor any spiritual concept. But here in Hegel, Logik is a supernatural element: "If nature as such, as the physical world, is contrasted with the spiritual sphere, then logic must certainly be said to be the supernatural element which permeates every relationship of man to nature, his sensation, intuition, desire, need..." (L, S 14) Logik is the fundamental basis of consciousness to Hegel.

In the next two sections of Essence and Notion, Hegel dives into Idealism, Rationalism, Tautological relationships,

Teleological aspects of the human soul, Empirical observations of the human mind and the dangers of this, Kantian Ontotheology (which he largely agrees with), and the relationships between his categories.

Hegel explains his objections to Kantian thinking in Phenomenology, but he goes into extensive details here. He deconstructs Kantian Transcendentalism *Ad Nasium*. Delineating Transcendental Idealism in-between his framework of Objective and Subjective logic, he picks apart Kant's philosophy as \"analytical, not constructive\". Despite his criticism, he still defines his frameworks in relation to Kant's, breaking apart Kant's 'thing-in-itself' concept in relation to the dialectal process while quoting at length from the Critique of Pure Reason. He praises Kant and credits him as \"the impetus to the restoration of logic and dialectic in the sense of the examination of the determinations of thought in and for themselves.\" (SL S 1794)

Hegel finishes his *Logik* with a highbrow discussion on three aspects of the Idea; Life, knowledge, and absolute idea. All categories exist in the Idea, with it the \"movement\" of the concept ends. The Absolute Idea is \"the sole matter and content of philosophy. Since it contains all determinations within it.\" Consciousness sees the identity of the subjective and the objective - of in-itself and for-itself, and ultimately, the subject recognizes itself as an object and the object is therefore also the subject in the penultimate unified whole; the uniform plurality (*gleichförmige Pluralität*) of objects which maintain distinction yet are one. The Absolute Idea is \"the sole matter and content of philosophy. Since it contains all determinations within it.\"

The result of this philosophical evolution is a new form of \"absolute knowing\" within the consciousness which moves beyond the false duality of Thought & Object that Hegel referred to as 'Begriff'. Because of this unity, Thought and Experience can only general meaning in relation to one another; a basic tenant of the OntoTheology Kant laid the foundation of and Hegel expounded upon. Kierkegaard, while deeply critical of Hegel, would emphasize this element of subjectivity throughout his works- that while objective truths are necessary, they are utterly meaningless without a living relationship (a metaphysical experience) with the subject of those truths- what he called Contemporaneity. St. Bonhoeffer (who studied at the University of Tübingen where Hegel also studied, taught and wrote his *Phänomenologie* at) would phrase a sentiment downstream from this Kantian & Hegelian OntoTheology: \"Being free means 'being free for the other,' because the other has bound me to him. Only in relationship with the other am I free.\"

Hegel was indeed in a bridge between dialectical idealism and dialectical materialism: the thing is the times determined him to take a position.

Hegel's definitional argument then brings in his category of 'mode', a term to which there is no convenient colloquial term. Modes are forms of 'productive expression', in other words, of meaning. There are two modes, relative and absolute. A relative mode has an indeterminate meaning since there is no established link between possibility and necessity. In absolute mode there is no contingency, or more precisely, contingency and necessity are congruent because of what he calls the \"initial conditions of productive expression.\" \"*Mode*,\" he says, \"*has the specific meaning of measure.*\"

Hegel's *Logic* begins with a logical big bang, a decision that effects pure thought and from which the categories develop themselves. This cosmological analogy, Jameson pointed out, helps to avoid characterizing the *Logic* as a hierarchy of forms. We can think of the more than 120 categories in terms of the first three minutes of the Big Bang: highly compressed and also a process. Whether they are synchronous or successive is indiscernible, yet still an open question. And as has been emphasized by today's working philosophers, the origination of the physical universe can only be thought, not pictured in accordance with our vague experience of sensuous reality.

But Vernunft, Reason, as the self-determining process of the categories, proceeds through a genuine sublation, or *Aufheben*, beyond the reifying strictures of *Verstand*. The opening therefore is not yet a narrative, for it is an unproductive vanishing. With the Concept's intervention into its own ceaseless floundering in picture-thinking, the *Logic* begins to present determination, however nascent. Hegel's narrative begins with the initiation of determination after the indeterminate immediacy of Being and Nothing.

Hegel, like Spinoza, starts with answers and only then follows up with questioning. Yet one of the preliminary texts is titled with a question: \"With what must the science begin?\" A question, even in self-questioning, \"barricades itself,\" said Dolar, and cannot question its own position. Being, however, is not an answer to a question. Hegel calls Being \"an empty word.\" It is an anti-hero, meaningless. Any predication is too much. The *Logic* can begin with a positive, Being, only via negation: it is indeterminate and immediate. One must therefore start thinking

undialectically, in an act of isolation. "In its indeterminate immediacy it [Being] is equal only to itself. It is also not unequal relatively to an other" (Miller translation, p.82). By calling Being indeterminate, Hegel opens a third way between positive and negative judgements. "Being, pure Being,—" is a repetition; it cuts the sentence into two and forecloses predication.