

Self-Determination and Ideality in Hegel's Logic of Being

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Abstract and Keywords

Hegel's project in the *Science of Logic* is to generate a demonstrably complete list of categories and forms of thought while arguing that these are products of thought's own self-determining (autonomous) activity. The chapter offers a compact introduction to the work's first section, 'Quality (Determinateness),' without assuming prior knowledge. Key background sources in Kant (the table of categories, the table of nothing, the transcendental ideal) and Spinoza (monism, nihilism, and the principle *omnis determinatio est negatio*) are discussed in order to cast light on the specifics of Hegel's approach. Analysis focuses on the main stations of Hegel's exposition: the opening dialectic of being-nothing-becoming, the relation of the finite to 'bad infinity' and the 'true infinite', the concept of being-for-self in its relation to self-consciousness (apperception), and the transition from quality to quantity. The final section draws conclusions about the nature of Hegelian 'idealism' and its essentially practical character.

Keywords: Hegel, Kant, Spinoza, idealism, self-determination, logic, bad infinity

10.1. Self-Determination and Ideality

HEGEL'S *Science of Logic* proposes to begin with no determinate, presupposed content whatsoever, and then, purely by dint of a methodically controlled reflection on the 'movement' of thinking itself, to generate a demonstrably complete list of categories and forms of thought.^{1,2} Like other of his contemporaries, Hegel regarded Kant as having neglected to provide a derivation of the categories he identified as constituting the structure of objectively valid experience (cp. SL 21.48/41, 12.44/541). *The Science of Logic* is intended to provide such a derivation and, in doing so, to improve upon similar attempts by Hegel's predecessors, especially Fichte and Schelling.

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Kant's transcendental idealism is not the only philosophy with which *The Science of Logic* stands in critical dialogue. Equally important is the confrontation with Spinoza's substance monism. Indeed, the so-called Objective Logic, comprising the first two main (p. 220) parts of the work (viz., the Doctrine of Being and the Doctrine of Essence), culminates in what Hegel proclaims to be "the one and only true refutation of Spinozism" (SL 12.15/512). The project of supplying a rigorous deduction of the categories is thus intertwined with that of vindicating "the freedom and the independence [*Selbständigkeit*] of a self-conscious subject" (SL 12.15/512) over against Spinoza's one-sided, 'realistic' monism of substance.³

To understand why Hegel found it promising to confront Spinoza's philosophy of substance with Kant's philosophy of subjective spontaneity, it is helpful to focus on the concept of *synthesis*, and more particularly on the concept of an *original synthetic unity*. Robert Pippin places Kantian apperception at the center of his groundbreaking study of *Hegel's Idealism*, noting Hegel's own association of 'the Concept' (i.e., the Logic's main and, in a certain sense, only topic) with the transcendental unity of apperception.⁴ One of the keys to understanding Hegel's Logic is to see, first, that he conceives the triadically structured 'movement' of 'the Concept' through the successive stages of its exposition as the activity of a priori synthesis itself; and then, second, that he conceives this activity as generating a unified but internally differentiated, and in that sense *concrete*, content—namely, the content of the categories themselves.⁵

Because this originally synthetic activity is (for Hegel as for Kant) the defining feature of *thought*, we can aptly characterize it as *ideal*. But insofar as it is an actual activity that is, moreover, productive of its own content, we are equally entitled to consider it *real*—in the sense of producing objective 'whatness' (*realitas*), as well as in the more common sense of having independent existence. In a conceptual move that at once both runs counter to Spinoza's prioritization of substance and reinterprets his notion of the *causa sui* through the structure of self-consciousness, Hegel puts the idea of an originally synthetic, equally real and ideal, 'spiritual' (*geistig*) activity at the center of his philosophical system. We should also recall, however, that (for Hegel as for Kant) synthesis is *spontaneous*, *self-causing*, and *self-determining* activity. The project of the Logic is thus to vindicate the "freedom and independence of a self-conscious subject" by demonstrating, in a single, continuous, conceptual 'movement', that pure, spontaneous, synthetic unity—'pure knowing' or 'pure thinking', as he calls it (SL 21. 45/38–39)—is sufficient to determine itself by generating, in a completely autonomous manner, its own *content* or *reality*. That is the idealist argument of Hegel's *Science of Logic*.

(p. 221) 10.2. The Kantian Template

Given Hegel's intention to improve on Kant's presentation of the categories, we may expect a degree of overlap between *The Science of Logic* and the relevant portions of the First Critique. Kant structures his table of categories according to four headings: quantity, quality, relation, and modality (CPR B106). When we compare the main divisions in

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first part of the Logic, the logic of 'Being', we find them to deviate only slightly from the Kantian template: Hegel reverses the order of the first two headings, putting quality before quantity, and he introduces an additional heading, *measure*, which he conceives as the synthesis of the first two.⁶ Under the heading *quality* we might therefore again expect to find categories that hew closely to the First Critique (viz., reality, negation, and limitation). Instead, we find the exposition of quality subdivided into three chapters devoted to Being, Being-Determinate (*Dasein*)⁷, and Being-for-Self, respectively—terms that bear no obvious relation to the ones proposed by Kant. However, while this terminological deviation does signal deeper, more substantive differences, we can still discern an illuminating parallel with Kant's ordering of the categories.

For Kant, the pure concept of *reality* denotes 'mere affirmation' (CPR B328), 'positing' (CPR B625), or 'position' (CPR B630), a category he correlates with the form of affirmative judgment (cp. CPR B95). Correspondingly, Hegel uses *being* to denote an essentially affirmative aspect or 'moment' of all the categories derived under the heading of quality, and the first chapter is devoted to its exposition. Kant understands *negation* to require some affirmative term from which to be distinguished and in relation to which its content can be fixed (cf. CPR B602–603). Correspondingly, Hegel devotes (p. 222) the second chapter to the category of *being-determinate*, at the heart of which lies the negative (contrastive) relation of 'something' and 'other'.⁸ Kant analyzes the concept of limitation, finally, as bringing together the concepts of reality and negation (CPR B111). Correspondingly, Hegel introduces the concept of *being-for-self* in chapter 3 as the complete 'integration' [*Einbildung*]⁹ of negation into being (cf. SL: 21.144/126): something is said to be 'for itself' to the extent that it has "interrupted and repelled its relation and community with what is other and abstracted from it" (SL 21.145/126–27); rather than being limited from the outside, by something else, the very character (the reality) of whatever is for itself is defined by its own self-limitation.

There is thus a discernible correspondence between Kant's identification of the qualitative categories and Hegel's treatment of quality in the *Science of Logic*. However, we should be aware that a degree of simplification is involved in mapping Hegel's division of quality onto the corresponding terms in Kant's table of categories. We need only glance at the table of contents to see that, in addition to serving as the heading for the entire first section of the Logic, quality is itself also a subordinate determination of the category being-determinate (SL 21.98/84). Furthermore, reality and negation are not straightforwardly identified with being and being-determinate; rather, they are themselves subordinate aspects of the concept of quality (SL 21.98/85), while the category 'limit' falls under the subheading 'finitude' (SL 21.113/98), well before the transition to being-for-self. What, then, is the use of trying to map the Hegelian concepts onto what now appear to be but very inexact Kantian equivalents?

Hegel himself understands Kant to have conceived 'reality' as a purely *affirmative* category containing no negation (SL 21.99/86). But that, according to Hegel, is to *misconceive* the category of reality: to be determinate *just is* to contain negation, so reality as conceived by Kant is something utterly empty and indeterminate, tantamount to what

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Hegel criticizes as 'abstract being' in the opening chapter of the Logic (SL 21.100/86–87). Indeed, one of Hegel's chief argumentative goals in this first part of the Logic is to show that reality and negation can only be understood as in any sense determinate when the concept of a determining limitation (and ultimately, in being-for-self, a *self-limitation*) is prioritized, so that reality and negation are conceived as secondary, subordinate aspects abstracted from the higher, more concrete category. So Hegel's exposition can be read as *polemically identifying* Kant's 'reality' with 'abstract being', in order *progressively to rearticulate* reality as the internally self-limiting (and to that extent self-determining) 'being-for-self' that Hegel will eventually go on to identify with 'infinite' or 'reality in a higher sense' (SL 21.136–37/119).

Mapping the divisions of 'Quality' onto their Kantian counterparts is thus useful for recognizing the precise manner in which *The Science of Logic* undertakes a critical transformation of Kant's doctrine of the categories.

(p. 223) Something similar is true of being-determinate and its correspondence with the concept of negation. The main thrust of chapter 2, "Being-Determinate," is to argue that so long as we take a purely affirmative notion of being (e.g., Spinoza's 'substance') as our starting point, such that determinate existence can only be conceived as the result of negative limitations that are somehow externally imposed on an intrinsically undifferentiated substrate, we are inexorably led to a nihilistic conception of determinate existence: we have no alternative but to grasp it as purely relational, defined purely through contrastive relations that have no positive grounding in the individuals themselves. Being-determinate, thus conceived, turns out to be coextensive with what Hegel calls *finitude*: "When we say of things that *they are finite*, what we understand by this is that [...] non-being constitutes their nature, their being. [...] The hour of their birth is the hour of their death" (SL 21.116/101).

Hence, even though negation is not identified with being-determinate at the level of terminology, it is clearly Hegel's intention to argue that anyone who (like Kant or Spinoza) assumes the priority of affirmative being and accords negation a secondary, dependent status is forced to conceive determinate being as effectively coextensive with negation. Mapping the second division of the Logic onto negation as it figures in Kant's table of categories is thus useful for bringing out one of the most innovative aspects of the Hegelian agenda: the development of an alternative conception of negation and determination that evades nihilism and provides a logico-ontological foundation for the philosophy of self-determination.

As we will see in more detail later, the critical thrust of Hegel's analysis of the category of finitude is to expose a natural preconception that renders it logically self-undermining. To be finite is, minimally, to be limited. Yet the 'logic' of the limit is such that *what* is limited (viz., the finite) inexorably tends toward self-negation or annihilation when taken in its totality. In the 'nothing' that remains, there can be no limit. When we view the matter thus, it appears that the passing away of what is limited is tantamount to the emergence of what is *unlimited*: the non-finite, the *infinite*. But an infinite whose being consists in noth-

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ing more than just the non-being of the finite is itself precisely—*nothing*. So the seemingly natural assumptions governing the logic of being-determinate (viz., that reality is purely affirmative, and that determination arises by virtue of external relations of negation or mutual limitation) tend to do away with the notion of reality and limitation altogether.

Accordingly, even though the concept of limitation occurs relatively early in Hegel's exposition, we do not encounter a logically stable instantiation of the concept until we move into the territory of being-for-self (i.e., the territory of an internally self-relating, self-limiting structure). Thus it is helpful to keep in mind the corresponding concept in Kant's table of categories. For as surely as Hegel agrees with Kant's analysis of limitation as the unity of reality and negation, he is just as surely committed to developing a more compelling account of such unity and the associated metaphysical stakes.

The structure of Hegel's exposition of 'Quality' thus implicitly reflects the structure of the corresponding division in Kant's table of categories at the same time that it explicitly (p. 224) displaces and rearticulates the concepts and conceptual relations that constitute the true framework of Kant's account.

10.3. Being-Nothing-Becoming

As indicated earlier, chapter 1 ("Being") pursues the critical goal of showing that a purely affirmative notion of being is thoroughly indeterminate and hence indiscernible from the thought of nothing [*Nichts*]. At the same time, Hegel seeks to derive a positive result that can serve as the basis for the derivation of further categories. However, the reader should be aware that this opening 'dialectic' of being-nothing-becoming is among the most challenging of Hegelian texts and also the one that has invited the most criticism.¹⁰

Apart from its compactness, the main difficulty of the text stems from Hegel's insistence that the beginning of the Logic is wholly without presuppositions, and more especially that his demonstration does not rely on any 'concepts of reflection' such as identity and difference, agreement and contradiction, or form and content (e.g. SL 21.55–56/47, 78–79/67, 90/78).¹¹ Because we are proscribed from using these concepts as part of the positive exposition, it becomes difficult to reconstruct anything like an 'argument' showing that being and nothing are (in some sense) both identical and different. Not only do these terms themselves belong on the list of prohibited concepts; the very indeterminateness of pure being and nothing precludes any distinction of aspects (such as form and content) with respect to which we could compare being and nothing. So how should we understand the method and aim of this opening 'dialectical' exposition?

A full-blown analysis of Hegel's exposition is beyond the scope of this contribution. However, the following two observations are intended at least to increase the *prima facie* plausibility of the beginning of Hegel's 'speculative science' of logic.

In the first place, why must the Logic begin with the thought of *being*? One way to approach this question is to connect it to Kant's theory of mental activity, according to

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which the defining character of thought is *synthesis*. Indeed, Kant identifies the “highest point, to which we must attach all use of the understanding, even the whole of logic” (CPR B134) as the “original synthetic unity of apperception” (CPR B134). The idea of an *original* synthetic unity will necessarily seem problematic if by ‘synthesis’ we understand the bringing together of two or more distinct and separately existing terms, already ‘there’ prior to their synthesis.¹² Understood thus, all synthesis is necessarily *derivative*, presupposing distinct terms, each of which would have to exhibit its own prior (and, (p. 225) somewhere down the chain of composition, non-synthetic) unity. For without such unity, it would not be a term or indeed anything at all.

Accordingly, if we are to speak of *original* synthesis at all, we must conceive it as concomitant with the very emergence of the terms it embraces; it would have to be, in some sense, the origin both of the relation and of the very difference whose unity the relation constitutes. The opening of the Logic can be understood as an attempt to resolve the conceptual difficulty involved in the notion of original synthetic unity. The underlying strategy can, roughly, be construed as follows: Assume that all synthesis is derivative (i.e., that all synthesis presupposes some prior, originally non-synthetic unity). If this thought is to have any content, then it must be possible to conceive some term, reality, or unity that is absolutely independent and separable, involving no constitutive relation to anything else. Such a term, reality, or unity would thus also be incapable of being differentiated in itself since any difference (i.e., any determination) would entail either the relation of different parts or aspects internal to it or the relation to something distinct from it. In short, synthesis, being a *relation*, would seem to require something utterly non-relational (call it *being*) as its precondition.

Now make good on this assumption in earnest: think, if you will, *being* in the sense just indicated. Thereupon (as will be spelled out shortly in more detail) you will find that the thought of being is itself the thought of a *pure* relation, in the sense of a *relating* that is prior to and independent of any relata. Or in slightly different terms, you will find that the single thought of being immediately involves the mind in an awareness of two distinct ‘directions’ or ‘values’: the negative (empty) character of being as ‘vanishing’ into nothing, and the self-negating character of nothing as ‘reverting’ to being in virtue of being thought, even as the being that has thus interposed itself into or in front of the thought of nothing nonetheless transports that negation in *failing* to be the thought of nothing.

This awareness, which has arisen through the attempt to think being in the sense just indicated, is nothing other than the immediate awareness of original synthetic unity. The thought of being is inseparable from the awareness of an original and irreducible duality between affirmation and negation. In its most native and original instantiation, pure a priori synthesis, the constitutive act of the mind, appears as a spontaneous act of self-differentiation into the opposed but inseparable ‘moments’ of affirmation and negation, the basic operations of logic.

To the extent this strategy succeeds, Hegel may be said to demonstrate the *possibility* of an original synthetic unity by inducing an exceptionally pure, *actual instance* of it. Thus,

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the Logic begins with what may rightly be said to be the beginning of logic as such: affirmation and negation as dual aspects of a single, self-differentiating, originally synthetically unified act of thinking. It thereby meets Hegel's conception of an ideally rigorous science of thought: "The principle ought to be also the beginning, and that which has priority for thinking [*das Prius*] ought to be also the first in the process of thinking" (SL 21.54/46).

The second of our two observations bears precisely on this synthetic unity of being and nothing, which Hegel infamously proclaims as the result of his exposition. How (p. 226) are we to understand it?—The key point in all Hegel's discussions of being and nothing is that they are indiscernible as putative *contents* of thought.¹³ By contrast, the *act of thinking* being and nothing exhibits a determinate structure. Although there is no determinate content to be grasped when I undertake to think *being* in its 'indeterminate immediacy,' I do become aware of the negative character of being precisely insofar as I fail to grasp any content. (Hegel identifies being with "this pure empty intuiting [or thinking] itself" [SL 21.69/59].) Being is nothing.

Let us draw once more on Kantian resources to elucidate this idea further. Kant treats the concepts associated with the term 'nothing' in the same chapter as the concepts of reflection, explaining,

The supreme concept with which it is customary to begin a transcendental philosophy is the division into the possible and the impossible. But since all division presupposes a concept to be divided, a still higher one is required, and this is the concept of an object in general [*Gegenstand überhaupt*], taken problematically, without its having been decided whether it is something or nothing. As the categories are the only concepts which refer to objects in general, the distinguishing of an object, whether it is something or nothing, will proceed according to the order and under the guidance of the categories.

(CPR B346)

In other words, the categories constitute the basic forms of reference in general, and the 'table of nothing' that follows on this explanation enumerates the various respects in which concepts can *fail to refer*.

Depending on the specific category within which a given concept fails to refer, 'nothing' can apply (1) to a concept whose content is logically possible, but fails to pick out any corresponding object in experience (*ens rationis*); (2) to a concept that has determinate content, but such that its object is determined merely as the absence of some positive quality, as dark is the absence of light (*nihil privativum*); (3) to a mere form of intuition that cannot be intuited separately and for itself (*ens imaginarium*); or (4) to a concept whose content is impossible in itself and which therefore could not pick out any object (*nihil negativum*) (CPR B348).

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At the opening of Hegel's Logic, 'being' might be said to fail in all these ways. Having no specific content ("it is pure indeterminateness," SL 21.69/59), it cannot be internally inconsistent, but neither does it pick out anything: it is an *ens rationis*. Once again, having no specific content ("it is pure [...] emptiness," SL 21.69/59), it is the negation of all content: *nihil privativum*. Since it is "only this pure empty intuiting itself" (SL 21.69/59), it cannot be intuited separately and for itself: *ens imaginarium*. Finally, in proving thus to be nothing in all these three senses, the thought 'being' is indiscernible from nothing; it is the same as its categorical negation, and in this way it is self-contradictory after all—not because its content is inconsistent, since it has none, but (p. 227) because it is a self-undermining act of referring and thus a kind of performative self-contradiction: *nihil negativum*.

Do we violate the prohibition on concepts of reflection in thus explaining how the thought of being is the same as the thought of nothing? The obvious answer would be yes. This distinction and comparison among aspects in which the thought 'being' fails to refer is a paradigm case of reflection. But on second thought, is it not rather a special case? Here all four aspects are collapsed into one another and are themselves only artificially distinguishable. In fact, all four categories in which referential failure can occur all make at least a minimal presupposition, namely that of 'an object in general' to which reference may be made, and, concomitantly, an act of referring. So just as Kant goes the tradition one better in replacing the concept of a 'possible object' with the 'higher concept' of an 'object überhaupt', Hegel may be seen as going Kant one better and replacing that concept with the mere thought: *überhaupt*. This would in any case be in line with his notion of 'pure knowing' as having 'merged with itself' into an absolute unity, lacking any distinction of subject and object, in which "all reference to an other and to mediation has been sublated; it is distinctionless [*das Unterschiedslose*], and as such it itself ceases to be a knowing; only simple immediacy is present" (SL 21.55/47).

In the case of the determinate concepts Kant has in mind, their emptiness is not immediately apparent. They *appear* to refer to something, and it is only through comparative reflection that we recognize their actual emptiness, be it through comparison with what we find in experience (*ens rationis*), with the metaphysical nature of the referent (e.g., cold as the mere deprivation of heat rather than as a positive quality in itself), comparison of the concept's component contents with themselves (*nihil negativum*), or comparison of the empty form with the substantial content on which it depends in order to appear as something in the first place (*ens imaginarium*). *Being*, by contrast, is utterly transparent in its emptiness, rendering reflective comparison superfluous. It is impossible to think the thought *being*, without immediately perceiving its emptiness, its lack of a referent, and hence its 'untruth' (SL 21.71/61). It is a thought whose directedness toward something other than itself (a content) has, so to speak, been captured and held back; its referential import is transparently void. Precisely for this reason, it is predestined to be the first thought of the 'pure knowing' with which the Logic begins and in which "all reference to an other and to mediation has been sublated," such that "only simple immediacy is present" (SL 21.55/47). Pure knowing, as Hegel conceives it, is the thought of *being*.

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Being is thus *the same as nothing*. However, what we have to recognize is that this transparent lack of reference, in virtue of which the thought of being effectively cancels itself out *as a thought*, is at the very same time the *thought* that I am engaged in thinking. My awareness of this transparent emptiness immediately invests it with an affirmative character. Just as *being* immediately manifests the simple immediacy of 'pure knowing', *nothing* immediately manifests the relationality or referentiality that is inseparable from thought. (As in the case of being, Hegel also identifies nothing with the "empty intuiting or thinking itself" [SL 21.69/59].) On the other hand, thinking stands to this nothing in the relation of cognitive reference: "To intuit or to think nothing has therefore a reference [*Bedeutung*]" (SL 21.69/59). So nothing immediately proves to have a (p. 228) relation, namely to the affirmative, being-like (*seiend*) character conferred on it in the act of thinking.¹⁴

Thus we re-arrive at *being*. But with a difference. In transparently exhibiting its sameness with being, nothing has effectively canceled itself out *as nothing*. Though in thinking *being* I have, in one sense, been *thinking nothing*, my thinking of nothing has at the same time (as it were, immemorially) failed to grasp it, as though the very act of thinking it were pushing it away. And yet my awareness of *this* failure to refer immediately *presupposes my grasp of the nothing* I am failing to think. As much as being manifests itself as 'always already' taking the place of nothing, nothing continuously evades, escapes, and opposes being, differing from it in what can only be called an absolute way.

This character of the thoughts of being and nothing, namely the fact that each is eternally returning into itself even as it vanishes into its other—this character of being and nothing immediately manifests the restless unity of pure thinking itself as original synthetic unity. Hegel terms this 'becoming' (SL 21.69/59).

10.4. The Logic of Being- Determinate (*Dasein*)

10.4.1. Being-Determinate

As we have just seen, in my attempt to think *nothing*, nothing 'reverts' to being: it *is* (exists) as the referent of my thinking. But in thus thinking being *instead of nothing*, I am aware of my failure to think nothing: being is *not nothing*. In this way, both nothing and being are present in a single thought *as distinct*, and being takes on a first, minimal determinacy, that of being *not-nothing*. Being as not-nothing is what Hegel calls 'being-determinate'. This is not to say that being is internally differentiated (though thinking now is differentiated, insofar as it encompasses the difference between affirmation and negation). Nor can being really be said to be externally limited by nothing, since *nothing* is no kind of limit at all.

Inasmuch as this incipient determinacy represents the first, original emergence of determinateness, Hegel also calls it 'determinateness as such' (SL 21.97/84). In the course of the Logic we will encounter further forms or instantiations of determinateness (e.g.,

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quantitative determinateness). In anticipation of those further forms, then, we distinguish this initial form in which determinateness as such first arises by calling it *quality* (SL 21.98/84). Quality is the determinateness belonging to *being* by virtue of its being *not-nothing*, two aspects that Hegel now further specifies by calling them *reality* and *negation*, respectively (SL 21.98/84).

(p. 229) Here two clarifying remarks are in order. First, it is easy to relapse into treating being and nothing as though they were distinct *contents* of thought, with being on the one side (so to speak) and nothing on the other, each with its own quality ('beingness', say, and 'nothingness'), each somehow external to the other, limiting it. But it is easy to see that nothing, or negation as such, is not suited to define or determine anything at all; how could it be? Hence we must not think of quality, at this initial stage, as *some way* being is, such that it thereby differs from nothing. What we have in 'being-determinate' *just is* quality, a *differing* pure and simple, without reference to anything other than itself *from which* or *in relation to which* it differs. (As we might also phrase it, 'being there'—existence itself, in the broadest sense of the term—is, after all, just being that *differs from nothing*.) So rather than conceive of being-determinate as a quality-less substrate adjoined to a quality that is somehow distinct from it, we must conceive it rather as a concretely unified, quasi-adverbial *being-qualitative*. Hegel uses the word 'something' (*Etwas*) to denote this unity of being-there and quality, which he characterizes as "the first negation of negation, as simple, affirmative [*seiend*] relation to itself" (SL 21.102/88).

Second, since nothing or negation as such is not a real difference, the sense in which something is an immediate or simple 'oneness of being and nothing' (SL 21.97/83) is incomplete. As long as negation remains thus submerged in being-determinate, we have not yet actually fully formed the thought of *something*. At the same time, moreover, the opening of the Logic—indeed, its whole first volume, the Doctrine of Being—is governed by the 'one-sided' priority of being over negation (cf. SL 21.97/83). Therefore, wherever negation is present (and it is present throughout), it must also manifest itself 'in the form of being' (SL 21.97/83). Accordingly, to complete the thought 'something' we need to think of the moment of negation that is still present only in the submerged form of a simple unity of being and nothing (viz., being-determinate) as 'coming out into the open' and setting itself over against something as a *real* difference. Since the whole development here is unfolding 'in the form of being', negation too will emerge in an *affirmative*, being-like (*seiend*) guise, namely as 'something other' (SL 21.104/90).

Hegel's discussion of 'being-determinate as such' thus culminates in a transition: Being, or rather being-determinate, seems to be truly determinate only insofar as it stands in a relation of contrast to an *other* being-determinate, an other *something*. This 'other' something constitutes the limit, the terminus, or *the end* of the 'first' something. Hegel accordingly places this new sphere of dual, contrasting, limiting relations under the general heading 'finitude' (German: *Endlichkeit*) (SL 21.104–105/90).

10.4.2. Finitude

*Omnis determinatio est negatio.*¹⁵ In Hegel's reformulation, "Determinateness is negation posited as affirmative" (SL 21.101/87). That is the core principle of finitude and it (p. 230) is central to the argument of 'Quality' in its entirety. Continued analysis of the relation of 'something and other' soon leads Hegel to the conclusion that qualitatively determinate beings are what they are only in virtue of their *limits*. If a quality may fittingly be described as whatever makes a difference, then qualitative beings have an existence that is purely differential, constituted by—but also exhausted in—their mutual contrasts. It is therefore not sufficient to say that qualitative beings are determinate in virtue of *having* limits; their limits are themselves "the principle of that which they delimit" (SL 21.115/100). Every limit is at once both a threshold of constitution and a site of mutual alteration. The sphere of qualitative being is thus constituted both as a heterogeneous continuum and as a perpetual flux in which nothing is actual except by differing.

Hegel is thereby suggesting not only that finite things are constituted by mere relations, above and beyond which they have no positively affirmative being of their own, but also that even in order to be what they are, they are bound to alter and destroy themselves.

When we say of things that they are finite, we understand by this not merely that they are determinate, not merely that their quality is a reality and a determination that has being in itself, not merely that they are limited and hence still have a being this side of their limit—but rather that their very nature, their being is constituted by non-being. Finite things are, but in their self-relation they relate to themselves negatively, propelling themselves beyond themselves, beyond their being, by virtue of this very self-relation. [...]

(SL 21.116/101)¹⁶

To capture this aspect of the finite, Hegel introduces the concepts of 'restriction' and 'the ought' as further specifying the concept of limit. To grasp the concept of restriction, it is helpful to focus on the dual role of the limit in defining a qualitative being. From a static, one-sided perspective, the limit is simply where one qualitative being *ends*; so at first glance it might seem as though something could remain whatever it is—maintain its defining quality—by remaining within its limit. On a more comprehensive, dynamic view, however, the limit is clearly defined as the interface between two 'contiguous' qualitative beings, each of which acts to limit (and thereby determine) the other. In order to 'be there' as *what it is*, each qualitative being has to interact with and thereby expose itself to *modification* or *alteration* by the other. But since a qualitative being is indeed defined by its quality, any alteration to it is tantamount to its negation or destruction. The qualitative being consumes and destroys itself, therefore, in its very realization.

In further unpacking this idea, we should keep in mind that what is at issue here are not primarily spatial or temporal limits, but *qualitative* limits. Hegel gives two examples: the limit beyond which something ceases to be a field and becomes a meadow, and the limit beyond which something ceases to be red and becomes a different hue (cp. SL (p. 231)

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21.174/153). An instructive illustration can be drawn from the case of simultaneous contrast, where for example contiguous fields of blue and red interact, shifting the perceived hues toward green and orange, respectively. In a case like that, *what* the one qualitative being *is*—its defining quality—is determined not by 'itself', but by the efficacy of *another* qualitative being and *its* defining quality. Thus, the way a qualitative being 'is there' is a function of its surroundings; any *given* presentation of its defining quality is modified by the defining quality of the being or beings that limit it, as they are in turn modified through what they limit.

Thus, since the defining quality of a qualitative being (its 'determination', *Bestimmung*; SL 21.110/950) is essentially contrastive or differential, it 'is there' only to the extent that it is juxtaposed with another quality. That is the one side. But such juxtapositions are not inert; depending on what the other quality is, the first will 'be there' in one or another determinate *modification* [*Beschaffenheit*], just insofar as it "preserves itself in its self-equality and asserts it [*geltend machen*] in its being-for-other" (SL 21.111/96).¹⁷ That is the other side. Hence the specific surroundings both *constitute* a finite being's defining quality (its 'determination') and *modify* or *alter* the way it 'is there'.

An elemental tension is thereby introduced into finite qualitative beings. In order to be there at all, the defining quality must differ from and thereby limit some other quality; but depending on what the other quality is, the defining quality will (so to speak) be colored by it and made to take on some determinate hue. As long as it stands in that particular relation of mutual limitation, it will be *restricted* to 'being there' in that single modification (cp. SL 21.122/106–107). Limited by a different contrasting quality, it will be modified accordingly, thereby passing beyond one restriction, albeit only to be restricted in a new way. This tension between something's 'determination' and its various 'modifications' is what Hegel calls 'the ought [*das Sollen*]' (SL 21.119/104).

We are now in a better position to appreciate why Hegel says of finite beings that "the hour of their birth is the hour of their death." They realize their defining quality, or what they are, only by undergoing some alteration of their defining quality, that is, by ceasing to 'be there.' To all appearances, *that* is the implication of the principle *omnis determinatio est negatio*, and the entire field of qualitative determinateness falls within its scope. It does not take much to see, however, that qualitative being must be utterly without any grounding or ontological footing if it is truly constituted in the thoroughly differential manner indicated by the principle. We can see this more clearly by considering that there are two conditions on qualitative being: (1) no single qualitative being stretches any further than its actual 'being there'; (2) the 'being there' of a qualitative being can never count for more than a *restriction* of what it is in itself, so that, insofar as it (merely) *ought to be*, something is constantly in transcendence of its own limit (i.e., the way its (p. 232) determinateness 'is there'). Now, these two conditions apply symmetrically to all qualitative beings; consequently, qualitative being in its entirety consists in nothing other than its own self-negation and perishing, part and whole alike. Non-being is the only true being of a qualitative sphere constituted solely by mutual restriction.

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In a word, finite being-determinate negates itself. Its basic quality was, after all, first introduced as “the simple oneness of being and nothing” (SL 21.97/83); the successor notion of ‘somethings’ in relation to ‘others’ was introduced purely as a means of separating off the moment of negation so as to posit what we thought we could consider ‘real’ differences. As it turns out, however, what we find is that this whole way of ‘translating’ the simple unity of affirmation and negation into a sphere of real differences dead-ends as a form of nihilism. As a totality of mutually restricting and thus *merely restricted* qualities, ‘being-determinate sums up to *nothing*. And that leaves us with nothing but a conception of being whose sole determination lies in the fact that, in contrast to the finitude of ‘being-determinate,’ it is *not nothing*. So we are back at square one. Or so it would seem until we take a broader and categorially richer view of ‘finitude’ and its role in the self-determination of being.

10.4.3 Infinity

‘Finitude’ represents the attempt to conceive determinateness as arising through the mutual restriction (negation) of otherwise affirmative qualities. The failure of that attempt teaches us that simple relations of negation between qualitatively distinct beings are insufficient to generate a system of determinate entities. If we allow ourselves to be guided by such a conception of negation in thinking through the principle *omnis determinatio est negatio*, we end up with a form of nihilism in which the ‘world’ of determinate existence ‘vanishes’ into an utterly simple and indeterminate ‘being’. But the story is not over. In the transition to ‘Infinity’, Hegel takes up what is, to all appearances, a disastrous result, and subjects it to further, ultimately redeeming analysis.

To begin, a simple observation: Being as not-nothing is the way we initially introduced the concept *Dasein* (i.e., ‘being there’ or being-determinate). So in the (self-) negation of the finite, we have fallen back not quite to the very beginning of the Logic, but rather to its first properly determinate category. Furthermore, the initial analysis of ‘being there’ led us (*via* the concepts of quality, something, and something other) to the concepts of finitude, limit, and restriction as its entailments. Therefore, when we arrive at the result that the finite *is as nothing*, leaving us with the thought of being as simply *not-nothing*, we have in one respect re-arrived at our original point of departure and are poised to repeat the very same cycle of self-negating negative determination.

In another respect, however, the situation has changed. At the beginning of chapter 2, being and non-being (nothing) were present in ‘simple unity’, rather than in the stark contrast that emerged by the end of the section on ‘finitude’. Consequently, being and non-being (nothing) now stand to each other in the more determinate relation of mutual limitation, each being what the other is not: the finite has revealed itself to be (p. 233) non-being, determining being accordingly as the non-finite, that is, as the *infinite*. But as Hegel is quick to point out, *this way* of grasping the concepts of the finite and infinite places them to each other in the characteristic relation of finitude (*viz.*, mutual limitation or restriction). The same ‘dialectic’ that drove us to acknowledge the nullity of the finite will

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therefore repeat itself in the relation of the finite and the ('finitized') infinite—but this time with a more positive result.

By virtue of its purely differential constitution, the finite negates itself: that is the lesson of the previous section. In negating itself, the finite gives rise to (or perhaps more aptly, *gives way to*) the non-finite (cp. SL 21.109, 126/94, 110; SL 11.291/385). On closer inspection, however, this way of speaking might seem to be no more than mere word-play. The non-being of the finite is just that: *non-being, nothing*. In the absence of being-determinate in the sense of presence or 'being there' (*Dasein*), there *simply is nothing there* to which the finite could 'give way' in its perishing. The non-finite is only 'there' to the extent that it stands in contrast to the finite. But that lands us in a predicament. In order to 'be there' and stand in contrast to the non-finite, the finite has to persist or endure; otherwise the non-finite loses all determinateness and itself collapses into nothingness (the lesson of the Logic's opening chapter). So if the finite is nothing, so is the non-finite. Yet we have just established that the very essence of the finite is not to persist but to perish; for it to persist as the infinite's contrasting pole is thus for it to be non-finite itself. So if the infinite is not nothing, then it is the finite. There seems to be no way of keeping the infinite apart from the finite that does not end up either conflating them or destroying both (cp. SL 21.131/114).

Hegel sets out to resolve this difficulty by noting, first, that it is occasioned by the fact that we have started from a merely negative conception of the infinite as the non-finite. As surely as the infinite emerges as the self-negation of the finite, the infinite must also *posit* the finite in order to ensure for itself the degree of determinateness that is required to qualify it as any kind of *being* at all. To this extent, the infinite is inseparable from the finite. In the very moment the finite meets its destiny to undergo annihilation, the non-finite (the being that is not-nothing) restores it to existence as being-determinate. This much is guaranteed by the developmental sequence that began with 'pure being': the purely indeterminate being, left over after the finite vanishes, collapses into the 'pure' being of the beginning, which we have seen to unfold in a sequence that leads precisely to the finitude of 'being-determinate' and its self-negation. So we find ourselves in a repetitive cycle in which the infinite posits the finite, which negates itself and passes over into the infinite, which in turn posits the finite, and so on and so forth.

This cycle of negation and renewed positing, which Hegel famously dubs 'bad infinity' or the 'progress to infinity' (SL 21.129/113), is a crucial preliminary step toward resolving the difficulties outlined in the preceding. We have seen the cycle of bad infinity to involve 'moments' of both negation and affirmation (positing). Hegel develops the concept of 'true' or 'affirmative infinity' by comparing the way these two moments are at work from the perspectives of the finite and the infinite in turn. The result of his comparative analysis will be an expanded notion of negation that is able to do the work of (p. 234) both simple affirmation and 'simple negation' as they are present in the dialectic of bad infinity.

Hegel begins by considering what he variously calls 'simple', 'first', or 'immediate' negation from the perspective of the finite (e.g. SL 21.114/99, 127/111). When we take the fi-

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nite in isolation, we find that its essential determination ('the ought') is to pass beyond its limit and thereby negate itself, thereby positing the infinite; but since the infinite is constituted as a being over against (i.e., limited by) the finite, it is in fact negated even as it is posited. When in turn we take the finite as standing in a limitative relation to the infinite, we are forced to acknowledge that the infinite, thus conceived, is subject to the same logic of 'the ought' and restriction that characterizes such relations generally; the infinite must therefore equally surpass *its* limit and pass over into the finite, thereby positing it anew. Hence in both cases, the finite is reproduced in its negation: the movement closes on itself and "merges with itself" in passing beyond or negating itself (SL 21.123, 134/108, 117).

Starting in turn from the infinite, we note its determination as the negation of the finite (viz., as the *non*-finite). It is thus determined as *beyond* the finite and consequently as limited by it. But such a limited infinite is itself finite and subject to the dialectic of the ought and restriction: it passes beyond the limit, negating itself, and the infinite is reproduced. The infinite thus exhibits the same cycle of negation and concomitant self-affirmation. Both the infinite and the finite constitute a single, identical movement of returning-to-self, a single process of 'becoming' (SL 21.135–136/118–119).

Upon reflection, then, we find that the finite and infinite do not in fact stand to each other in the relation of *simple* or *immediate negation* characteristic of 'being-determinate' as we initially came to understand it. Instead of each being the negation of the *other*, each is the negation of *itself* and thereby the renewed positing, reproduction, or reaffirmation of itself: *double negation* or the *negation of negation*.

Hence neither the finite nor the infinite can be understood as instances of simple, immediate being-determinate; they are instead internally self-mediated results, each arising from the identical movement of self-negation. The finite's (infinite) return to itself is itself the return of the infinite into itself. In the 'true' infinite, therefore, the logic of quality reaches a preliminary culmination. As a returning-to-self or self-relation, the true infinite exhibits the moment of immediacy that is characteristic of all determinations of 'being' in the technical sense of Hegelian logic. But as self-negation (and hence as a differing-from-self), the infinite exhibits the otherness or determinateness that is constitutive of determinate being. Hegel can therefore claim to have retrieved the notion of the infinite from its otherworldly sphere as what is merely beyond actual existence, proclaiming that "it *is*, and *is there*, present, at hand" (SL 21.136/119).

10.5. Being-for-Self

Hegel's analysis of 'true infinity' culminates in a transformed conception of reality, negation, and limitation. The categories of finitude were structured by what Hegel calls (p. 235) 'simple' or 'immediate' negation: *Dasein* is a heterogeneous continuum or manifold of qualities, each of which is supposed to constitute an *immediate* (i.e., independently graspable) reality and yet to be what it is only insofar as it represents the *negation* of (i.e., insofar as it differs from) some other quality external to it. This conception of reality and

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negation harbors a latent contradiction that Hegel's analysis of 'finitude' makes increasingly explicit: a world of qualities determined solely by mutual limitation could not be a world at all.

Hegel avoids this unacceptable conclusion by reconceiving negation. What is logically and metaphysically primary is an 'absolute' activity of self-negating negation. While it is right to think of this 'double negation' or 'negation of negation' as an original division, we must not imagine it as introducing difference into a preexistent unity ('substance' or 'being'). Division (self-negation) and unity (affirmation) are strictly concomitant. (It is easy to see that this is simply a further specification of what we said about *original* synthetic unity.) The concept of self-negating negation is intended to capture this paradoxical idea of a reality that divides itself in order to be one and that differs from itself by virtue of merging with itself.¹⁸

Such a reality can be said to be 'affirmatively infinite' in the sense that it is qualitatively determinate (it 'is there'), but not in virtue of being limited by any qualitative being external to it. Its determinateness is the result of self-limitation, that is to say, of self-determination. It is at once both a unity *for itself*, over against its manifold, finite determinations, and the unity of itself together with the manifold, finite determinations that are there *for it*.

At this point, it is natural to ask how and where we are supposed to find such a self-negating and thereby affirmatively self-determining reality to be instantiated. What claim to plausibility can be made on its behalf?

The beginning of an answer lies in Hegel's discussion of 'being-for-self', the topic of the third and final chapter of 'Quality.' By *being-for-self*, he means something closely analogous to the unified subject of apperception (cp. SL: 21.145/127, 12.17–19/514–516). It is important to emphasize, however, that the subject of consciousness is never encountered as a bare unity, but always as a unity saturated with the rich and particular content whose being is characterized by 'intentional inexistence',¹⁹ or what Hegel calls *being-for-one* (SL 21.146/128). Obviously, consciousness and its content are *realiter* inseparable. Yet they are also obviously distinct: within the unity of consciousness, there is a distinct and immediate *consciousness of unity* that persists through the flux of conscious content. As this consciousness of unity, being-for-self remains "at one with itself" (*bei sich*; SL: 21:145/127), notwithstanding its inseparability from the contents that are given to it as its modes.

Now, in Hegel's technical use of the term, 'consciousness' refers to a specific instance of the unity of being-for-self and being-for-one, in which the heterogeneity and externality of the unified content compromises the consciousness of unity as such (cf. (p. 236) SL: 21.145/127). By contrast, *self-consciousness* illustrates being-for-self in its purity. Here the difference in content that characterized being-for-one in the case of consciousness (sensations, intuitions, etc.) is canceled, and consequently the *Dasein*-like relation of being-other between distinct and independent 'somethings' also falls away. Being-for-one is, identically and indivisibly, also being-for-self; indeed, as self-consciousness, being-for-self

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can be said to obtain only insofar as it is itself being-for-one: being-for-self is *itself* the being-for-one of being-for-self (SL: 21.147/129).

We must therefore avoid the temptation to understand the content of self-consciousness as being (*merely*) *ideal* in contrast to the *reality* of the underlying 'subject' that grasps itself in it (SL: 21.147/129). Properly understood, being-for-self cannot be separated even notionally from the determinateness it has as being-for-one. In Hegel's words, "Ideality consists precisely in the fact that it is equally true of both [being-for-self and being-for-one] that they have being and validity only insofar as they are *for-one*, which is at one and the same time indistinguishably both ideality and reality" (SL 21.147/129).

The 'self-negating' character of true infinity and its categorial twin, being-for-self, does therefore find a plausible instantiation in the structure of self-consciousness, a unity which *is there* only to the extent that it simultaneously distinguishes itself *from itself* and identifies what is thus distinguished *with itself*. Nonetheless, being-for-self is explicitly not to be identified with self-consciousness, even though the two share the same basic structure.

The state of play at the opening of the chapter "Being-for-Self" is namely such that the manifold of qualities that populated the chapter "Being-Determinate" or *Dasein* has not yet reappeared after having vanished into nothingness along with finitude as such. The analysis of true infinity has merely shown us *how* qualitative being must be constituted in order not to succumb to the nihilistic logic of 'simple' negation, and being-for-self represents a corresponding reconception of the being-determinate that was the root of finitude. But being-for-self as such still has to undergo a process of development and realization parallel to the preceding development and realization of *Dasein*, whose successor-concept it is. Far from exhibiting the concretion of real self-consciousness, at this initial stage being-for-self is little more than a *principle* of self-determination, still lacking any concrete determinations that could anchor its abstract differentiation into being-for-self and being-for-one. It is, at this initial threshold of development, merely 'one [*Eins*]' (SL 21.150/132).

Accordingly, the remainder of 'Quality' is devoted to the successive unfolding of this 'one', by the agency of its negative self-relation. Because the one is *negative* self-relation, it *repels* itself from itself, thereby positing an unordered manifold of 'many ones' (SL 21.151–57/132–137). However, insofar as the one is negative *self*-relation, it is also the thoroughgoing *attraction* of those many ones. The result is a single, internally differentiated whole ('the one One'): "Since it contains repulsion in its determination, the latter equally preserves the ones as many within it; by its attracting, it musters, so to speak, something before it, gains a comprehension [*Umfang*] or a filling" (SL 21.162/141). Like (p. 237) all the subordinate triads within the *Science of Logic*, however, this one too concludes with a logically incomplete state of affairs that is, by consequence, ambivalent.

Over the course of the chapter, Hegel works out this conceptual tension, arguing that being-for-self acquires real determinateness only as the relation of many ones contained within a single One that is distinguished from them solely by its functional role as the uni-

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fying whole. The chapter ends with the insight that a relation like this is not yet sufficiently determinate to sustain a real distinction between the positive aspect of the one-many relation (the 'attraction' of the many exactly similar ones to the 'one One' (i.e., their *continuity* with it) and the negative aspect of the relation (the 'repulsion' of the many exactly similar ones, the *discreteness* that goes along with the very notion of plurality). The section on quality concludes with this notion of a quantum that is (in contrast to the heterogeneity of qualitative being) equally amenable to being construed as either a *homogeneous continuum* or a *homogeneous manifold* of discrete, but exactly similar 'ones', *units*. The transition to the next major division of the Logic of Being, 'Quantity' (SL 165–166/145, 173–174/152–153), is thus effected.

10.6. Hegel's Idealism

"Every philosophy is essentially idealism" (SL 21.142/124).—Understanding this statement is key to understanding the sense in which Hegelianism is idealism. The 'Remark' in which it occurs (SL 21.142/124) follows on the 'transition' from 'affirmative infinity' to 'being-for-self' and begins thus:

The proposition that the finite is ideal [*ideell*] constitutes idealism. The idealism of philosophy consists in nothing other than in recognizing that the finite is not a true being [*ein wahrhaft Seiendes*]. Every philosophy is essentially idealism or at least has idealism for its principle, and the question then is only how far this principle is carried out. [...] The principles of ancient as well as modern philosophies, be it 'water', 'matter', or 'atoms', are *thoughts*, universals, ideal entities [*Ideelle*], not things as they are immediately given, i.e. in sensuous singularity. Not even the 'water' of Thales is that, for notwithstanding the fact that it is also empirical water, it is besides that the in-itself or essence of all other things, which are thus not independent beings [*Selbständige*], self-grounded, but rather *posited* on the basis of an other, of 'water', i.e. they are ideal entities

(SL 21.142/124).²⁰

The first thing to notice here is Hegel's identification of ideality with (ontological) *dependence*, though not dependence on an 'other' that is external to itself. For something to be ideal is for it to be grounded in a process of which it is a moment and which it thus serves to realize. By implication, a 'true being' is (ontologically) *independent*, (p. 238) self-grounded, self-determining, insofar as it constitutes the dynamic whole of its individual 'moments'. Insofar as the finite constitutes a sphere of mutually delimiting qualitative entities, clearly nothing within that sphere meets this criterion of 'true being'; but insofar as the finite as such proves to be inseparable from the infinite, neither does finitude in its affirmatively revised conception meet the criterion. As a 'moment' within the process or becoming of the true infinite, finite things retain their status as *merely ideal*.

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Second, we should note that, *with respect to their specific content*, the principles Hegel adduces in illustration of his point ('water', 'matter', 'atoms') constitute classical varieties of *materialist monism*. Their material (i.e., non-mental) content serves to underline Hegel's contention in the same passage that "the opposition between idealistic and realistic philosophy is [...] without meaning" (SL 21.142/124). Instead, the decisive point concerns their *formal character* as *monistic* principles: 'water', 'atoms', and so on, are intended to constitute the unique, homogeneous basis for a system of real constitution. Everything that exists or 'is there' is to be grasped as a particular modification of that single underlying reality, separable from it only in thought, and to that extent *merely ideal*.

In the third place, we may observe that Hegel uses the term 'ideal' to characterize both the dependent, finite derivata and the independent, non-finite principles from which they are derived. 'Water', 'matter', and so on, are determinate '*thoughts*', and thus also *derived*; indeed, they are derived from the very finite derivata they are intended to explain. Their whole purpose, as *principles*, is to reveal how the determinate contents of finite, qualitative entities are posited; yet they are themselves, insofar as they exhibit the *form* of principles, posited through an act of thinking that has already taken the ideality of the finite contents as its point of departure. We can therefore recognize here an illuminating instance of the unity and inseparability of the finite and infinite that Hegel makes so much of in the main text. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, there is something about the very presence here of determinate content that renders it finite, *merely ideal*, to the extent that it differs in kind from the categorial content the Logic is meant to derive. 'Water', and any principle like it, is incapable of exhibiting the (original synthetic) unity of the real and the ideal that marks out infinitude as "reality in a higher sense" (SL 21.136/119; cp. 21.147/129, quoted earlier).

In this connection, it is instructive to consider Hegel's criticism of subjective idealism in the same 'Remark' (SL 21.143/125): To 'idealize' the contents of consciousness merely by denying their mind-independent existence is to fail to supply a principle of derivation by which to demonstrate their dependence (in terms of constitution) on the unity of the mind itself. Significantly, Hegel is also committed to the view that certain kinds or strata of mental content are insusceptible to such derivation: "the content, as taken up in sensation, intuition, or also in the more abstract element of representation and thought, contains a plethora of such finitudes, and these, by the exclusion of that one mode of finitude alone (of the form of subjective and objective), are still not done away with, and even less have they fallen off on their own" (SL 21.143/125).

This view grounds a specifically Hegelian form of *content-idealism*: only certain sets of cognitive contents—one prominent example being the contents of *The Science of Logic*, another being the contents of Hegel's speculative theories of nature and (p. 239) spirit—are fit to stand in the required relation, such that the contents are fully derivable from the principle ('pure thinking') and the principle is fully realized in the contents ('pure thought-determinations').

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The distinguishing feature of such content is that it exhibits (or can exhibit) within itself the actively synthetic, original unity *that is thinking itself*. In turn, the sequence and hierarchy of such content—in the case of the Logic: the categories or ‘pure-thought determinations’—are determined *by the degree* to which the specific content *clearly and distinctly* exhibits, realizes, or objectively manifests that unity, the unity of what Hegel calls ‘the Concept’. The categories of infinity and being-for-self, in which the logic of quality culminates, owe their special status precisely to the fact that they exhibit, in a relatively more explicit form, the active synthetic unity that was present merely implicitly at the Logic’s beginning in the thought of being and nothing.

It is hardly coincidental, then, that Hegel chooses the transition between ‘infinite’ and ‘being-for-self’ to enunciate the principle of idealism, to exemplify it in the naïve cosmologies of the Presocratics, and to criticize subjective (e.g., Berkeleyan) idealism as a spurious form of it. We have already recognized the structural affinity between the original synthetic unity of apperception and affirmative infinity/being-for-self. Now we see that all scientific striving, especially all philosophical striving, is ‘idealistic’ in the sense that it responds to a norm (‘the ought’) implicit in finite rational consciousness as such: namely, to realize itself by positing the ‘stuff’ by which it is determined in its immediate, qualitative (sensuous) existence as *merely ideal*, as having a merely derivative being-for-one.

In contrast to subjective idealists, who erroneously imagine themselves already to have fulfilled this task merely by embracing the thought that nothing exists except by virtue of belonging to ‘my’ consciousness, Hegel urges what is essentially a version of Kant’s transcendental ideal. Kant defines the ideal as “the idea, not merely *in concreto*, but *in individuo*, i.e. as an individual thing, determinable or indeed determined by the idea alone” (CPR B 596). In short, the ‘transcendental ideal’ represents the ideal of absolute self-determination. Viewed from one perspective, the culminating passages of ‘Quality’ are still far from delineating this ideal; after all, fully eight substantial sections of equal complexity still separate ‘true infinity’ and ‘being-for-self’ from Hegel’s concluding exposition of the ‘absolute idea’. To that degree, ‘the ought’ still predominates over the finite thought-determinations we encounter here. And in a larger sense, that is true of all finite thought, destined as it is to wrestle with an unruly environment of transient, but nonetheless importunate qualities. From a different perspective, however, and in pointed contrast to Kant’s gesture of humility and self-denial, the active orientation toward that ideal within the finite realm—the ‘ought’ as such—is itself already the presence and reality of the ideal. Hence the emphatic expressions with which Hegel evokes the infinite, in another context, as the ‘simple essence of life’, the ‘soul of the world’, the ‘native realm of truth’ (PhenS 9.99, 103/¶¶162, 167). Wherever the mind strives for intellectual self-determination, it has, in the most basic sense, already determined itself to such striving. There the unity not only of apperception, but of reason itself, is present in full. That is the meaning of the unity of the finite and the infinite. Though we must strive (p. 240) for the ideal in order for it to exist, it exists and is present in our very striving. Reason is truly alive only in and through the finite; Hegel’s idealism is practical.

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Notes:

(¹) In preparing this chapter I have profited from the writings of more scholars than can be mentioned here. I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to Andreas Arndt, Dieter Henrich, Anton Friedrich Koch, and Robert Pippin, whose insights have helped shape my account, as much as it surely departs in particulars, and especially to Stephen Houlgate for his constructive comments on a draft of this chapter. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Birgit Sandkaulen, who hosted my tenure as a Humboldt Research Fellow in 2014/2015 at the Forschungszentrum für Klassische Deutsche Philosophie (Ruhr-Univer-

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sität Bochum); our regular discussions on Hegel and post-Kantian philosophy have been a source of inspiration. The research that went into writing this article was generously supported by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

(²) On Hegel's Logic as a theory of categories see Hartmann, *Hegels Logik*.

(³) On the impact of Spinoza, see the contributions by Sandkaulen, Ng, and Zambrana (Chapters 1, 12, 13) in this volume. Cf. Beiser, *Fate of Reason*; Förster and Melamed, *Spinoza and German Idealism*.

(⁴) See Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism*, esp. 17–24; cp. SL 12.17–18/514–515.

(⁵) In one sense, the progress of the Logic is analytic in character, “merely the positing of that which is already contained in a concept” (E §88R). However, the content that is there to be posited is the product of an original, productive synthesis.

(⁶) Hegel adopts the triadic organization of the categories from Kant: cp. B 110; SL 21.324/283. In the same passage, he explains his addition of the category of *measure*.—Kant's categories of relation and modality find their analogues in the logic of ‘Essence’.

(⁷) Hegel's term *Dasein* presents the translator with challenges. In ordinary non-Hegelian usage, the term usually translates as ‘existence’, though in many contexts ‘to be present’ or ‘to be there’ is more appropriate. Hegel himself points to the etymological meaning of the word as “being [*Sein*] in a certain place,” but hastens to add that “the idea of space [*die Raumvorstellung*] does not belong” in the context of his logical analysis of the category (SL 21.97/83–84). In English we can similarly say that “there is someone coming,” for instance, or speak of what it is “for there to be” something of a certain kind. ‘There’ functions as an empty placeholder that, despite the explicitly spatial metaphor, marks existence but has no distinctively spatial import. Hegel uses the word this way when he says of ‘affirmative infinitude’ that “it is, and is *there*, present, at hand [*es ist, und ist da, präsent, gegenwärtig*]” (SL 21.136/119). I will occasionally exploit this resource of the English language to render *Dasein* (e.g., in section 10.4.2).

However, neither ‘being-there’ nor ‘existence’ recommends itself as the primary rendering of the Hegelian term. Besides the fact that ‘being-there’, as an English term of art, is firmly associated with Heidegger's quite different notion of *Dasein*, neither does it serve well to track the more general Hegelian concept of which it is a special instance, namely *determinate being* (*bestimmtes Sein*; SL 21.96/83; cf. Houlgate, *The Opening of Hegel's Logic*, 298). ‘Existence’, in turn, ought to be reserved as a translation for the related but distinct Hegelian term, *Existenz* (cp. SL 11.324–34/420–430). I have opted to render *Dasein* as *being-determinate*, partly to bring it into line with related terms such as *being-in-itself* and *being-for-itself*, partly also to emphasize its adverbial character as a mode of being in contrast to the adjectival relation of a property (say) to an underlying entity that is thereby rendered determinate.

(⁸) For Kant's view of negation as the source of determinateness among different ‘some-things’ or ‘realities’, cf. B 605–607; also cp. AA 2.30–31.

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(⁹) Di Giovanni's translation of the *Logic* has occasionally been modified.

(¹⁰) On the early reception see Burkhardt, *Hegels 'Wissenschaft der Logik.'* Classical and contemporary criticisms are covered in Houlgate, *The Opening of Hegel's Logic*, esp. 29–102.

(¹¹) For Kant's account of the concepts of reflection and their role in concept-formation, see CPR B316–324, together with AA 9.94–95.

(¹²) Cp. SL 21.78, 82–85; also cp. GW 4, 327.

(¹³) Cp. SL 21.72–73/62, 79–80/68.

(¹⁴) The argument of Parmenides is discernible in the background: see DK 28/B2.7–3.1, B6.1–2; cp. SL 21.88/76–77.

(¹⁵) Hegel follows Jacobi in attributing this principle to Spinoza (cf. SL 21.101/87). For critical discussion see Melamed, "Omnis determinatio est negatio." Cp. Stern, "Determination Is Negation."

(¹⁶) On the difference between limitation and finitude and the contrast with Spinoza cp. Houlgate, *The Opening of Hegel's Logic*, 370–375.

(¹⁷) Hegel's term *Beschaffenheit* is sometimes rendered as 'constitution', a word suggestive of something's inner makeup or fixed character. This connotation clashes with Hegel's use of the term to denote "what belongs to something outwardly [*was das Etwas an ihm hat*: cp. SL 21.108/93], *but not to its being-in-itself*" (SL 21.111/96, emphasis added). McTaggart's translation, 'modification' (*Commentary*, 26), is preferable in suggesting a quality something has in virtue of interacting with something else.

(¹⁸) Cp. Henrich, "Grundoperation."

(¹⁹) According to Brentano (*Psychology*, 88), the hallmark of mental phenomena.

(²⁰) On the 'idealism of the finite', see Stern, *Hegelian Metaphysics*, 57–77.

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