

GENERAL CONCEPT OF LOGIC

In no science is the need to begin with the fact [*Sache*] itself, without preliminary reflections, felt more strongly than in the science of logic. In every other science, the matter that it treats, and the scientific method, are distinguished from each other; the content, moreover, does not make an absolute beginning but is dependent on other concepts and is connected on all sides with other material. It is therefore permitted to these sciences to speak of their ground and its context, as well of their method, in the form of lemmas;⁷ to apply presupposed forms of definitions and the like without further ado, as known and accepted; and to make use of customary ways of argumentation in order to establish their general concepts and fundamental determinations.

Logic, on the contrary, cannot presuppose any of these forms of reflection, these rules and laws of thinking, for they are part of its content and they first have to be established within it. And it is not just the declaration of scientific method but the *concept* itself of *science* as such that belongs to its content and even makes up its final result. Logic, therefore, cannot say what it is in advance, rather does this knowledge of itself only emerge as the final result and completion of its whole treatment. Likewise its subject matter, *thinking* or more specifically *conceptual* thinking, is essentially elaborated within it; its concept is generated in the course of this elaboration and cannot therefore be given in advance. What is anticipated in this Introduction, therefore, is not intended to ground as it were the concept of logic, or to justify in advance its content and method scientifically, but rather to make more intuitible, by means of some explanations and reflections of an argumentative and historical nature, the standpoint from which this science ought to be considered.

⁷ i.e. premises taken for granted.

Whenever logic is taken as the science of thinking in general, it is thereby understood that this “thinking” constitutes *the mere form* of a cognition; that logic abstracts from all *content*, and the so-called second *constitutive piece* that belongs to the cognition, namely the *matter*, must be given from elsewhere; hence that logic, since this matter does not in the least depend on it, can give only the formal conditions of genuine knowledge, but does not itself contain real truth; or again, that logic is only the *pathway* to real knowledge, for the essential component of truth, the content, lies outside it.

But, first, to say that logic abstracts from all *content*, that it only teaches the rule of thinking without being able to engage in what is being thought or to take its composition into consideration, this alone is already inadequate. For, since thinking and the rules of thinking are supposed to be its subject matter, in these logic already has a content specifically its own; in them it has that second constituent of knowledge, namely a matter whose composition is its concern.

But, second, the notions on which the concept of logic has generally rested so far have in part already passed away, and for the rest, it is time that they disappear altogether, that the standpoint of this science were grasped at a higher level, and that the science gained a completely altered shape.

The concept of logic has hitherto rested on a separation, presupposed once and for all in ordinary consciousness, of the *content* of knowledge and its *form*, or of *truth* and *certainty*. Presupposed *from the start* is that the material of knowledge is present in and for itself as a ready-made world outside thinking; that thinking is by itself empty, that it comes to this material as a form from outside, fills itself with it, and only then gains a content, thereby becoming real knowledge.

Further, these two component parts (for they are supposed to be related to each other as component parts, and cognition is compounded from them in a mechanical, or at best chemical, manner) are said to stand to each other in this order: the object is complete and finished all by itself and, for its actuality, can fully dispense with thought; thought, for its part, is something deficient and in need of a material in order to complete itself, and also, as a pliable indeterminate form, must adapt itself to its matter. Truth is the agreement of thought with the subject matter, and in order to produce this agreement – for it is not there on its own account – thought is expected to be subservient and responsive to the subject matter.

Third, when the difference of matter and form, of subject matter and thought, is not left in this nebulous indeterminacy but is more specifically defined, each turns out to be a sphere divorced from the other.

Consequently, as thought receives and informs the material, it does not transcend itself but its reception of this material and its responsiveness to it remain modifications of itself; thus thought does not become its other; the self-conscious determining, at any rate, belongs only to it; even as it refers to the subject matter, therefore, it does not reach out to it outside itself; the subject matter remains a thing in itself, utterly a “beyond” of thought.

These views on the relation of subject and object to each other express the determinations that constitute the nature of our ordinary, phenomenal consciousness. However, when these prejudices are carried over to reason, as if in reason the same relation obtained, as if this relation had any truth in and for itself, then they are errors, and the refutation of them in every part of the spiritual and natural universe is what philosophy is; or rather, since they block the entrance to philosophy, they are the errors that must be removed before one can enter it.

The older metaphysics had in this respect a higher concept of thinking than now passes as the accepted opinion. For it presupposed as its principle that only what is known of things and in things by thought is really true in them, that is, what is known in them not in their immediacy but as first elevated to the form of thinking, as things of thought. This metaphysics thus held that thinking and the determination of thinking are not something alien to the subject matters, but are rather their essence, or that the *things* and the *thinking* of them agree in and for themselves (also our language expresses a kinship between them); that thinking in its immanent determinations, and the true nature of things, are one and the same content.

But the *reflection* of the understanding seized hold of philosophy. We must know exactly what is meant by this saying which is otherwise often used as a slogan. It refers in general to an understanding that abstracts and therefore separates, that remains fixed in its separations. Turned against reason, this understanding behaves in the manner of *ordinary common sense*, giving credence to the latter’s view that truth rests on sensuous reality, that thoughts are *only* thoughts, that is, that only sense perception gives filling and reality to them; that reason, in so far as it abides in and for itself, generates only mental figments. In this self-renunciation of reason, the concept of truth is lost, is restricted to the knowledge of mere subjective truth, of mere appearances, of only something to which the nature of the fact does not correspond; *knowledge* has lapsed into *opinion*.

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Yet there is something deeper lying at the foundation of this turn which knowledge takes, and appears as a loss and a retrograde step, something on which the elevation of reason to the loftier spirit of modern philosophy

in fact rests. The basis of that conception now universally accepted⁸ is to be sought, namely, in the insight into the *necessary conflict* of the determinations of the understanding with themselves. – The reflection already mentioned consists in *transcending* the concrete immediate, in *determining* and *parting* it. But this reflection must *equally transcend* its *separating* determinations and above all *connect* them. The conflict of determinations breaks out precisely at the point of connection. This reflective activity of connection belongs in itself to reason, and to rise above the determinations and attain insight into their discord is the great negative step on the way to the true concept of reason. But, when not carried through, this insight runs into the misconception that reason is the one that contradicts itself; it fails to see that the contradiction is in fact the elevation of reason above the restrictions of the understanding and the dissolution of them. At that point, instead of making the final step that would take it to the summit, knowledge flees from the unsatisfactoriness of the determinations of the understanding to sensuous existence, believing that there it will find stability and accord. On the other hand, since this cognition is self-admittedly a cognition only of appearances, the unsatisfactoriness of the latter is admitted but at the same time presupposed: as much as to say that although we do not have cognition of things in themselves, nevertheless, within the sphere of appearance we do have correct cognition; as if, so to speak, there were a difference only in the *kind of subject matters* and one kind, namely the things in themselves, does not fall within the scope of knowledge whereas the other kind, namely the appearances, does.⁹ This is like attributing right insight to someone, with the stipulation, however, that he is not fit to see what is true but only what is false. Absurd as this might be, no less absurd would be a cognition which is true but does not know its subject matter as it is in itself.

The *critique of the forms of the understanding*¹⁰ has arrived precisely at this result, namely that such forms do *not apply to things in themselves*. – This can only mean that they are in themselves something untrue. However, since they have been allowed to remain valid for reason and experience, the critique has not altered them in any way but rather has let them be for the subject in the same shape as they formerly applied to the object. But if they are inadequate for the thing in itself, still less must the understanding to which they supposedly belong have to put up with them and rest content with them. If they cannot be determinations of *the thing in itself*, still less

⁸ i.e. the concept of truth as merely subjective.

⁹ This is a criticism of Kant. Cf. Bxxv.

¹⁰ The reference is to Kant. Cf. A276/B332ff.

can they be determinations of the *understanding*, to which one ought to concede at least the dignity of a thing. The determinations of finite and infinite run into the same conflict, whether they are applied to time and space, to the world, or are determinations internal to the spirit – just as black and white yield gray, whether they are mixed on a wall or on a palette. If our representation of the *world* is dissolved when we carry over to it the determinations of the infinite and finite, still more is *spirit* itself, which contains both determinations within itself, something inwardly self-contradictory, self-dissolving. – It is not the nature of the material or of the subject matter to which they are applied or in which they are found that can make a difference; for it is only through such determinations, and in accordance with them, that the subject matter has contradiction within it.

The said critique has therefore removed the forms of objective thinking only from the thing, but has left them in the subject as it originally found them. That is to say, it did not consider them in and for themselves, according to their proper content, but simply took them over from subjective logic in the manner of lemmas. There was no question, therefore, of an immanent deduction of such forms, or also of deducing them as logico-subjective forms, still less, of a dialectical treatment of them.

In its more consistent form, transcendental idealism did recognize the nothingness of the spectral *thing-in-itself*, this abstract shadow divorced from all content left over by critical philosophy, and its goal was to destroy it completely. This philosophy also made a start at letting reason produce its determinations from itself. But the subjective attitude assumed in the attempt prevented it from coming to fruition. This attitude and, together with it, the attempt and the cultivation of pure science were eventually abandoned.

But what is commonly understood by logic is considered with a total disregard of metaphysical significance. This science, in the state in which it still finds itself, has admittedly no content of the kind which ordinary consciousness would accept as reality, or as a genuine fact. But it is not for that reason a formal science void of any material truth. Besides, the region of truth is not to be sought in that material missing in it – a lack to which the insufficiency of logic is usually attributed. More to the point is that the emptiness of the logical forms lies rather solely in the manner in which they are considered and dealt with. Scattered in fixed determinations and thus not held together in organic unity, they are dead forms and the spirit which is their vital concrete unity does not reside in them. Therefore they lack proper content – a matter that would in itself be substance. The content which is missed in the logical forms is nothing else than a fixed foundation

and a concretion of these abstract determinations, and such a substantial being is usually sought for them outside them. But logical reason is itself the substantial or real factor which, within itself, holds together all the abstract determinations and constitutes their proper, absolutely concrete, unity. There is no need, therefore, to look far and wide for what is usually called a matter; it is not the fault of the subject matter of logic if the latter seems empty but only of the manner in which this subject matter is grasped.

This reflection brings us to a statement of the standpoint from which logic is to be considered, of how this standpoint differs from previous treatments of this science and is alone the true base on which the science is to rest in the future.

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*¹¹ I have presented consciousness as it progresses from the first immediate opposition of itself and the subject matter to absolute knowledge. This path traverses all the forms of the *relation of consciousness to the object* and its result is the *concept of science*. There is no need, therefore, to justify this concept here (apart from the fact that it emerges within logic itself). It has already been justified in the other work, and would indeed not be capable of any other justification than is produced by consciousness as all its shapes dissolve into that concept as into their truth. – A discursive justification or explanation of the concept of science can yield at best a general notion of it and a historical acquaintance; but a definition of science – or more precisely of logic – has its *proof* only in the necessity of the manner it is produced by consciousness as just mentioned. Any definition with which a science makes an absolute beginning can contain nothing else than the precise and correct expression of what is represented in one's mind as the *traditionally accepted* subject matter and purpose of the science. That just this subject matter and this purpose are so represented is a historical warrant for invoking such or such fact as conceded, or, more precisely, only for pleading that such or such fact should be accepted as conceded. There will always be the possibility that someone else will adduce a case, an instance, in which something more and different must be understood by some term or other – a term which is therefore to be defined in a narrower or broader sense and the science, too, will have to be refashioned accordingly. – Further still, definition is always a matter of argumentation as to what is to be included in it or excluded from it, within which limits and to what extent; but argumentation is open

¹¹ i.e. in Hegel's final Jena work (1807). Hegel gives one summary of this process at the beginning of Chapter 8, the concluding chapter.

to the most manifold and various opinions, and on these a decision can finally be determined only arbitrarily. In this method of beginning science with a definition, no mention is made of the need to demonstrate the *necessity* of its *subject matter*, and hence the necessity of the science itself.

The concept of pure science and its deduction is therefore presupposed in the present work in so far as the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is nothing other than that deduction. Absolute knowledge is the *truth* of all the modes of consciousness because, as the course of the *Phenomenology* brought out, it is only in absolute knowledge that the separation of the *subject matter* from the *certainty of itself* is completely resolved: truth has become equal to certainty and this certainty to truth.

Pure science thus presupposes the liberation from the opposition of consciousness. It contains *thought in so far as this thought is equally the fact as it is in itself*; or the *fact in itself* in so far as this is *equally pure thought*. As *science*, truth is pure self-consciousness as it develops itself and has the shape of the self, so that *that which exists in and for itself is the conscious concept and the concept as such is that which exists in and for itself*.

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This objective thinking is thus the *content* of pure science. Consequently, far from being formal, far from lacking the matter required for an actual and true cognition, it is its content which alone has absolute truth, or, if one still wanted to make use of the word “matter,” which alone is the veritable matter – a matter for which the form is nothing external, because this matter is rather pure thought and hence the absolute form itself. Accordingly, logic is to be understood as the system of pure reason, as the realm of pure thought. *This realm is truth unveiled, truth as it is in and for itself*. It can therefore be said that this content is *the exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and of a finite spirit*.

Anaxagoras is celebrated as the man who first gave voice to the thought that *Nous, thought*, is the principle of the world; that the essence of the world is to be defined as thought.¹² In this, he laid down the foundation for an intellectual view of the universe, the pure shape of which must be *logic*. Logic has nothing to do with a thought *about* something which stands outside by itself as the base of thought; nor does it have to do with forms meant to provide mere *markings* of the truth; rather, the necessary forms of thinking, and its specific determinations, are the content and the ultimate truth itself.

To get at least some inkling of this, one must put aside the notion that truth must be something tangible. Such tangibility, for example, is carried

¹² Cf. Aristotle, *Metaph.*, 984b.

over even into the ideas of Plato which are in God's thought, as if they were, so to speak, things that exist but in another world or region, and a world of actuality were to be found outside them which has a substantiality distinct from those ideas and is real only because of this distinctness. The Platonic idea is nothing else than the universal, or, more precisely, it is the concept of the subject matter; it is only in the concept that something has actuality, and to the extent that it is different from its concept, it ceases to be actual and is a nullity; the side of tangibility and of sensuous self-externality belongs to this null side. – But on the other side one can appeal to the representations typical of ordinary logic; for it is assumed that in definitions, for example, the determinations are not just of the knowing subject but are rather determinations of the subject matter, such that constitute its innermost essential nature. Or in an inference drawn from given determinations to others, the assumption is that the inferred is not something external to the subject matter and alien to it, but that it belongs to it instead, that to the thought there corresponds being. – Everywhere presupposed by the use of the forms of the concept, of judgment, inference, definition, division, etc., is that they are not mere forms of self-conscious thinking but also of objective understanding. – *Thought* is an expression which attributes the determination contained in it primarily to consciousness. But inasmuch as it is said that *understanding, that reason, is in the objective world*, that spirit and nature have *universal laws* to which their life and their changes conform, then it is conceded just as much that the determinations of thought have objective value and concrete existence.

21.35 Critical philosophy did indeed already turn *metaphysics* into *logic* but, like the subsequent idealism, it gave to the logical determinations an essentially subjective significance out of fear of the object, as we said earlier;¹³ for that reason, these determinations remained affected by the very object that they avoided, and were left with the remains of a thing-in-itself, an infinite check, as a beyond. But the liberation from the opposition of consciousness that science must be able to presuppose elevates the determinations of thought above this anxious, incomplete standpoint, and demands that they be considered for what they are in and for themselves without any such cautious restriction, as the logical, the purely rational.

Kant thought further of logic, that is, the aggregate of definitions and propositions that ordinarily passes for logic, as fortunate because, as contrasted with other sciences, it was its lot to attain an early completion; since Aristotle, it has taken no backward step, but also none forward, the latter

¹³ Hegel is probably referring to 21.29, above.

because to all appearances it seems to be finished and complete. If logic has not undergone change since Aristotle – and in fact, judging from the latest compendiums of logic, the usual changes mostly consist only of omissions – then surely the conclusion to be drawn is that it is all the more in need of a total reworking; for the two thousand years of spirit's continuous labor must have procured for it a higher consciousness about its thinking and the purity of its inner essence. A comparison of the shapes to which the spirit of the practical and the religious world, and of science in every form of real or idealized consciousness, has raised itself, with the shape in which logic, spirit's consciousness of its own pure essence, finds itself, reveals too wide a difference that one would not be struck, even on the most superficial observation, by the disproportion and the unworthiness of the latter consciousness as contrasted with spirit's other elevations.

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As a matter of fact, the need for a reformation of logic has long been felt. In the form and content in which it is found in the textbooks, it must be said that it has fallen into disrepute. It is still being dragged along, more from a feeling that one cannot dispense with a logic altogether and the persisting traditional belief in its importance, than from any conviction that such a commonplace content and the occupation with such empty forms are of any value or use.

The additions of psychological, pedagogical, and even physiological material which logic was at one time given, have later been almost universally recognized as disfigurements. A large part of these psychological, pedagogical, or physiological observations, of these laws and rules, whether they occur in logic or anywhere else, must appear in and for themselves to be quite shallow and trivial. The rule, for instance, that one should think through and personally test what one reads in books or hears by word of mouth; or, if one has poor sight, that one should aid the eyes with spectacles – rules which were offered for the attainment of truth in the textbooks of so-called applied logic, and even pompously set out in paragraphs – these must immediately strike everyone as superfluous – apart from the writer or the teacher who is in the embarrassing position of having to pad with extra material the otherwise too short and lifeless content of logic.^{c,14}

^c A just published and most up-to-date adaptation of this science, Fries's *System of Logic* [1811, Introduction §1] goes back to its anthropological foundations. The shallowness of the representation or opinion on which it is based, in and of itself, and of the execution, dispenses me from the trouble of taking any notice of this insignificant publication.

¹⁴ Note in the first edition, dropped in the second.

Regarding this content, the reason why it is so spiritless has already been given above. Its determinations are accepted in their undisturbed fixity and are brought together only in external connection. Since in judgments and syllogisms the operations are mostly reduced to, and founded upon, the quantitative aspect of the determinations, everything rests on external differentiation, on mere comparison, and becomes a completely analytical procedure and a calculus void of concept. The deduction of the so-called rules and laws, of inference especially, is no better than the manipulation of rods of unequal lengths for sorting them out in groups according to size – than a children's game of fitting together the pieces of a colored picture puzzle. – Not incorrectly, therefore, has this thinking been equated with reckoning, and reckoning again with this thinking.¹⁵ In mathematics, numbers have no conceptual content, no meaning outside equality or inequality, that is, outside relations which are entirely external; neither in themselves nor in connection are they a thought. When one mechanically calculates that three-fourths multiplied by two-thirds makes one-half, this operation contains about as much and as little thought as estimating whether in a logical figure this or that kind of syllogism applies.

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For the dead bones of logic to be quickened by spirit and become substance and content, its *method* must be the one which alone can make it fit to be pure science. In the present situation of logic, hardly a trace of scientific method is to be seen in it. It has roughly the form of an empirical science. The empirical sciences did find a method of defining and classifying their material specifically suited, such as it is, to what they are supposed to be. Pure mathematics, too, has its method suited to its abstract objects and the quantitative form in which alone it considers them. In the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, I have said what is essential regarding this method and, in general, the derived form of scientific procedure proper to mathematics,¹⁶ but we shall return to it in more detail within the logic itself.¹⁷ Spinoza, Wolff, and others, have let themselves be led astray into applying that method also to philosophy and in making the conceptually void external course of quantity, the course of the concept – a move contradictory in and for itself. Hitherto philosophy had yet to find its method but looked with envy at the systematic edifice of mathematics and,

¹⁵ Hegel is referring to Reinhold, at the time when the latter had espoused the philosophy of C. G. Bardili. Reinhold defines thought as “*the determinable and, to this extent, finite repeatability of one and just this one in an other, through the indeterminable and, to this extent, infinite repeatability of one and just this one in one and just this one determining.*” He calls this process a “*Rechnen.*” K. L. Reinhold, “Was ist das Denken, als Denken?” in *Beyträge zur leichtern Übersicht der Philosophie bey dem Anfange des 19. Jahrhunderts* I (Hamburg: Perthes, 1801), p. 103.

¹⁶ GW 9, 31–34. ¹⁷ GW 12, 226–229.

as we have said, borrowed it from it or helped itself with the method of sciences which are only an admixture of given material, propositions of experience and thoughts – or it even resorted to the crude rejection of all method. But the exposition of that which alone can be the true method of philosophical science falls within the treatment of logic itself; for method is the consciousness of the form of the inner self-movement of the content of logic. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, I have presented an example of this method with respect to a concrete object, namely *consciousness*.^d At issue there are shapes of consciousness, each of which dissolves itself in being realized, has its own negation for result – and thereby has gone over to a higher shape. The one thing needed to *achieve scientific progress* – and it is essential to make an effort at gaining this quite *simple* insight into it – is the recognition of the logical principle that negation is equally positive, or that what is self-contradictory does not resolve itself into a nullity, into abstract nothingness, but essentially only into the negation of its *particular* content; or that such a negation is not just negation, but is *the negation of the determined fact* which is resolved, and is therefore determinate negation; that in the result there is therefore contained in essence that from which the result derives – a tautology indeed, since the result would otherwise be something immediate and not a result. Because the result, the negation, is a *determinate* negation, it has a *content*. It is a new concept but one higher and richer than the preceding – richer because it negates or opposes the preceding and therefore contains it, and it contains even more than that, for it is the unity of itself and its opposite. – It is above all in this way that the system of concepts is to be erected – and it has to come to completion in an unstoppable and pure progression that admits of nothing extraneous.

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How could I possibly pretend that the method that I follow in this system of logic, or rather the method that this system itself follows within, would not be capable of greater perfection, of greater elaboration of detail? Yet I know that it is the one and only true method. This is made obvious by the very fact that this method is not something distinct from its subject matter and content – for it is the content in itself, *the dialectic which it possesses within itself*, which moves the subject matter forward. It is clear that no expositions can be accepted as scientifically valid that do not follow the progression of this method and are not in tune with its simple rhythm, for it is the course of the fact itself.

^d Later, with respect to other concrete objects and corresponding parts of philosophy.

In keeping with this method, I remind the reader that the divisions and the headings of the books, the sections and chapters given in this work, as well as the explanations associated with them, are made for the purpose of a preliminary overview, and that strictly speaking they only are of *historical* value. They do not belong to the content and body of the science but are rather compilations of an external reflection which has already gone through the whole of the exposition, therefore knows the sequence of its moments in advance and anticipates them before they are brought on by the matter at issue itself.

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Similarly in other sciences, preliminary definitions and divisions are by themselves nothing other than such external indications; but also within the science they never exceed this status. Even in logic, for example, we are told something like this, that “logic has two main parts, the doctrine of the elements and methodology,” and under the doctrine of the elements we then immediately find such *headings* as “Laws of Thinking,” followed by *Chapter One*, “On Concepts,” *Section One*, “On the Clarity of Concepts,” etc. – These definitions and divisions, made without any deduction and justification, constitute the systematic framework and the entire connectedness of such sciences. Such a logic considers it its vocation to talk about the necessity of deducing concepts and truths from principles; however, of what they call method, there is not the shadow of a deduction. Order consists in something like grouping together what is alike, in bringing in the simple ahead of the composite, and in other such external considerations. But as regards any internal, necessary connectedness, the list of headings is all that there is, and a transition is made simply by saying that now we are at “Chapter Two,” or that “*we now come to judgments*,” and the like.

Also the headings and divisions that appear in the present system are not intended to have for themselves any other significance than that of an indication of content. But then the *necessity* of the connectedness and the *immanent emergence* of distinctions must be found in the treatment of the fact itself, for it falls within the concept’s own progressive determination.

What propels the concept onward is the already mentioned negative¹⁸ which it possesses in itself; it is this that constitutes the truly dialectical factor. *Dialectic*, once considered a separate part of logic and, one may say, entirely misunderstood so far as its purpose and standpoint are concerned, thereby assumes a totally different position. – Even the Platonic dialectic, in the *Parmenides* itself and elsewhere even more directly, on the one hand

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¹⁸ Cf. above, 21.28.

only has the aim of refuting limited assertions by internally dissolving them and, on the other hand, generally comes only to a negative result. Dialectic is commonly regarded as an external and negative activity which does not belong to the fact itself but is rooted in mere conceit, in a subjective obsession for subverting and bringing to naught everything firm and true, or at least as in resulting in nothing but the vanity of the subject matter subjected to dialectical treatment.

Kant had a higher regard for dialectic – and this is among his greatest merits – for he removed from it the semblance of arbitrariness which it has in ordinary thought and presented it as *a necessary operation of reason*.¹⁹ Because dialectic was held to be merely the art of practicing deceptions and producing illusions, it was straight away assumed that it plays a false game; that its whole power rests solely on hiding its deception; that its results are only deviously obtained, a subjective shine. True, Kant's dialectical displays in the antinomies of pure reason, when examined more closely as will be done at length in the course of this work,²⁰ do not deserve great praise; but the general idea to which he gave justification and credence is the *objectivity of reflective shine* and the *necessity of the contradiction* which belongs to the *nature* of thought determinations: of course, this he did above all with reference to the way in which these determinations are applied by reason to *the things in themselves*; nevertheless, what such determinations are in reason, and with reference to what is in itself, this is precisely their nature. This result, *grasped in its positive aspect*, is nothing else but the *inner negativity* of the determinations which is their self-moving soul, the principle of all natural and spiritual life. But if one stays fixed at the abstract negative aspect of dialectics, the result is only the commonplace that reason is incapable of knowing the infinite – a peculiar result indeed, for it says that, since the infinite is what is rational, reason is not capable of cognizing the rational.

It is in this dialectic as understood here, and hence in grasping opposites in their unity, or the positive in the negative, that *the speculative* consists. It is the most important aspect of dialectic, but for the still unpracticed, unfree faculty of thought, the most difficult. Such a faculty, if still occupied with breaking itself free of the concrete representations of the senses and of ratiocination, must first practice abstract thinking, hold fast to concepts in their *determinateness* and learn to gain knowledge by means of them. An exposition of logic to this end would have, in its method, to keep to a subject division as mentioned above, and with regard to the more

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¹⁹ Cf. A321/B377ff. ²⁰ Cf below, 21.179ff., 228ff.

detailed content, to the definitions given to the single concepts, without getting itself involved in dialectic. In external shape, it would turn out to be similar to the usual presentation of this science, yet would also depart from it in content and, though of no use for the practice of speculative thinking, it would however serve abstract thinking, and this is a purpose which can never be realized by a logic popularized with the additions of psychological and anthropological materials. What it would give to the mind is the picture of a methodically ordered whole, even though the soul of the edifice, the method dwelling in the dialectic, would not itself appear in it.

Finally, with respect to the *education and the relation of the individual to logic*, I would further remark that this science, like grammar, appears in two different aspects or values. It is one thing for one who comes to it and to the sciences generally for the first time, and something else for one who returns to it from these sciences. He who is beginning to make his acquaintance with grammar finds in its forms and laws dry abstractions, arbitrary rules, quite in general a disconnected aggregate of definitions that have no other value or meaning than what they immediately signify; at the start, there is nothing to be known in them except themselves. On the other hand, he who has mastered a language and is also acquainted with other languages with which to compare it, to such is given the capacity to feel in the grammar of the language the spirit and culture of a people; the same rules and forms now have an enriched, living value. In the medium of the language, he can recognize the expression of spirit as spirit, and this is logic. So, he who first comes to this science, at first finds in logic an isolated system of abstractions which, confined to itself, does not reach over to embrace other forms of cognition and of science. On the contrary, when held against the riches of the world-scenario, against the apparently real content of the other sciences; when compared with the promise of the absolute science to unveil the *essence* of these riches, to unveil the *inner nature* of spirit and of the world, the *truth*, then in the abstractness of its shape, in the colorlessness and stark simplicity of its pure determinations; this science has rather the look of one who can sooner afford anything than any such promise but stands penniless before those riches. The first acquaintance with logic restricts its significance to it alone; its content passes only for an isolated occupation with thought determinations, *next* to which the other scientific endeavors constitute a material and content of their own, one over which logical thought may indeed have some formal influence, but an influence which is more of their own making and which, if need be, scientific form and the study of this form can at any rate also dispense with.

The other sciences have on the whole discarded the well-regulated method of proceeding by way of definitions, axioms, theorems and their proofs, and so on; so-called natural logic has become their accepted norm and this manages to do its work without any specialized knowledge of thought itself. All in all, the matter and the content of these sciences stand totally independent of logic and are also better suited to the senses, to feeling, the imagination, and any kind of practical interest.

So logic must indeed at first be learned as something which one may well understand and penetrate into but in which, at the beginning, one misses the scope, depth, and broader significance. Only after a more profound acquaintance with the other sciences does logic rise for subjective spirit from a merely abstract universal to a universal that encompasses within itself the riches of the particular: in the same way a moral maxim does not possess in the mouth of a youngster who otherwise understands it quite well the meaning and scope that it has in the spirit of a man with a lifetime of experience, to whom therefore the weight of its content is expressed in full force. Thus logic receives full appreciation of its value only when it comes as the result of the experience of the sciences; then it displays itself to spirit as the universal truth, not as a *particular* cognition *alongside* another material and other realities, but as the essence rather of this further content.

Now although this power of logic is not consciously present to spirit at the beginning of its study, such a study will nevertheless impart to it the inward power which will lead it to the truth. The system of logic is the realm of shadows, the world of simple essentialities, freed of all sensuous concretion. To study this science, to dwell and to labor in this realm of shadows, is the absolute culture and discipline of consciousness. Its task is one which is remote from the intuitions and the goals of the senses, remote from feelings and from the world of merely fancied representation. Considered from its negative side, this task consists in holding off the accidentality of ratiocinative thought and the arbitrariness in the choice to accept one ground as valid rather than its opposite.

But above all, thought thereby gains self-subsistence and independence. It will make itself at home in abstractions and in the ways of working with concepts without sensuous substrata, will develop an unconscious power to assimilate in rational form the otherwise dispersed manifold of cognitions and sciences, the power to grasp and hold them in their essentiality, to strip them of every externality and in this way to abstract from them the logical element – or what is the same thing, the power to fill the abstract groundwork of logic previously acquired through study with the content of

every truth, and to bestow upon this content the value of a universal which no longer stands as a particular alongside other particulars but embraces them all in its grasp and is their essence, the absolutely true.

21.44

GENERAL DIVISION OF THE LOGIC

It follows from what has been said regarding the *concept* of this science and where its justification lies that the general *division* of it can be only *provisional* here – can be given, as it were, only in so far as the author is already acquainted with the science and is consequently *historically* in a position to indicate in advance the main distinctions in which the concept assumes determination as it develops.

Still, the attempt can be made to elicit in advance some general understanding of what is required for *performing the division*, although even here recourse must be made to a procedural method which will attain full disclosure and justification only within the science. – One must thus be reminded, first and foremost, that presupposed here is that the *division* must be connected with the concept, or rather must lie in the concept itself. The concept is not indeterminate but is *determinate within*; the division, however, expresses this *determinateness* of the concept *in developed form*; it is the *parting* of the concept *in judgment*,²¹ not a judgment *about* some subject matter or other picked out externally, but the judging, that is, the *determining*, of the concept within it. Right-angularity, acute-angularity, etc., or equilaterality, which are the determinations according to which triangles are divided, do not lie in the determinateness of the triangle itself, that is, not in what is usually called the concept of a triangle, no more than in the concept of animal in general, or of mammal, bird, etc., one can find the determinations according to which animal in general is divided into mammal, bird, etc., and these classes are then divided into further genera. Such determinations are taken from elsewhere, from empirical intuition; they come to those so-called concepts from without. In the philosophical treatment of division, the concept must show that it itself holds the source of the determinations.

21.45

But in the Introduction, the concept of logic was itself presented as the result of a science that transcends it, and hence as equally a *presupposition* here. Accordingly, logic was defined as the science of pure thought – the science that has *pure knowledge* for its principle and is a unity which is not

²¹ *parting . . . in judgment* = *Urteil*. The German *Urteil* (“judgment”) connotes a “parting,” like the Greek κρίσις.

abstract but living and concrete, so that the opposition of consciousness between *a being subjectively existing for itself*, and another but objectively *existing such being*, has been overcome in it, and being is known to be in itself a pure concept and the pure concept to be true being. These, then, are the two *moments* contained in logic. But they are now known to exist *inseparably*, not as in consciousness, where each *exists for itself*; it is for this reason and this reason alone, because they are at the same time known to be *distinct* (yet not to exist for themselves), that their unity is not abstract, dead and inert, but concrete.

This unity also constitutes the logical principle as *element*,²² so that the development of the distinction which is from the start present in it proceeds only *inside* this element. For since the division is, as we said, the *parting* or the *judgment* of the concept – is the positing of the determination which is already immanent in it and therefore the positing of its distinction – this positing must not be understood as resolving that concrete unity back into its determinations, as if these were to exist on their own, for this would be here a vacuous return to the previous standpoint, to the opposition of consciousness. But this opposition has vanished; the unity remains the element, and the distinctions of the division and of the development in general no longer transgress that unity. Therefore the earlier determinations which (on the *pathway to truth*) *existed for themselves*, as for instance that of subjective and objective, or also of thought and being, of concept and reality, no matter from what standpoint they were determined, are *now in their truth*, that is, in their unity, *reduced to forms*. In their difference they therefore implicitly remain, *in themselves*, the whole concept, and this concept is posited in the division only under its own determinations.

Thus it is the whole concept which we must consider, first as *existent* concept, and then as *concept*; in the one case it is concept only *implicitly, in itself*, the concept of reality or being; in the other, it is the concept as such, the *concept that exists for itself* (in more concrete forms, the concept as it is in the human being, who is endowed with thought, and also in the sentient animal and in general in organic individuality, although, of course, in these last it is not *conscious* and still less *known*; it is concept *in itself* only in inorganic nature). – Accordingly, the first division must be between the logic of the *concept as being* and of the concept *as concept*, or (if we want to avail ourselves of otherwise familiar, but very indeterminate and therefore very ambiguous expressions) in *objective* and *subjective* logic.

21.46

²² “Element” has classical connotations here. Like “water,” “fire,” or “air,” this unity is a pervasive element that embraces differences.

However, in accordance with the elemental unity which is immanent in the concept as basis, and hence in accordance with the inseparability of the concept's determinations, such determinations, even as *differentiated* (the concept is posited in their *difference*), must also stand at least in *reference* to each another. There results a sphere of *mediation*, the concept as a system of *reflected determinations*, that is, of being as it passes over into the in-itselfness of the concept – a concept which is in this way not yet posited for itself *as such* but is also fettered by an immediate being still external to it. This sphere is *the doctrine of essence* that stands between the doctrine of being and of the concept. – In the general division of logic in this work, it has been included in *objective logic* because, although essence is indeed already inwardness, the character of *subject* is to be reserved *nominatim* for the concept.

21.47

Recently Kant^c has opposed to what has usually been called “logic” another, namely a *transcendental logic*.²⁴ What has been called *objective logic* here would correspond in part to what for him is *transcendental logic*. Kant distinguishes it from what he calls general logic because (α) it deals with concepts that refer to *intended objects a priori*, and hence does not abstract from all the *content* of objective cognition, or in that it contains the rules of the pure thinking of an *intended object*; and because (β) it thereby goes to the source of our cognition so far as this cognition cannot be attributed to the intended objects. – It is to this second aspect that Kant's philosophical interest is exclusively directed. His principal idea is to vindicate the *categories* for self-consciousness understood as the

^c I should point out that in this work I make frequent references to the Kantian philosophy (which to many might seem superfluous) because, whatever might be said here or elsewhere of its distinctive character or of particular parts of its exposition, it constitutes the foundation and the starting point of the new German philosophy, and this is a merit of which it can boast undiminished by whatever fault may be found in it. An added reason for these frequent references in the objective logic is that Kantian philosophy delves deeply into important, *more specific* aspects of the logic, whereas later philosophical expositions have paid little attention to these aspects and in some instances have even expressed crude – though not unavenged – contempt for them. The philosophizing most widespread among us does *not reach* past the Kantian results that reason cannot cognize any true content, and that, when it comes to absolute truth, it must be directed to faith.²³ But what for Kant is the result is for this philosophizing the immediate starting point, so that the exposition which precedes the result, from which this result is derived and which constitutes philosophical cognition, is excised beforehand. The philosophy of Kant thus serves as a cushion for an intellectual indolence which takes comfort in the fact that everything is already proved and settled. For cognition and a specific content of thought which is not found in such a barren and arid complacency, one must therefore turn to that preceding exposition.

²³ The allusion here is at least to Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi. Cf. Jacobi, *David Hume über den Glauben, oder Idealismus und Realismus, Ein Gespräch* (Breslau, 1787), pp. 48–49; *Werke: Gesamtausgabe*, Series 2, Vol. 1, pp. 31–32. English trans., *David Hume on Faith, or Idealism and Realism: A Dialogue*, in *Main Philosophical Works*, pp. 271–272.

²⁴ A50/B74ff.

subjective “I.”²⁵ Because of this determination, his point of view remains confined within consciousness and its opposition, and, besides the empirical element of feeling and intuition, is left with something else not posited or determined by thinking self-consciousness, a *thing-in-itself*, something alien and external to thinking – although it is easy to see that such an abstract entity as the *thing-in-itself* is itself only the product of thought, and of merely abstractive thought at that. – If other Kantians²⁶ have expanded on the determining of the *intended object* by the “I” by saying that the objectifying of the “I” is to be regarded as an original and necessary deed of consciousness, so that in this original deed there is not yet the representation of the “I” – which would be only a consciousness of that consciousness, or itself an objectifying of that consciousness – then this objectifying deed, liberated from the opposition of consciousness, is closer to what may be taken simply as *thinking* as such.^f But this deed should no longer be called consciousness; for consciousness holds within itself the opposition of the “I” and its intended object which is not to be found in that original deed.²⁷ The name “consciousness” gives it more of a semblance of subjectivity than does the term “*thought*,” which here, however, is to be taken in the absolute sense of *infinite thought*, not as encumbered by the finitude of consciousness; in short, *thought as such*.

21.48

Now because the interest of the Kantian philosophy was directed to the so-called *transcendental* nature of the categories, the treatment itself of such categories came up empty. What they are in themselves apart from their abstract relation to the “I,” a relation which is the same for all, how they are determined and related to each other, this was not made a subject of consideration, and therefore knowledge of their nature was not in the least advanced by this philosophy. What alone is of interest in this connection comes only in the Critique of Ideas. – However, if there was to be a real progress in philosophy, it was necessary that the interest of

^f If the expression, the “*objectifying* deed of the ‘I,’” brings to mind other products of spirit, e.g. those of *fantasy*, it is to be observed that we are speaking of the determining of an intended object inasmuch as the elements of its content do *not* belong to *feeling* and *intuition*. The intended object is here a *thought*, and to determine it means both to produce it originally, and also, inasmuch as it is something presupposed, to have further thoughts about it, to develop it further by thinking.

²⁵ Cf., among other places, the B edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, §§25, 26.

²⁶ The most obvious allusion is to J. G. Fichte. For a clear statement of Fichte’s still early position on the matter, see his *Zweite Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre*, *Philosophisches Journal*, 6 (1797) §5; English trans., *Second Introduction to the Wissenschaftslehre*, trans. and ed. Daniel Breazeale (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), pp. 46ff.; GA I.4.463.

²⁷ Fichte was aware of this. Cf.: “I become conscious only of the concepts involved, that is, the concept of the object and the concept of the goal, not however of the two intuitions [i.e. intellectual intuition and intuition of the senses] that lie at the basis of these concepts.” Fichte, *Second Introduction to the Wissenschaftslehre*, p. 47; GA I.4, 467.

thought should be drawn to the consideration of the formal side, of the “I,” of consciousness as such, that is, of the abstract reference of a subjective awareness to an object, and that in this way the path should be opened for the cognition of the *infinite form*, that is, of the concept. Yet, in order to arrive at this cognition, the finite determinateness in which that form is as “I,” as consciousness, must be shed. The form, when thought out in its purity, will then have within itself the capacity to *determine* itself, that is, to give itself a content, and to give it as a necessary content – as a system of thought-determinations.

The objective logic thus takes the place rather of the former *metaphysics* which was supposed to be the scientific edifice of the world as constructed by *thoughts* alone. – If we look at the final shape in the elaboration of this science, then it is *ontology* which objective logic most directly replaces in the first instance, that is, that part of metaphysics intended to investigate the nature of *ens* in general²⁸ (and *ens* comprises within itself both *being* and *essence*, a distinction for which the German language has fortunately preserved different expressions). – But objective logic comprises within itself also the rest of metaphysics, the metaphysics which sought to comprehend with the pure forms of thought such particular substrata, originally drawn from the imagination,²⁹ as the soul, the world, and God, and in this type of consideration the *determinations of thought* constituted the *essential factor*. Logic, however, considers these forms free of those substrata, which are the subjects of *figurative representation*, considers their nature and value in and for themselves. That metaphysics neglected to do this, and it therefore incurred the just reproach that it employed the pure forms of thought *uncritically*, without previously investigating whether and how they could be the determinations of the thing-in-itself, to use Kant’s expression – or more precisely, of the rational. – The objective logic is therefore the true critique of such determinations – a critique that considers them, not according to the abstract form of the *a priori* as contrasted with the *a posteriori*, but in themselves according to their particular content.

The subjective logic is the logic of the *concept* – of essence which has sublated its reference to a being or to its reflective shine, and in its determination is no longer external but something subjective, freely self-subsisting, self-determining, or rather the *subject* itself. – Since *subjective* brings with it the misconception of “accidental” and “arbitrary” and also, in general,

²⁸ Cf.: “Ontology or first philosophy is the science of being in general or being as such.” Christian Wolff, *Philosophia prima, sive ontologia, methodo scientifica pertractata* (Frankfurt & Leipzig, 1736), §1.

²⁹ *Vorstellen*.

of determinations that belong to the form of *consciousness*, no particular weight is to be attached here to the distinction of subjective and objective. This is a distinction which will be more precisely developed later in the logic itself.

Logic thus divides overall into *objective* and *subjective* logic, but more specifically it has three parts:

- I. The Logic of Being,
- II. The Logic of Essence, and
- III. The Logic of the Concept.