

Clark Butler

The concept of the subject, of what Hegel calls absolute negativity, already appears early in the logic of being.¹ Absolute negativity, negation of the negation, occurs throughout the logic as identity in difference understood as self-identification under different descriptions. First, the subject refers to itself merely under an incomplete description. Second, it refers to something other than itself under a second description which is logically required by the first. (For example, the description of being in general requires some determinate description of being in particular.) But this second description is dialectically excluded by the assumption that the first description is complete. Third, the subject negates its negation of the other. It discovers itself in the other, under the other description, and thus comes to refer to itself less incompletely.

This is Hegel in the analytic mode. The very concept of analytic Hegelianism may suggest that we have deformed Hegel. Perhaps it would be more honest to call my proposal something else. My reply is that I am maintaining the essential content of Hegelianism even while developing the form further. This content, the content of systematically dialectical speculative philosophy, lies in two essential theses. The first is the thesis of the whole speculative tradition up to and including Schelling: in and through human knowledge of the absolute, the absolute knows itself.² The second thesis is specifically Hegelian: the absolute comes to know itself concretely by a deductively

I "But in something [Etwas] the subject already begins to be. Something is the negative oneness «of what refers to itself in referring to what does not merely have being but is determinate and hence is the negation of simple being]. »² (On. I quote from Hegel's Summer 1831 lectures on logic in my translation. Until their 2001 publication they were unknown even in German. The 1831 lectures were the last that Hegel completed before his death. They deserve to be known as a last and orally comprehensible introduction to the Science of Logic. The translation is forthcoming from Indiana University Press.² Nature's highest goal, to become wholly an object to herself, is achieved only through the last and highest order of reflection, which is none other than man; or, more generally, it is what we call reason, whereby nature first completely returns

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cally Hegelian

necessary dialectical thought process realized both in the history of

¹ Professor of Philosophy, Purdue University, Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne. I wish to thank David Carlson for his support and insightful criticism of the first draft.

²G.W.F. HEGEL, VORLESUNGEN UBER DIE LOGIK 107 (Udo Rameil & Hans-Christian Lucas eds., 2001) [hereinafter VORLESUNGEN]

philosophy and in world history.³

My ultimate project is to restate Hegel's dialectical logic in quantification logic. The technical aspects of it will not be my focus here.⁴ In this paper, I apply linguistic ascent by translating the central Hegelian concept of identity in difference into the Fregean language of identity under different descriptions.⁵

More particularly, I use Keith Donnellan's concept of successful reference under a false description (i.e., the non-attributive use of definite descriptions) to interpret identification of the absolute under descriptions that dialectically prove false. By « attributive," Donnellan means the following: all definite descriptions are referential. Some such descriptions are true. The speaker frequently attributes the description to the referent, as we might attribute to Queen Elizabeth being head of the Anglican Church. Other descriptions used in reference are non-attributive or false, as the speaker may have no intention of attributing those descriptions to the referent. For example,

Spinoza makes attributive as well as referential use of the term « substance," insofar as Spinoza thought the absolute was substance. But Hegel makes purely referential use of the term "substance." For Hegel, to be the absolute is not to be merely substance. In undertaking the proposed translation, I put philological, exegetical explication of Hegel's texts to the side. I myself practice such explication, but I do not think that it does enough to clarify Hegel for us today. In translating Hegel's 1831 lectures on the science of logic, I use the phrase "identity in difference," not "identity under different descriptions." But that is a translation of Hegel's words. This paper is a restatement of Hegel's concept by linguistic ascent.

My motive for restating Hegel's science of logic in an analytic mode is in part because many people find Hegel's language obscure, into herself, and by which it becomes apparent that nature is identical from the first with what we recognize in ourselves as the intelligent and the conscious.

Michael Vatter, Introduction to FRIEDRICH SCHELLING, SYSTEM OF TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALISM

§ 1.4A (Peter Heath trans., 1978).

³ CLARK BUTLER, HEGEL'S LOGIC BETWEEN DIALECTIC AND HISTORY (1996).

⁴ See Clark Butler, Hegel's Dialectic of the Organic Whole as An Application of Formal Logic, in ART AND LOGIC IN HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY 221 (Warren E. Steinkraus & Kenneth I. Scmitz eds., 1980). For qualifications that apply to this interpretation, see Clark Butler, Dialectic and Indirect Proof 74 MONIST 422 (1991).

⁵ By linguistic ascent the analytical tradition means substitution of talk about language (e.g., reference) for talk in the ontological mode about things.

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while they find the Fregean language clear. Unfortunately, Hegel did not have twentieth century symbolic logic available, so he could not state himself as clearly as we can. As he was a conservative in science, it is reasonable to suppose that Hegel would use contemporary logic if he were alive today.

Do I expect to win more friends for Hegel's science of logic by my procedure? Not necessarily. Modern symbolic logic is a language for doing philosophy, not a philosophy as such. Translation of the Hegelian position into that language is not a justification of it. Many very different philosophies can be translated into symbolic logic. Frege's distinction between sense and reference has been used to make materialism clear. The mind is brain process under a different description. I would not expect that its use in making Hegelian idealism clear would, by itself, resolve disputes between idealists and materialists. At most, we might expect more widespread discussion of the issues.

If symbolic logic were a philosophy, (e.g, the philosophy of logical atomism), I would agree that translating the Hegelian position into analytic philosophy would prove impossible. But the failure of such an attempt would favor Hegel rather than logical atomism. Any logical atomist claim that "This is yellow" states a fully analyzed atomic fact can be refuted-Hegel's early demonstration in the science of logic that positive qualities imply negative qualities contains such a refutation. ⁶ But since symbolic logic is only a language for doing philosophy, translation of Hegel's position into does not necessarily fail.

Symbolic logic itself has evolved and can serve as a vehicle for restating Hegel. As Hegelians, we may adopt Frege's distinction between our rich but sometimes ambiguous ordinary language and the disambiguated but more mechanical language of quantification logic. That there is a speculative genius to ordinary language,⁷ or that everyone assimilates ⁶ Quality, determinateness, has now been cast in relief We at once have it as the determinateness of being [gerund]. Yet being is no longer alone, but refers immediately to the negative of itself. If we lay the emphasis on 'is', we have reality. Quality is then reality as the determinateness of being [gerund]. What is negative, which is also contained in being there, is also determinateness, is also quality, but in the opposite form of not being.

VORLESUNGEN, supra note 1, at 107.

⁷ Some German words possess "not only different but opposite meanings, so that one cannot fail to recognize the speculative spirit of the language in them." G.W.F. HEGEL, HEGEL'S SCIENCE OF LOGIC 32 (A.V. Miller trans., 1969) [hereinafter SL].

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the truth most deeply in his native tongue,⁸ does not mean that there is nothing for Hegelians to learn from regimentation in quantification logic.

Quine denied that symbolic logic is more successful in getting at the meaning of an ordinary sentence than the ordinary language original. Rather, he held that, when we are pragmatically concerned with simplicity and ontological economy, the logical language sometimes usefully replaces ordinary language. But H.P. Grice, in preserving the meaning of what is said as determined by the sentence's truth conditions, ⁹ but not as determined by what the speaker intends by using the sentence, is closer to Hegel. Meaning is not use, as Wittgensteinians have thought, and economical use is not our only concern as some Quinians might suggest. Quantification logic gets at the constant semantics of an ordinary language sentence even when, pragmatically, uses of that sentence vary. Such logic gets at what the sentence says without necessarily capturing what the utterer means or intends in saying it.¹⁰ Ordinary sentences containing the verb *aufheben*, regardless of varying speaker intentions in uttering them, express conflicting meanings, according to Hegel. ¹ But if this is so, symbolization by quantification logic would purge ordinary language containing that verb of its rich

ambiguity. Senses are now expressed in quantification logic without ambiguity by assigning different terms to different senses. A general Gricean solution to the problem of meaning seems to accommodate, better than Wittgenstein's or Quine's solution, Hegel's respect for the sense and ambiguity of ordinary language while allowing for the possibility of quantification.

8 Letter from G.W.F. Hegel to Voss, No. 55 (Jan. 14, 1806), in *HEGEL: THE LETTERS* 107 (Clark Butler & Christiane Seiler trans., 1984).

9 Grice distinguishes between a statement's truth conditions, i.e., what the statement says, and what the speaker has implicated (suggested, insinuated) in making the statement. Herbert Paul Grice, *Utterer's Meaning, Sentence Meaning, Word Meaning*, 4 *FOUNDATIONS OF LANGUAGE* 225 (1968).

10 Language belongs to human beings, and so has the character of thought. Thus we can say nothing that we merely intend [meinen] to say. If I say 'That is my opinion' I think others do not hold the same opinion. For my opinion [Meinung] is only mine [mein].... Yet when I speak I can only utter what is universal. If I say 'This point here!' this point is at once all points everywhere in the world.

VORLESUNGEN, supra note 1, at 14. Without entering into the correctness of Hegel's examples, we see that ordinary language means something whether we consent or not to that meaning.

11 "Aufleben means [in German] to negate, [literally] to raise up [aufheben], which is at once to absorb [in what is higher-aufnehmen] and to preserve." Id. at 106.

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Symbolic logic does not replace ordinary language with its rich speculative spirit. Rather, symbolic logic reduces the speculative content of ordinary language to a kind of child's play, so that we can return to ordinary language with a better conscience—much as a good musician might return to the enjoyment of Paganini's caprices reassured by knowledge of the technique needed to play through them.

Despite what he says of the speculative ambiguity of German, Hegel's own systematic writing can be understood as free of ambiguity.

"Being" retains the same sense at the end of the logic as it has at the beginning, where what has being is considered totally indeterminate.

New predicates are added, but the sense of the old ones remains.

Hegel's logical syntax predates quantification logic, but just as he would likely be a Darwinian were he alive today, he would also likely use quantification logic. An unambiguous use of terms is, of course, necessary if the dialectic is to be, as Hegel claims, deductively necessary.

Like Frege, Hegel would undoubtedly deny that there was only one correct analysis of ordinary statements. "John is Mary's father" can also be analyzed as "Mary is John's daughter," or as "x being the father of y is co-instantiated by the ordered pair John and Mary." None of these analyses gets at the one, and only one, logical structure of the English.

Formal logic disambiguates an ordinary English sentence, but if the ordinary language is, as Hegel thinks, richly ambiguous, each disambiguation loses part of the sentence's meaning. Other logical expressions, however, might be added to retrieve this lost meaning.

Understanding a singular sentence does not require having the complete science of the referent, including all its properties. It does not require that we know how it is related to everything in the universe, as Russell thinks Hegelianism demands.¹² For Hegel, knowledge of the absolute begins with abstract predicates like being, determinate being, something, and something else, to the implicit exclusion of all the other predicates that follow. Even a system of prepositional thought (an sich, für sich, etc.) as complete or concrete as Hegel achieved fails to exhaust, as he admits in his 1829 review of Göschel,¹³ the full nature of the absolute

as we are acquainted with it in feeling. The most that can be said is that when negation of the negation is effected a million times, it can be effected a million times plus one, and in this sense it can be reiterated
12 BERTRAND RUSSELL, *THE PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY* 144 (1959) (on file with author).
13 G.W.F. HEGEL, *MISCELLANEOUS WITINGS* 401-29 (on Stewart ed., 2002) (on file with author).
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infinitely. To grasp the principle of dialectical cycle is to grasp proleptically the infinite series of cycles necessary to fully describe the absolute. Michael Dummett's interpretation of Frege's "contextual principle" suggests a similarity between Hegel and Frege in opposition to Russell's atomist tendency. His interpretation suggests that the reference of "Saddam Hussein" can be fixed semantically only through all actual statements that contain that name, including true statements like, "Saddam Hussein denounced Bin Laden," but also including possibly false statements like, "Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction."¹⁴ On Dummett's interpretation, Frege's context principle does imply that the full sense of a singular term includes the different senses or descriptions by which all speakers have in fact referred to the same referent, including false descriptions. If a singular term includes all these senses, it refers to all speakers who have used the term referentially by whatever sense. So if a sentence and its meaning are determined by all actual references to what the sentence is about, one sentence is determinate only in a public linguistic context of other sentences. And this is different from the ontological context principle that to know a thing is to know everything about it, including all its relations to everything in the universe. But Russell was mistaken that Hegel adopted this ontological principle. Hegel in fact believed that we can know something about the absolute without knowing everything about it. In knowing that it has indeterminate being, Parmenides partook of complete knowledge of the absolute without having it completely.¹⁵ He successfully referred to it without knowing all true statements about it that eventually follow in the dialectic.

That categories in Hegel's science of logic, I am claiming, have theoretical import follows from his claim that successive categories can be deduced from previous ones.¹⁶ Each theory in Hegel's science of logic is established by an indirect proof assumption, not just by pre-
14 "[T]o secure a meaning for an expression or type of expression, it suffices to determine the senses of all sentences in which it occurs." Michael Dummett, *Gottlob Frege*, in *A COMPANION TO ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY* 12 (2001).

15 "If the parts pass as independent, they do not have the determination of being parts, since parts are parts only as parts of the whole." *VORLESUNGEN*, supra note 1, at 154.

16 [There can be no question of a confirmation based on the authority of the ordinary understanding of the term [of the term "Notion"]; in the science of the Notion [of the concept] its content and character can be guaranteed solely by the immanent deduction. ...

SL, supra note 7, at 582.

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ises. Each of these assumptions identifies the absolute under an identifying description that preserves descriptions from the previous ways of identifying the absolute, while particularizing them through the addition of further descriptive predicates.

Among the different categories in Hegel's logic, the concrete category of identity in difference emerges explicitly-though I would say

that it was implicitly present much earlier—as a correction of the abstract opposition of identity and difference early in the logic of essence.

18 But such identity in difference is, from then on, a permanent gain in the science of logic.

Identity in difference is the category that permits linguistic ascent within Hegelianism itself. It thus permits a transition from classical Hegelianism to Hegelianism in an analytic mode. To assert that the absolute exhibits self-identity in difference means, linguistically, that the absolute, existing under one description, is always rediscoverable as existing under another description. If it has concrete being in itself and not just being for us, what exists under a general description also exists under a more particular description.¹⁹

If this is correct, the attainment of Hegelian identity in difference is a Fregean discovery that a referent exists under different descriptions.

20 "The discovery that the morning star is the evening star presupposes and corrects a belief that the morning star is possibly distinct from the evening star. Before the discovery, the morning star was viewed as possibly not being the evening star. But the morning star is necessarily the evening star by the identity of indiscernibles even if the discovery of their identity is empirical. Once the discovery is made, the morning star's known identity expands to include the different description. The

17 I argue this in Clark Butler, *Dialectic and Indirect Proof* 74 *Monist* 422 (1991).

18 "It is according to [the logic of] the concept [but not the logic of abstract essence] that difference as well as identity is present." VORLESTUNGEN, *supra* note 1, at 139.

19 The abstract determination of being falls to the subject [of predication]. With that comes the determination of what has being. Here we have the activity of distinguishing, and in this distinguishing lies the particularity of the concept. First we have posited the concept in general, in its universality. Next the concept is posited in its particularity.

Id. at 182. Read: no matter how concretely the concept has been posited in its universality, it is necessarily then posited in its further particularity.

20 "Identity is something's, or someone's, oneness with itself, or with oneself. But it is in fact this oneness only as the negation of what is diverse [i.e., of what is diversely different from itself or from oneself]." *Id.* at 139. Analytic Hegelianism takes this negation of what is different to be the discovery of the thing's existence under different descriptions.

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discovery of identity under different descriptions is the discovery of identity under a single, more comprehensive description. But until the discovery, the morning star is placed outside of itself, under the disguise of actually and, hence, possibly not being the evening star, in order for this separation or alienation of itself from itself to be overcome. One is tempted to say that it is only mind, not a thing, that can step outside itself in this way. Our alienation from the truth in referring to the morning star under a false description seems to leave that star itself unaffected.

But the star is what it is through all its properties, including any property of being described falsely. When it is falsely described by us, it enters our thought world by being placed by us outside itself. The star's alienation from itself is mediated by human activity of description and misdescription.

Here, I slip from Fregean into Hegelian language. Given the revealed identity of the two stars, reference to the morning star as separate from the evening star displaces the first star from itself. It is differentiated from itself, placed under a different description that proves to be untrue. Through the mediation of our thinking, it is displaced.²¹ The logical idea at the end of the *Logic* is placed or displaced under the

description of being not the logical idea but nature, under the description of being other than itself.

If anything referred to under one description-which is always possibly true of different things-is to be fully concrete and unique, it must be reidentifiable under unending further descriptions falling outside that one description. A thing's being in itself cannot be reduced to its being for something else: hence, it cannot be reduced to its being for me. What exists in Hegel's logic of ground always goes beyond a finite description of it. What further description an existent falls under cannot be deduced from a true description of it up to the present, but must be found empirically.

Whatever exists concretely satisfies different descriptions. It subsists beyond any given finite true description by which we may refer to it. As we contemplate a house under the description of its blueprint, the house contains in itself (an sich) much detail that so far has no being for us (für uns). When its detail is realized we first experience it as something beyond the initial concept, only to embrace it in the end as the concept itself in its fuller realization. The house in the blueprint is

21 "Essence is the negation [negativity] in which something or someone makes reference to itself or to oneself [as not being itself, as not being oneself]." Id.

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rediscovered under a more particular and sometimes surprising description when the house is actually built.²²

According to the category of ground and consequent that follows Hegel's category of identity and difference, the absolute is self-identical under an allegedly complete description that deductively includes all the different temporally-indexed descriptions as consequents of the ground. This conceptual grasp enjoyed by Laplace's deterministic super-scientist²³ no longer discovers the absolute under a different description, but only explores the implications of its own self-identical total description of grounding law and the full world state at any time.²⁴

In this new Laplacean theory of the absolute, a new proposition is introduced: any total grounding description logically implies all empirical consequent descriptions. I call this a mediately discovered premise—a premise not introduced at the beginning as in an axiomatic method, but which arises only in the course of the derivation.

No description which follows as a consequence is ever really new.

It is a logically implied part of the total grounding description. Only its explicit statement can be new. Generally, analytic statements are discovered in the science of logic, and they are maintained as permanent gains in the progress of the dialectic. For example, to be is to be determinate.

22 [T]he concept has, in reality, nothing but what belongs to it as its very own reality.

That the concept and reality are other [than each other] is pure show. The concept [the Begriff as a conceptual grasp] intuits itself in intuiting reality. In intuiting reality, it has being for itself. It is other than itself in reality, but the conceptual grasp and intuited reality are also one and the same. I have a plan for a house when I announce what I want to do, but the plan is fully contained only in the house by which the plan is carried. [True] infinity lies in such a correspondence. The concept in this correspondence is beyond itself, it is no longer [abstractly] for itself on its own account, it finds itself in an other, in diverse appearances. And yet in this beyond it is by itself, it has thus returned within itself.

Id. at 22.

23 See PIERRE SIMON LAPLACE, A PHILOSOPHICAL ESSAY ON PROBABILITIES (Andrew I. Dale, trans., 1995) (on file with author).

24 [T]he ground [as the foundation] at once supports the house. The house proceeds

out of its ground, in differentiation and in opposition to it The house is a house insofar as it is not its ground. It is the other of its ground. In the ground we have all the determinations of essence, we have essence in its totality. Identity and difference, identity and non-identity, the positive and the negative come to be lifted beyond themselves. The difference of each to the other comes to be lost. With that, the [thought]-determination of identity comes to be posited in its totality. But identity is, within itself, repulsion. Ground is the totality of essence showing forth.

Id. at 145.

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To be finite is to be contradictory. The true infinite includes the finite, and so on. In such analytic statements we find positive, non-dialectical doctrine. They show that the Logic, if we leave the dialectic aside, contains conceptual analysis in a rather prosaic sense.

The analytic movement accused Hegelianism of claiming that to know something is to know all its relations to everything else, including all its causes and effects. But even if some British idealists may have held that the absolute is a single organic whole of internally related parts, that was not Hegel's view. Hegel held a middle position between saying that everything is internally related to everything else and saying that nothing is so related. This is clear from the fact that Hegel adhered to the microcosm/macrocosm distinction, something Russell does not appreciate. The "object," in the logic of the concept, is an intersubjective macrocosm. To quote from Hegel's 1831 lectures on logic:

The object is ... the totality and is identical with itself. But it is such a totality as contains differences in itself, and indeed such that every difference is also [microcosmically] a totality Each of these differences is also the entire concept. Every moment of the object is the totality of the object, and yet they makes up only one totality.²⁵

The question remains as to the relation between the different totalities in the one totality. Insofar as each is a determination that helps make up the totality, they are internally related within the overreaching one. But insofar as each is the entire concept embracing all internally related determinations, the different totalities are qualitatively convergent ones, not different internally related ones. They are similar to Leibniz's monads, but are not windowless. These totalities, except for their different degrees of development, are only numerically different. However, we cannot be content with distinguishing what a thing is insofar as it is the whole and what it is insofar as it is not the whole. For it is either "F" or "non-F," and we want to know which. This is a deep question of Hegel interpretation, and I cannot go much beyond stating my position here. My position is that the aggregate whole has no individual existence except in one or another microcosmic totality contained in it. The microcosm alone has individuality. The macrocosmic aggregate is unified as existing individuals only in its microcosms. God has

25 VORLESUNGEN, supra note 1, at 199.

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no subjective point of view beyond the subjectivity of this, that, the human or other mind.

As different instances of the same entire concept, microcosmic totalities are externally related. The macrocosmic totality is an aggregate of ones. But they are not coordinated from above by a Leibnizian God. Rather, each adjusts to the others by finding itself in them, transposing itself in them. God as creator at once posits the creature as other than himself, and then transposes (transposits) himself into the creature.

"God knows the world, knows humanity, only insofar as he is in it; or, if the world has not remained with him, only insofar as he from his side transposes himself into the world. '26 "Self-transposition" is a term used by C. F. G6schel, but Hegel quotes it approvingly. It means, not just taking the standpoint of the other in imagination, but truly finding oneself in the other self as a conceptual totality. One is not internally related to the other totality, but is identical with it, except for being on a higher or lower level of development. The other is one's own less or more developed self. God as higher is, in the Incarnation, identical with man as lower.

Of course, a God still open to self-transposition in an other is not yet God under a true description. Such a God-Father or Creator-is still one microcosm among others. It is the false infinite. It is not yet infinite intersubjectivity.

An internal relation may connect your present toothache to the recollection of your last toothache, but unless you have telepathic powers it is not internally related to every toothache in India. Both your field of consciousness and one belonging to someone in India reflect the same world from different points of view. It is even possible for you to observe the speech and behavior of the other individual, and then to know the other's toothache empathetically as you transpose yourself into the other's point of view. But you do not thereby feel the other's toothache, you only feel its ripple effect in your own field of consciousness.

The creator's empathetic knowledge of the creature is similarly incomplete.

Now if something is internally related to something else, to go inside it analytically is ultimately to go outside it. This is a Hegelian principle. The inner is the outer; inner force is upon analysis the outer expression. To go into indeterminate being as indeterminate being is to
26 G.W.F. HEGEL, MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS, supra note 13, at 385.
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be forced outside it into determinate being. What has being in itself also has being for something else.²⁷ Yellowness, we learn from G. E. Moore, is a simple quality unanalyzable into simpler determinations. Yet yellowness is in itself determinate only by not being blueness. The negative analysis of yellowness is not only possible but never comes to an end, since we can never be sure we have enumerated all its determinate others. To be king is not to be queen, prince, dauphin, president, emperor, subject, feudal lord, or courtier, and on and on. Yellowness is determinate only by negating each member in the open-ended series of its determinate others. Thus, unless F (e.g., yellowness) is totally indeterminate, "Fa" cannot, as Russell would suppose, express a fully analyzed atomic fact.²⁸ It also follows that analysis is never knowably complete, and that reference is never known to be completely determinate.

It is a Quinian dictum that if something does not itch we should not scratch. He thus places analysis in a pragmatic context. Though never **absolutely** complete, analysis may be pragmatically complete if it resolves all presently identified problems, all contradictions known thus far. A new contradiction may emerge, but the future must be allowed to take care of itself.²⁹ As I suggested earlier, Hegel may have a Gricean conception of meaning, but he has a Quinian conception of how we repair our theory of the absolute at sea, without being able to get outside of the vessel and compare it to the absolute itself. Hegel is concerned with how, in the history of philosophy, a contradictory rational theology

of the absolute is salvaged and repaired at sea by translating it into a new theory which is free of contradiction. A re-identification that resolves the contradictions or other problems of past identifications is

27 "Something posited in relation to itself in contradistinction to something else is something with being in itself. . . . We thus have something in itself and also for something else."

VORLESUNGEN, supra note 1, at 118.

28 "a is yellow and not blue" is atomic, since being yellow is not logically independent of not being blue. Since "and" for Russell only connects atomic sentences in compound sentences, "a is yellow and not blue" for him is not atomic as it must be for Hegel in order for yellowness not to be indeterminate. "'Socrates was a wise Athenian' ['Socrates was wise and Athenian'] consists of two [atomic facts] All atomic propositions are logically independent of each other." But "a is yellow" is not logically independent of "a is not blue." BERTRAND RUSSELL, Introduction to LUDWIG WITGENSTEIN, TRACrIcUs LOGICO-PHILOSOPHICUS xiii (1922).

29 WILLARD VAN ORMAN QUINE, ONTOLOGICAL RELATIVITY AND OTHER ESSAYS 67 (1969) (As for the ontology in turn of the background theory, and even the referentiality of its quantification-these matters can call for a [new] background theory in turn.) (emphasis added).

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pragmatically acceptable, for both Hegel and Quine, until further notice.

What is constant for both is a method of embarking on re-identification when a new contradiction or other conceptual problem arises.

A new identification of the absolute arises to resolve a contradiction in a previous identification. The contradiction arises because it is not possible to get into a particular way of identifying the absolute without going beyond it. "The absolute is merely determinate being" is adopted in order to escape the contradiction in saying, "The absolute is merely pure being." The new proposition may prove contradictory. For the moment, it is only the most immediate, ready-at-hand way of avoiding contradiction.

That the absolute is that outside of which there is nothing is definitional in the language of the science of logic, but that the absolute is merely determinate being is contingent, and like any contingent statement it may prove contradictory. The Science of Logic presupposes an analytic definition of being the absolute, but its investigation is not one of analysis but of descriptive reidentification of the absolute. Nor does it derive theorems from an axiomatic base, from the induction of causal laws, or from "conjecture and refutation" in Popper's sense of experimental refutation. Rather, it is "conjecture and refutation" in the dialectical sense of finding contradictions in different ways of identifying the absolute.

The work of the Science of Logic lies not in analysis of what it is to be the absolute, but in analysis of particular identifying descriptions of the absolute. The result of its analysis is to establish statements such as "To be is to be determinate," or "To be positively determinate is to be negatively determinate," to be analytically true. The function of analysis in the science of logic is to uncover and analyze any relations of putatively non-relational concepts.

Hegel himself mistakenly calls his categories "definitions of the absolute."

30 If the absolute is that outside of which there is nothing throughout the system of philosophy, "the absolute" changes neither in meaning nor reference throughout the logic. Instead of re-defining the absolute, each new category of thinking tries to re-identify the absolute under a more particular definite description. There can only be one entity outside of which there is nothing, so that the addition of new

30 "We can give the logical determinations out to be definitions of God .. " VoRLESUNGEN,

supra note 1, at 98. "What we have here is a new definition of the absolute: the absolute is the essence .. " Id. at 136.

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identifying descriptions of it cannot affect the reference of "the absolute."

The science of logic is a kind of detective story in which we start out knowing what we are looking for in general, and proceed to identify it in particular after a series of misidentifications. Despite Hegel's way of speaking, this should not be viewed as a matter of defining or redefining the absolute, but as identifying and re-identifying it. If the Logic contained seventy-two analytic definitions of the absolute, it would contain seventy-two languages. It could not unfold a single deductively necessary line of thought, since deduction requires that each term be used in only one sense. The Science of Logic would contain seventy-two illustrations of the Quinian point that analyticity is not absolute, but is relative to a language and theory. Quine may be right, but I do not think that the science of logic is a good illustration of his point.

Relational analytic statements such as, "To be is to be something that is not something else," refute the existence of the absolute merely under a simple monadic description. Analysis in the science of logic thus plays a critical role. Even the last category in the logic, the absolute idea, invites further analysis. We do not know that there is no further logical category beyond the absolute idea merely because, in looking for one, we only repeat past categories. Such repetition may only express our obtuseness. Rather, we know it is the last logical category because we find the absolute idea to be analytically relative to something beyond all purely logical categories, beyond pure imageless thought. The absolute idea is relative to the concept of the sensory realm other of all purely logical categories, to the concept of nature. In nature, the absolute idea is forced to step outside itself, to assume a disguise, until, as spirit, the mere idea ceases to be absolute and lays claim to itself under the description of being nature as well as idea. Until a contradiction is found in self-knowing infinite spirit, through some analytic relativity of self-knowing spirit to still something else, such spirit will stand as the true descriptive identification of the absolute. But that the absolute is self-knowing spirit is not analytic, it is simply a contingent statement not falsified by any further analytic relational statement.

Until the last identification of the absolute is shown to be necessarily false, it is the way by which we continue to refer most successfully to the absolute, by which we partake of knowledge of it. If a contradiction were found, we would refer to the absolute attributively by a different

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description, but by one that would contain much that is contained in the present description.

The logic is a dialectical system of rational theology, not ontology. A theological property, used in identifying the absolute, is abstracted from a universal ontological property, a purported quality of everything. An ontological category differs from a mere empirical concept by such universal application. Hegel says that each category is true both of everything and of the absolute in which everything is. "Everything is diverse . . . everything is an opposite . . . everything has a ground . . . Everything is a judgment. 3 . Everything is a syllogism.... "32 But given Hegel's concern is to identify the absolute, we may wonder why he even mentions the application of categories to finite things.

Here, I suggest we recall Kant's view that each category has a legitimate cognitive use in application to the finite objects of experience, but that it lacks legitimate use in application to God. Hegel holds that the finite is in the true infinite, so that this infinite does not need to be inferred from the finite in the same way the false infinite is inferred from the finite in classical metaphysics.

He certainly does not argue that, since everything finite is a ground, the absolute is ground. Rather, the deduction of the absolute as ground arises from the collapse of the prior identification of the absolute as merely self-identical without difference.³³ Yet, once the absolute is identified as ground, ground also becomes the dominant ontological category. The inference here goes from the infinite to the finite, not from the finite to the infinite. Everything finite partakes of the infinite and microcosmically reflects it, and that, it seems, is why everything is a ground when the absolute is identified as ground.

³¹ Id. at 138.

³² Id. at 191.

³³ It is according to [the logic of] the concept [but not the logic of abstract essence] that difference as well as identity is present [e.g., "Cicero is Tully"]. Therefore, [abstract] identity [e.g., "Cicero is Cicero"] is a false, untrue [thought] determination, since it is what is merely one-sided, mere self-reference.

Id. at 139. "Cicero is Cicero" is false only if understood as "Cicero is merely Cicero." 2004]