Meta-Encyclopaedic Reflections on the Beginning of Philosophy[1]

The first and third editions of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* (1817 and 1830, respectively) conclude with three syllogisms that disclose the world from three different macro-perspectives based on whether nature, spirit or logic is viewed as the mediator of the process of their unification. Since Hegel repeatedly states that the end of philosophy coincides with its beginning, it is reasonable to expect that the end of the *Encyclopaedia* sheds some light on the opening argument of the *Science of Logic*.[2] This article follows this basic intuition and analyses these three final syllogisms with an eye on how they can contribute to our understanding of the logical movement that starts from pure being.

I will firstly respond to a possible worry that the approach of this article, which makes use of the end of the Hegelian system to analyse its beginning, falls into a vicious circularity. Secondly, I will introduce the difficulties of interpretation around Hegel's statement that '[…] the immediate character of the beginning must be a lack *inherent* in the beginning itself, which must be endowed with the impulse to carry itself further' (*SL*: 739, II. 554–5). In my view, misunderstanding the nature of this 'impulse' (*Trieb*) was at least partly responsible for Schelling and Trendelenburg's influential objections to the beginning of logic. Thirdly, I will present my approach to the three final syllogisms as 'meta-encyclopaedic reflections' that demand 'perspectival shifts' from the philosophizing subject. I argue that these perspectival shifts help clarify what Hegel means by the 'impulse' of beginning and the character of the logical movement that starts from pure being. Finally, I will respond to the objections that my interpretation unduly

'Kantianizes' and 'phenomenologizes' the study of logic, and conclude with brief remarks on the implications of my argument for how one could defend the *Science of Logic* against the critiques of Trendelenburg and Schelling.

I. The Question of Circularity

We should first clear the way by responding to an important worry about a possible vicious circularity involved in turning to the end of the *Encyclopaedia* to explicate the beginning of logic. Tom Rockmore claims to identify an 'unresolved tension' between epistemological circularity and linearity in the methodology of Hegel's mature philosophy (Rockmore 1989: 41). Dieter Henrich focuses on this issue specifically as it presents itself in the beginning of the *Science of Logic*. Most important for our purposes is his insistence that Hegel cannot justifiably employ any determinations of reflection (*Reflexionsbestimmungen)* to motivate the logical movement from pure being to becoming (Henrich 1971). Assuming that Hegel is committed to a linear derivation of logical categories, making use of that which will be justified only later in the 'logic of essence' for explaining a movement in the beginning of the 'logic of being' would be an unacceptable circularity in the argument. If that is the case, *a fortiori* we cannot justifiably turn to the very end of the *Encyclopaedia* to help clarify the opening argument of the *Science of Logic*.

For those who think that circularity is not necessarily a fatal flaw, such as Edward Beach, Henrich's worry does not carry much weight (Beach 2010–11). However, I think that

even those who are committed to a linear reading of the logical method can find something useful in what I am proposing to do. As Stephen Houlgate puts it, provided that what we know from the later parts of the system do not 'play a role in moving the logic forward', we are permitted to retain a 'double perspective' (Houlgate 2006: 276).[3] In other words, even though the cogency of the argument in the 'logic of being' does not strictly speaking depend on a consideration of the three final syllogisms, we can still refer to them in order to learn something about the beginning of philosophy. What we could gain from such an exercise is a more convincing response to some of the objections that arise from misunderstandings about the nature of the logical movement that starts from pure being.

II. The Impulse of Beginning

Hegel describes the 'impulse' that he attributes to the beginning of philosophy as follows:

> The beginning, therefore, has for the method no other determinateness than that of being the simple and universal; this is precisely the *determinateness* that makes it deficient. Universality is the pure, simple concept, and the method, as the consciousness of this concept, is aware that universality is only a moment and that in it the concept is still not determined in and for-itself. But with this consciousness that would want to carry the beginning further only for the sake of method, the method is only a formal procedure posited in external reflection. Where the method, however, is the objective and immanent form, the immediate

> character of the beginning must be a lack *inherent* in the beginning itself, which must be endowed with the impulse to carry itself further. (*SL*: 739, II. 554–5)

This passage shows that Hegel is well aware of the aforementioned worry that motivates Henrich's critique. As we start reading the *Science of Logic*, we may already be aware of the fact that the first logical category is a deficient, one-sided moment of the whole. However, Hegel says that we cannot refer to this knowledge in order to move the logic forward, because that would be a merely 'external reflection'. Instead, the beginning itself must have an intrinsic lack that endows it with 'the impulse to carry itself further'.

This characteristic of the Hegelian logic gave rise to the well-known objections of Schelling and Trendelenburg. They both argue that logical categories cannot move of their own accord. For Schelling, the 'impulse' that Hegel attributes to the beginning of logic has its real source in a certain nostalgia that the philosopher feels for the concreteness of sensuous life (Schelling 1994: 138). For Trendelenburg, the categories of the Hegelian logic seem to move only because Hegel smuggles in the principle of 'local motion' from nature into the logical sphere (Trendelenburg 1993: 189).

Both Schelling and Trendelenburg think that the project of Hegel's *Science of Logic* is doomed from the start. However, it is possible to agree with them that the logical categories themselves do not move and still attempt to rescue Hegel's opening argument. One may do so by interpreting the move from pure being to becoming as a movement that is prompted by the activity of the philosopher who attempts to think the concept of

pure being. In other words, that which moves is *our* thinking as we try to render these logical categories intelligible to ourselves.

Houlgate objects to such interpretations by saying that the logical categories '… must be understood to develop or 'move' because of their own *logical* character, not because of the way we think of them or experience them' (Houlgate 2006: 274). Otherwise we would inappropriately turn the 'speculative' logic into a 'phenomenological' logic (Houlgate 2006: 273). [4] However, he adds:

> This is not to deny that thought or reflection has to render explicit and "experience" for-itself the dialectic implicit in each category, but this dialectic must be inherent in the categories *themselves*. Reflection does, indeed, "declare" being to be nothing, but it does so only because pure being *itself* vanishes logically into nothing. (Houlgate 2006: 274)

Houlgate does not deny that we have to actively think for ourselves as we are engaged in the study of logic, but only that the movement of logical categories can be made dependent on the way we think or experience them.

I will gradually develop my alternative reading in the next section. But my initial criticism of Houlgate's aforementioned response is that it is premised on and takes for granted the distinction between the *temporal* movement of our thoughts and the *logical* movement of the categories. It is indeed true that we remain cognitively aware of a

distinction between the two as we are engaged in the *Science of Logic*. However, as Cinzia Ferrini succinctly states, this distinction is merely an appearance tied to 'the subjective standpoint' of the philosopher in the beginning of speculative philosophy:

> This subjective standpoint consists in the immediate move of taking thought itself as an object of thinking, as if it were something that stands over against it, or simply confronts the reflecting subject. This externality, or dualism, is what appears at first, and this is exactly what the philosophical science has to rework, making it a process in-itself and producing (enjoying) it as a spiritual result. (Ferrini 1999: 72)

Ferrini is right in emphasizing that there is a certain initial 'externality' between the philosophizing subject and the movement of pure being. She calls this externality an 'appearance' that needs to be reworked by the philosophical system into a 'spiritual result'. Hegel puts this as follows:

> To speak of a beginning of philosophy has meaning only in relation to a person who proposes to commence the study, not in relation to the science as science. The same thing may be thus expressed. The notion of science – the notion therefore with which we start – which, for the very reason that it is initial, implies a separation between the thought which is our object, and the subject philosophizing which is, as it were, external to the former, must be grasped and comprehended by the science itself. (*EL*: §17, 45)

As Ferrini warns us, this 'externality, or dualism' is of a different nature than the 'opposition of consciousness' in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Ferrini 1999: 72).[5] I will have more to say on its precise nature towards the end of the article, but let me first elaborate on the implications of this externality for the logical method.

A consequence of this seeming separation between the philosophizing subject and the logical movement that starts from pure being is the aforementioned distinction between the *temporal/spiritual* movements of our (i.e. the philosophizing subjects') thinking and the *non-temporal/logical* movement of the categories. However, as Hegel notes, this distinction is actually a mere appearance. We have seen that this appearance has its basis in the fact that the *Science of Logic* is addressed to a finite philosophizing subject who has just resolved to philosophize speculatively. I will show below that this is also why the beginning of logic appears to the philosophizing subject as moving forward by an 'impulse'.

Let me first put my cards on the table and state briefly how I interpret the movement that actually takes place as we are engaged in the study of logic. There is neither a purely logical, nor a purely temporal movement. Instead, there is only one spiritual totality in motion, namely the mind of the philosophizing subject. Once we resolve to think purely, namely to take pure being as our object of thought, our mind moves in such a way that it displays a temporal process with a rational structure. This is the structure of the human mind; more precisely, it is the processual structure of the mind that thinks its own thought-determinations. This rational structure can indeed be abstracted or analytically

distinguished from the spiritual totality within which it is actually embedded and presented as a purely logical movement, but this is only an appearance for the sake of the finite philosophizing subject. In the final part of the article, I will defend my reading against the objection that I 'Kantianize' Hegel by interpreting the logical categories as displaying 'merely' the structure of the human mind. But, in what follows, I will first substantiate my reading through an interpretation of the three final syllogisms.

III. Three Final Syllogisms as Perspectival Shifts of the Philosophizing Subject

As mentioned earlier, the first and third editions of the *Encyclopaedia* conclude with three syllogisms that disclose the world from three different macro-perspectives based on whether nature, spirit or logic is viewed as the mediator of the process of their unification. The order of the first syllogism is Logic/Nature/Spirit, the order of the second syllogism is Nature/Spirit/Logic, and the order of the third syllogism is Spirit/Logic/Nature.

Hegel's remarks in §575-7 are highly condensed and therefore open to multiple interpretations. There is continuing disagreement over a wide range of issues: What is the precise relationship between these three final syllogisms and the 'subjective logic' section of the *Science of Logic*? Does either the first or the third syllogism on its own correspond to the entirety of *Encyclopaedia*? Do the three syllogisms rather correspond to the three parts of the *Encyclopaedia*, namely the *Science of Logic*, the Philosophy of Nature, and the Philosophy of Spirit? Do some of them refer to texts other than the

Encyclopaedia, such as the *Phenomenology of Spirit* or the Berlin Courses? Are all three syllogisms in some sense present throughout Hegel's works? Or, do some of them refer to unwritten or not yet written works? Is their ultimate conclusion the dissolution of the syllogistic form as such? Do they say anything new or do they merely recapitulate the conclusion of the philosophical sciences? Going through all of these alternatives and justifying my reading vis-à-vis other interpretations would require a book-length study.[6] Instead, I will right away present my interpretation and ask to be judged by its results.

I interpret these three syllogisms as displaying three different perspectives, which look at the same systematic totality but disclose it in a progressively more adequate manner. My goal in this article is not to offer an exhaustive account of these three syllogisms but rather to investigate what we can learn from them regarding the beginning of philosophy. In the paragraph immediately preceding the discussion of the three final syllogisms, Hegel says that '… science has returned to its beginning, and the logical is its *result* as the *spiritual* …' (*EPM*: §574, 275–6).[7] Hence, it has now been grasped that the end of philosophy coincides with its beginning: The logical is spiritual and the spiritual is logical. I take this as the ultimate insight of the encyclopaedic presentation of the Hegelian system, and argue that it now opens up a meta-encyclopaedic standpoint, which will be elaborated through the three final syllogisms. The first syllogism corresponds to the layout of the encyclopaedic presentation (Logic/Nature/Spirit). In other words, starting with his discussion of the first syllogism, Hegel takes *the encyclopaedic presentation as a whole as an object* of critical inquiry and identifies its limitations from

a higher vantage point. It is in this sense that I call these three final syllogisms as 'meta-encyclopaedic' reflections.

Hegel's discussion of the first syllogism shows us that the encyclopaedic presentation has an 'objective' and a 'subjective' limitation. As we will see, these are in fact two sides of the same coin. Hegel describes the first syllogism as follows: 'The logical becomes nature and nature becomes spirit' (*EPM*: §575, 276).[8] The deficiency of this presentation lies in the fact that '… science has the form of the progression of necessity, so that only in one extreme is the freedom of the concept posited as its joining together with itself' (*EPM*: §575, 276). In other words, this presentation puts a one-sided emphasis on necessity in the sense that freedom appears to be fully actual 'only in the one extreme', namely spirit. That is because the encyclopaedic presentation can display the logical *as* the logical only as *in-itself* rather than *in actu* spiritual. This already gives us a clue about what a more adequate perspective would be. We need a standpoint that can disclose the logical as not just in-itself, but always already *in actu* spiritual, so that the whole will be grasped as free thorough and thorough rather than only in the one extreme.

This 'objective' limitation is inherent in the encyclopaedic presentation due to a second, 'subjective' limitation. The structure of the encyclopaedic presentation is shaped by the fact that it is addressed to a finite philosophizing subject. The 'finitude' of a philosophizing subject who has just resolved to philosophize speculatively consists in the fact that he does not yet know the aforementioned ultimate insight of the encyclopaedic presentation. Precisely because the philosophizing subject can only at the very end of his

philosophizing activity comprehend the identity of the logical and the spiritual (the subjective limitation), the encyclopaedic presentation cannot be one that displays the logical as always already *in actu* spiritual (the objective limitation). That is why the non-temporal/logical and the temporal/spiritual movements must initially appear separate.

In the encyclopaedic presentation, the separation between the non-temporal/logical and the temporal/spiritual is overcome only at the very end, namely in the 'philosophy' section. This overcoming takes place as follows. According to Hegel, there is a single, infinite philosophy that emerges in time and unfolds in and through a multiplicity of different finite philosophies. Furthermore, the progress of philosophy follows the same pattern as the logical categories in the *Science of Logic*, starting with the pure being of Parmenides (*VGP*: 49). However, *unlike* the *Science of Logic*, the historical development of philosophy exhibits the movement of logical categories *in the spiritual shape of conscious thoughts unfolding in time*. Instead of impersonal logical movements that are experienced as distinct from the temporal movements of conscious thoughts, the philosophizing subject now encounters the unfolding of the same logical categories in and through the temporal, conscious thoughts of singular philosophizing subjects. Hence, the seeming separation between the non-temporal/logical and the temporal/spiritual is sublated. However, this insight concerning the identity of the logical and the spiritual remains concealed from the philosophizing subject until the end of the encyclopaedic presentation.

The second and third syllogisms seek to overcome this limitation identified in the first syllogism by closing the initial gap between the temporal/spiritual and the non-temporal/logical movements. They do so by demanding perspectival shifts from the philosophizing subject vis-à-vis the objective system. As we will see below, the character of each final syllogism is determined by its middle term, which serves as the mediator that effects the unification of the three terms. Furthermore, each syllogism demands from the philosophizing subject to take the perspective of its middle. I will argue that these perspectival shifts gradually overcome the 'seeming externality' that we saw in the first syllogism between the philosophizing subject and the beginning of philosophy.

The fact that nature serves as the mediator of the first syllogism accounts for its aforementioned one-sided emphasis on necessity. The attitude of the philosophizing subject has a corresponding deficiency. The first syllogism demands from the philosophizing subject to take the standpoint of nature, namely to take an *impersonal* or *third-person viewpoint* towards the world. He declares that 'the Idea is being' or 'the Idea is essence' etc. As he does so, he takes a *distance* and acts as though he himself were not the self-knowing Idea. He makes pronouncements *about* the Idea as though 'it' were something external to him. That is why the unification of the totality appears to the philosophizing subject as though it were accomplished by nature. In other words, the objective process described in the first syllogism, namely the Idea developing itself into spirit through nature, seems to be one that the philosophizing subject only needs to attentively observe and comprehend as if he were watching the course of some natural process. Consequently, the beginning of philosophy appears as a natural 'impulse' and

philosophy as a whole is viewed merely as an 'object of study'. Only at the very end does the philosophizing subject recognize his own activity of thinking as an act of self-knowing reason.

The second syllogism displays the Nature/Spirit/Logic sequence. The comprehension of the identity of the logical and the spiritual at the end of the encyclopaedic presentation (discussed in the first syllogism) is at the same time the negation of the seeming separation between the philosophizing subject and the objective process that he comprehends. As Hegel puts it elsewhere, 'If knowledge of the Idea, i.e. of men's knowledge that their essence, purpose, and object is freedom, is speculative, then this Idea itself as such is the actuality of men, not an Idea that they *have* about it, but an Idea that they *are*' (*EPM*: §482, 215). Most importantly for our purposes, *this seeming externality was that which necessitated and made possible the third-person viewpoint of the first syllogism*. Its removal means that the philosophizing subject has now shifted from the standpoint of the distant, external observer to that of *the engaged participant*. In other words, the second syllogism demands of the philosophizing subject to shift from a third-person viewpoint to a *first-person viewpoint*. Instead of taking the standpoint of nature (third-person viewpoint), he now takes the standpoint of spirit (first-person viewpoint). He is no longer a mere onlooker, but has identified with and grasped himself as the active spirit. As Hegel notes, '… this syllogism is already the standpoint of the spirit itself, which is the mediator of the process…' (*EPM*: §576, 276).

The movement in the second syllogism starts from the givenness of nature, which the spirit actively reworks and elevates to the logical. However, this syllogism replaces the one-sidedly objective first standpoint with an equally one-sided subjective one. Hegel expresses this limitation by characterizing it as merely 'aiming' at freedom and being 'the way' to produce this freedom without being the full actuality of freedom (*EPM*: §576, 276). The deficiency of the philosophizing subject's viewpoint consists in the fact that it is the first-person viewpoint of the *finite* spirit, who encounters an external nature that still needs to be elevated to the logical. It turns out that in the second syllogism the philosophizing subject has retained some of the initial externality towards both the logical and the natural.

This remaining externality is sublated in the third syllogism. At first sight, the third syllogism seems to display the Spirit/Logic/Nature sequence. However, there is an important nuance: *Instead of the logical, Hegel places the 'self-knowing reason' into the middle of the syllogism*. This is the crucial move that defines the character of this highest standpoint. In the first syllogism, the logical is only in itself spiritual – it is not yet spiritual in and for itself. It externalizes itself in nature and returns back to itself in order to become 'self-knowing'. However, in the third syllogism, this appearance is sublated. We can now *right from the start* identify the logical as 'self-knowing reason'. In other words, we have come to recognize that the logical is always already *in actu* spiritual. The corresponding attitude of the philosophizing subject is identification with the self-knowing reason.

Hegel substitutes 'the logical' with 'the self-knowing reason' in the third syllogism of both the 1817 and the 1830 formulations. However, the mediating activity performed by this middle term of the third syllogism is conceived quite differently in these two editions of the *Encyclopaedia*. How must this mediating activity be conceived if we are to be justified in substituting 'the logical' with 'self-knowing reason'? Let us now briefly compare Hegel's 1817 and 1830 answers to this question.

In the 1817 version of the third syllogism, Hegel does not attribute any activity to the third term, namely nature (*E1817*: §477, 247). Nature is said to be 'merely posited' (*nur ein Gesetztes*). Spirit occupies the position of the first term, which at first seems to be an immediate starting point, but shows itself to be posited as the 'totality that has returned back into itself' (*die in sich zurückgekehrte Totalität*). The finite spirit sublates his initial immediacy by recognizing himself as the self-knowing reason that divides itself into (finite) spirit and nature, and remains with itself. At first sight, it is hard to see what Hegel found unsatisfactory in this 1817 version of the third syllogism. However, one of the several changes that he introduced into his account in 1830 gives us a clue.

In 1830, Hegel inserts two expressions to the first sentence of §577 (§477 of the 1817 edition), which are meant to explicate what is meant by 'spirit' and 'nature' within the context of the third syllogism. He thereby equates spirit with 'the process of the Idea's *subjective* activity', and nature with 'the process of the Idea that is *in itself*, objective' (*EPM*: §577, 276). The expression 'the process of the Idea's *subjective* activity' refers to the second syllogism, and the expression 'the process of the Idea that is *in itself*,

objective' refers to the first syllogism. In other words, Hegel seeks to communicate that the third syllogism does not reconcile merely spirit and nature, but also the first two syllogisms as a whole.

These additions are far from being innocent elaborations of the terms 'spirit' and 'nature'. The first thing that strikes us is that nature is no longer 'merely posited' (as in the 1817 edition), but is rather reconceived as a distinctive kind of activity. However, there is a deeper, structural change underlying this striking difference. In 1830, the extremes of the third syllogism are no longer merely spirit (as distinct from the natural and the logical) and nature (as distinct from the spiritual and the logical). Instead, spirit is equated with the whole (one-sidedly subjective) mediating process that takes place in the second syllogism where it acts as the mediator ('the process of the Idea's *subjective* activity'). Similarly, nature is equated with the whole (one-sidedly objective) mediating process that takes place in the first syllogism where it acts as the mediator ('the process of the Idea that is *in itself*, objective'). In other words, the third syllogism now has *the two movements* described in the two preceding syllogisms as its extremes, which I will call the 'objective process' (the first syllogism) and the 'subjective process' (the second syllogism). Hence, in the 1830 formulation, not only the three final syllogisms taken together, but also *the third syllogism on its own is a triple syllogism*.[9]

In other words, by 1830, Hegel came to realize that the substitution of 'the logical' with 'self-knowing reason', namely the claim that the logical is always already *in actu* spiritual, can be substantiated only if the middle term of the third syllogism is

reconceived as mediating the following double movement. The first syllogism describes the objective unfolding of the Idea towards the spiritual. The second syllogism describes the subjective knowing terminating in the discovery of the logical in nature. Only when the 'objective process' thus shows itself as the spiritual subject (the first movement), and the 'subjective process' thus culminates in the logical object (the second movement), the third syllogism can take these two movements as the extremes that are unified in the self-knowing reason's 'self-judgment' into an 'objective process' and a 'subjective process'.

As mentioned above, the attitude of the philosophizing subject vis-à-vis the third syllogism is identification with the self-knowing reason. Hence the first-person standpoint that this syllogism demands from the philosophizing subject could be formulated as follows: 'I know myself as that which eternally remains active, engenders, and enjoys itself as absolute spirit'. Here, the expression 'I know myself' corresponds to the 'subjective process,' and the expression 'that which eternally remains active, etc.' corresponds to the 'objective process' *as* they ultimately figure and are unified in the third syllogism.[10] A merely third person viewpoint would necessarily introduce a seeming externality between the philosophizing subject and the objective system, and is therefore bound to fail expressing this ultimate identity of subject and object. The philosophizing subject does not merely know a seemingly external objective process, but knows *himself* as 'the truth of' this entire process in nature and history. His activity of self-knowing *is* the fully actualized, processual totality of nature and spirit.

This perspectival shift is no special, 'mystical' insight in the pejorative sense of the word, namely it is not an opaque experience that cannot be universally communicated and is therefore limited to a few 'gifted' individuals. It is simply a logical consequence of comprehending the elevation of the logical to the spiritual at the end of the encyclopaedic presentation. If a philosophizing subject has really comprehended this point, he can no longer regard the third-person viewpoint as an adequate standpoint vis-à-vis the world, because the third-person viewpoint presupposes precisely the distance that is sublated through the elevation of the logical to the spiritual.

Let us now investigate the implications of this insight for the beginning of philosophy. Hegel notes that '… everything rational is manifested as a triple syllogism …' (*EL*: §187, 352). The end of philosophy is the fully actualized triple syllogism. In contrast, the beginning of philosophy is the most implicit form of the same triple syllogism. Since the beginning and the end are in truth the same triple syllogism, we can employ the structure of the latter to make sense of the former.

As mentioned earlier, there is a beginning of philosophy only for the finite philosophizing subject. Furthermore, initially there is a seeming externality between the 'subjective' (temporal/spiritual) knowing of the philosophizing subject and the 'objective' (non-temporal/logical) movement of thought-determinations. From the third final syllogism, we know that the self-knowing reason 'judges itself' into an 'objective process' and a 'subjective process,' and remains with itself in this self-division. We have the most implicit version of this 'self-judgment' in the beginning of philosophy. The finite

philosophizing subject (i.e. the philosophizing subject who has just begun to philosophize speculatively) is *in itself* the philosophizing subject who recognizes himself as the self-knowing reason. When this finite philosophizing subject thinks the pure being, what he in truth does is to 'judge himself' into an 'objective process' and a 'subjective process'.[11] The 'objective process' here takes the form of the non-temporal movement of the logical categories, and the 'subjective process' is the cognition of this process through the temporal movement of his own thinking.

Now, the philosophizing subject remains with himself in this self-division, namely these two movements are in fact unified in the single spiritual activity of the philosophizing subject. In other words, there is neither a purely 'objective' logical, nor a purely 'subjective' temporal movement. Instead, there is only one spiritual totality in motion, namely the mind of the philosophizing subject who thinks his own thought-determinations. From the standpoint where the logical is grasped as always already *in actu* spiritual, we know that the logical movement of pure being is our own spiritual act as self-knowing reason. That which moves here is only our self-thinking thought, namely our thinking as we try to render intelligible to ourselves the categories that structure the human mind.

However, in the beginning, the philosophizing subject does not and cannot yet know that he remains with himself in this self-division. As explained above, in the encyclopaedic presentation, the logical movement had to appear as though it were something merely in-itself but not *in actu* spiritual. The philosophizing subject came to recognize that the

logical is spiritual only *after* the study of logic. Consequently, the logical movement of pure being had to appear as something distinct from the finite spiritual acts of thinking that the philosophizing subject performs. In other words, the movement of the philosophizing subject's own spiritual act had to appear to him as something separate from him, namely as a one-sidedly objective process endowed with an inherent 'impulse', which he merely attentively observes and comprehends as though it were a natural process. To put it in Hegel's words, 'the beginning must be a lack *inherent* in the beginning itself, which must be endowed with the impulse to carry itself further' (*SL*: 739, II. 554–5).

In short, the 'objective process' and the 'subjective process' must initially appear to be separate as a non-temporal/logical movement and a temporal/spiritual movement. That is why such a distinction is built into the *Science of Logic*. However, this is a mere appearance due to the initial finitude of the philosophizing subject. Put differently, it is this initial finitude of the philosophizing subject that necessitates the appearance of a purely logical movement. This separation is fully overcome only in the third final syllogism when the philosophizing subject no longer confronts a separate 'object of study', but is rather elevated to the first-person standpoint of the absolute spirit who knows *himself*.

Responses to Objections and Concluding Remarks

Let me conclude by briefly responding to two possible objections to my argument, which I will call the 'Kantianization objection' and the 'phenomenologization objection.' Firstly, one could accuse my reading of proposing an undue 'Kantianization' of Hegel, because I argue that the study of logic is the study of the structure of human mind. Secondly, following Houlgate, one could claim that I unduly 'phenomenologize' the *Science of Logic*. I will start by responding to the 'Kantianization objection' and then turn to the 'phenomenologization objection'. Finally, I will conclude with a few remarks on the implications of my argument with respect to the aforementioned influential critiques of Trendelenburg and Schelling.

By calling the first critique 'Kantianization objection', I do not mean to say that anyone would accuse me of literally turning Hegel into Kant. Even if I unduly Kantianize Hegel in this specific sense, there would still be plenty of crucial differences between Kant and Hegel as I interpret him. However, the real stakes in this objection is whether my interpretation can account for Hegel's view that pure thought determinations are at the same time determinations of the 'essence of things'. If not, then my reading would turn the reality of nature and spirit into something like the Kantian 'thing in itself', namely inaccessible to the thought-determinations of the human mind.

How can knowledge of the structure of human mind make the structure of reality accessible to us? In my view, the ultimate Hegelian answer to this question is that the

human mind is 'the truth of' all reality. Allow me to first indulge in a pictorial metaphor to explain my meaning. Imagine that the whole reality is shaped like a pyramid. Furthermore, suppose that each building block of this pyramid is a more or less adequate model of the entire pyramid. The higher a building block is located in the pyramid, the more adequate is the model. The very top building block is a perfectly adequate model of the whole pyramid. If this top building block could contemplate its own structure, it would at the same time contemplate the structure of the entire pyramid. The human mind is like this top building block of the pyramid.[12]

In other words, the human mind and all other real beings form a single, internally differentiated totality. The mind of the philosophizing subject is not external to the reality that it comprehends; instead, it is the peak of that same reality.[13] To be sure, there are real beings external to the human mind. However, the human mind is their 'truth' in the sense that its structure is that which all these other real beings strive but fail to embody adequately. To be more precise, this structure in question is *not the structure of human mind in general* (as studied by the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit), but specifically *the processual structure that the human mind displays when it thinks its own though-determinations* (as disclosed by the *Science of Logic*). The whole reality, through its own immanent dynamic, moulds itself into the shape of the philosophizing subject's mind thinking its own thought-determinations.[14] These thought-determinations, taken as purely logical categories, are only abstractions from the spiritual totality of the human mind. They give us knowledge of the 'essence of things' only because the mind within which they are embedded has the form that the whole reality gradually gives to itself. There is

no purely logical movement; all movement is the movement of one internally differentiated reality with a rational structure.

In my view, this is the direction that a fuller response to this challenge should take. I will dwell a bit longer on the second challenge, because it attacks more directly the core of my approach. One may claim that my reading unduly 'phenomenologizes' the study of logic. This worry may be motivated by the fact that I talk about the 'perspectival shifts' of the philosophizing subject vis-à-vis the objective system in a way similar to how the *Phenomenology of Spirit* distinguishes between consciousness, its object, and the phenomenological 'we'. If this challenge is correct, this may be problematic for at least two reasons.

Firstly, the phenomenological method gives way to the speculative method through the dissolution of the 'opposition of consciousness' between subject and object. My account may be unduly reintroducing such an opposition of consciousness where it has no place. However, we should be careful about what exactly is meant by the overcoming of this opposition of consciousness at the end of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. What is overcome is not the subject-object opposition as such, but rather the standpoint of consciousness that uncritically or dogmatically assumes that there is an unbridgeable gap between the subject and the object.[15] Hence, in the beginning of logic, we neither assume that there is such a gap, *nor do we assume that there isn't one*. We simply suspend judgment on this question and think 'pure being', letting it develop according to its own rational dynamic. In the course of this process, the subject-object opposition does re-emerge and sublate

itself. My argument is that this sublation fully takes place only in the third final syllogism.

Hence, (i) the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, (ii) the encyclopaedic presentation, and (iii) the meta-encyclopaedic reflections of the three final syllogisms are three levels at which the subject-object opposition is progressively overcome. In the first level, the uncritical or dogmatic assumption of an unbridgeable gap between subject and object is overcome. In the second level, the subject-object opposition as such is overcome, but in a one-sidedly objective manner (as we saw in Hegel's discussion of the first syllogism). The third-person viewpoint of the encyclopaedic presentation leaves the seeming externality between the philosophizing subject and the objective system intact except at the very end. The moment we recognize the identity of the logical and the spiritual, we have already passed beyond the encyclopaedic presentation. In the third level, this last remnant of externality is thematized and the subject-object opposition is most adequately overcome in the first-person viewpoint of the philosophizing subject who recognizes himself as self-knowing reason.

Secondly, following Houlgate, one may worry that I make the cogency of Hegel's argument in the *Science of Logic* dependent on the perspectival shifts of the philosophizing subject. If so, this would mean that the logical movement that starts from pure being is not 'presuppositionless', but is rather conditioned upon the standpoint of the reader. In considering the validity of this objection, we need to be careful about the context of the discussion concerning whether the beginning of philosophy is

presuppositionless. Hegel does not just claim that the beginning of philosophy has no presupposition; he also says that philosophy has no beginning at all in the way that 'finite sciences' do. More precisely, it has a beginning only for the finite philosophizing subject. Hence, the whole debate about the presuppositionless nature of the beginning takes place from the perspective of the finite philosophizing subject, not from the perspective of the philosophizing subject as self-knowing reason. Therefore, we need to distinguish between two different senses in which the Hegelian philosophy is presuppositionless.

From the higher standpoint, the self-knowing reason makes itself into a presupposition and sublates this presupposition through the course of its own development. Here, being 'presuppositionless' does not mean that philosophy has no presupposition whatsoever, but that the presupposition is self-sublating. Therefore, 'admitting' that the beginning of logic is conditioned upon the standpoint of the reader (i.e. the finitude of the philosophizing subject) does not violate the 'presuppositionless' character of philosophy in this specific sense. The self-knowing reason *both* 'judges itself' into a finite philosophizing subject and a seemingly external object of study (i.e. self-knowing reason makes them into its presuppositions), *and* overcomes this seeming externality when the philosophizing subject recognizes himself as self-knowing reason (i.e. self-knowing reason sublates its own presuppositions). Hence the self-knowing reason is 'presuppositionless' through the sublation of its own presupposition.

From the lower standpoint, the 'presuppositionless' character of philosophy has a different meaning. Here, it means that the reader of the *Science of Logic* does not start by

uncritically or dogmatically assuming any prior knowledge about what being, nothing, subject, object etc. may be. For instance, whatever we learn about pure being, we learn simply by drawing the rational conclusions of thinking this concept alone and trying to render it intelligible to ourselves. When pure being proves to be pure nothing, this proof does not 'presuppose' or depend on any prior assumptions that we may have about the world or about ourselves etc. According to Hegel, philosophy has no presuppositions in this specific sense. More accurately, what the finite philosophizing subject learns through his speculative philosophizing does not presuppose anything that is not proven by that speculative philosophizing itself.

My Hegel reading preserves the 'presuppositionless' character of philosophy in this second sense, too. The philosophizing subject who has just resolved to philosophize speculatively does not need to know anything that is explained in this article in order to comprehend the line of argumentation in the *Science of Logic*. To the very contrary, he must suspend any knowledge he may have acquired from this or any other philosophical work. If my interpretation of Hegel is correct, then what I explained about the beginning of philosophy must emerge from his 'meta-encyclopaedic reflections', namely *after* having comprehended the entire encyclopaedic presentation. In other words, even though a purely logical movement is only an appearance, it is still a *necessary* appearance. The beginning of philosophy must appear to the finite philosophizing subject in this way, and Hegel's meta-encyclopaedic reflections demonstrate precisely this necessity by taking the encyclopaedic presentation as an object and identifying its limitations.[16]

However, one may now wonder what purpose my discussion of the implications of Hegel's meta-encyclopaedic reflections for the beginning of philosophy serve if they are not to motivate the philosophizing subject in the beginning of philosophy. First of all, I should reiterate that the three final syllogisms do not invalidate the *Science of Logic*. One neither can nor needs to write a *Science of Logic* from the standpoint of the third syllogism. The *Science of Logic* is necessarily a third-person viewpoint endeavour, because a seeming separation between the 'scientist' of logic and the 'science' of logic is built into the project. One could not have started philosophizing speculatively from a first-person viewpoint, since the 'I' of that standpoint would be the finite ego of the philosophizing subject. The ego of the philosophizing subject is necessarily finite in the beginning of philosophy, because he will be elevated to the infinite standpoint only as a result of philosophizing. This is the mistake that Hegel saw in Fichte's methodology. Nor do we need to retrospectively rephrase everything in the *Science of Logic* from a first-person viewpoint.

These meta-encyclopaedic reflections offer us a more adequate grasp of what we actually do when we start philosophizing speculatively. Since the philosophizing subject must suspend all prior knowledge and simply think the pure being, the true nature of what actually takes place when he engages in this act necessarily remains concealed from him. This we learn only from the three final syllogisms. Even though what we learn from them cannot legitimately motivate any move made in the beginning of logic, they can still help us respond to some of its critics.

In my view, the Hegelian response to the aforementioned critiques of Trendelenburg and Schelling would be as follows. Their reactions to the *Science of Logic* are not only partly legitimate, but also in a sense necessary and rational. The movement from the first syllogism (where there appears to be a purely logical movement) to the second syllogism has its basis in the fact that we cannot rest content with a merely third-person perspective towards the world, where truth appears as an external, one-sidedly objective process. This is the element of truth in the reactions against the view that the logical categories move of their own accord. However, these critiques are one-sidedly subjective because they cannot grasp the necessity of this appearance. The reason why logical categories appear to move on their own is not that we feel a nostalgia for the concreteness of sensuous life (*pace* Schelling), nor that we smuggle in the principle of 'local motion' from nature into the logical sphere (*pace* Trendelenburg). As explained above, it is rather that the self-knowing reason 'judges itself' into a subjective and an objective process, and remains with itself by sublating this seeming externality. In other words, Hegel would happily admit that a purely logical movement is a mere appearance. However, he would also claim that his philosophy can immanently explain the necessity of this appearance, and explain it better than his critics.[17]

Notes

[1] Abbreviations:

E1817 = Hegel, G.W.F. (2000), *Gesammelte Werke, Band 13, Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse (1817)*, ed. Wolfgang Bonspien and Klaus Grotsch. Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag.

EL = Hegel, G.W.F. (2010), *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline: Part I: Science of Logic*, trans. K. Brinkmann and D. O. Dahlstrom. New York: Cambridge University Press.

EPM = Hegel, G.W.F. (2007), *Philosophy of Mind*, trans. W. Wallace and A.V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford: Clarendon Press.

SL = Hegel, G.W.F. (2010), *Science of Logic*, trans. G. di Giovanni. New York: Cambridge University Press. German edition consulted: Hegel, G.W.F. (1986). *Wissenschaft der Logik*, ed. E. Moldenhauer and K.M. Michel, 2 vols., *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, vols. 5, 6. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag. In references from this text, first the page number of the English edition, then the volume (in Roman numerals) and page number of the German edition are indicated.

VGP = Hegel, G.W.F. (1986), *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, vol. 18, ed. E. Moldenhauer and K.M. Michel, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag.

[2] Admittedly, this statement already makes some controversial assumptions, which I will not attempt to defend in this article. However, let me at least clarify the meaning of my terms in order to aid the reader in following my argument. Firstly, by 'the beginning of philosophy', I mean the beginning of the encyclopaedic presentation of the Hegelian system, namely the logical movement that starts from pure being and is developed throughout the *Science of Logic*. There is a sense in which one could call the first chapter of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as 'the beginning of philosophy'. A proper justification of my choice would require a lengthy argument regarding the relationship between the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the mature Hegelian system. Secondly, by 'the encyclopaedic presentation', I mean the presentation of the Hegelian system in the following order: The Science of Logic, the Philosophy of Nature, and the Philosophy of Spirit. Thirdly, when I say 'Science of Logic', I indiscriminately refer to both the 'Greater Logic' and the 'Encyclopaedia Logic'. The underlying assumption is that the latter is simply a condensed, summary version of the former. I am aware that this is an oversimplification, but I am bracketing this issue for the sake of brevity.
[3] See also Houlgate (2006: 84–6, 101–2).
[4] See also Henrich (1971: 82).
[5] Also see Ferrini (2012: 135-6). In her interpretation of the three final syllogisms, Ferrini claims that the '... first syllogism corresponds to the "syllogism of *Dasein*" in the 1816 subjective *Logic*' (Ferrini 1999: 70). On the issue of relating Hegel's teaching on syllogism in the 'subjective logic' section of the *Science of Logic* to the three final syllogisms, see the footnote 6 below. For Ferrini's more recent take on this subject, also see Ferrini (2012: 127-9, 135-8, 143).
[6] There is a long history of interpretation regarding these three final syllogisms, and there are many divergent readings. For a helpful literature review, see Werckmeister (2007). He distinguishes between two basic approaches, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Füzesi (2004), Beaufort (1983), Fulda (1975), Theunissen (1970), Bruaire (1964), among many others, follow the first approach, which employs Hegel's teaching on syllogism in

the 'subjective logic' section of the *Science of Logic* for explaining these three final syllogisms. In this group of scholars there is a convergence on the idea that the first final syllogism is a 'syllogism of *Dasein*', the second final syllogism is a 'syllogism of reflexion', and the third final syllogism is a 'syllogism of necessity'. Yet there is no consensus on the precise nature of these correspondences. Hegel himself calls the second final syllogism as 'the syllogism of spiritual reflexion' (*EPM*: §576, 276), which seems to lend support to this approach. However, Inwood questions the validity of this interpretation and notes that Hegel may have added the word 'spiritual' here in order to distance this expression from the *Science of Logic*'s more technical term called the 'syllogism of reflexion' (Inwood 2010: 658). Werckmeister is similarly sceptical about correlating the three final syllogisms with these three main types of syllogism (Werckmeister 2010: 56). The second approach relates the three final syllogisms with different works of Hegel, such as the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the Berlin Courses, and the *Encyclopaedia*. Geraets (1975: 231-236) distinguishes between the 'transcendent' and 'immanent' versions of this interpretative approach, namely those who 'identify' at least one of the three final syllogisms with works other than the *Encyclopaedia* and those who see in these syllogisms only the three parts of the *Encyclopaedia* or different readings of the *Encyclopaedia* as a whole. Van der Meulen (1958), Léonard (1971), Beaufort (1983), among others, could be counted in the former group, whereas Geraets (1975) and Inwood (2010) would be just a couple of examples for the latter. Given the short and cryptic nature of the relevant paragraphs in the *Encyclopaedia*, it would be wise to recognize a wide room for interpretation. There is a lot at stake in our reading of these syllogisms in terms of how we understand the Hegelian philosophy as a whole. Burbidge (2006: 146) sees nothing less than 'the pattern of all life' in these short passages. My goal is to contribute to this rich variety of thought-provoking commentaries by focusing on *how each one of these syllogisms situate us, namely the philosophizing subjects, vis-à-vis the world as disclosed by them*.

[7] In this passage, the word 'science' may refer to the Hegelian philosophy as presented in the *Encyclopaedia* as a whole, or to 'philosophy' as the third moment of the triad 'art, religion, philosophy'. In my view, the former interpretation is more reasonable, because throughout the paragraph 'the beginning' refers to 'the logical,' and 'the logical' is the beginning of the Hegelian system as presented in the *Encyclopaedia* as a whole rather than of 'philosophy' as the third moment of the aforementioned triad. However, the Hegelian philosophy is 'the truth of' all finite philosophies in the history of philosophy. Therefore, philosophy as the third moment of the triad 'art, religion, philosophy' and Hegelian philosophy as presented in the *Encyclopaedia* as a whole overlap. Hence, it may well be the case that Hegel is actually referring to philosophy in both senses.

[8] In the translation of this passage I replaced the word 'mind' with 'spirit'.

[9] In other words, (i) the first term, (ii) the third term, and (iii) the three terms taken together are each a syllogism. This is also why the third syllogism does not display the standard syllogistic progression. In other words, the third syllogism does not say that spirit becomes nature through the mediation of the logical. In fact, the three terms here are not simply nature, logic, and spirit, but rather each term is equated with a distinct process: (i) spirit is 'the process of the Idea's *subjective* activity', (ii) logic is 'self-knowing reason', and (iii) nature is 'the process of the Idea that is *in itself*, objective'. The first and the third terms are opposite processes and each shows itself to be its own

other only because they both are 'manifestations' of the self-knowing reason that 'judges itself' into these two processes and remains with itself.

[10] In other words, the process described by the expression 'I know myself' refers to the 'subjective process' *as* it is sublated and elevated to the level of third syllogism. In contrast, the 'subjective process' at level of second syllogism was just that the finite spirit (not yet 'the self-knowing reason') subjectively cognizes the Idea in nature as a seemingly separate object. Similarly, 'that which eternally remains active, engenders, and enjoys itself as absolute spirit' refers to the 'objective process' *as* it is sublated and elevated to the level of third syllogism. In contrast, the 'objective process' at the level of first syllogism was just that the logical Idea (not yet 'the self-knowing reason') objectively unfolds itself in nature and spirit.

[11] Hence, the act of thinking the pure being is an act of self-negation on the part of the philosophizing subject, but this negativity is not 'for the philosophizing subject' who has just resolved to philosophize speculatively. It can be made explicit and thematized only much later. Hegel puts this as follows: 'The several steps or stages of the Speculative Method are, first of all, (a) the Beginning, which Being or Immediacy: *für sich* for the simple reason that it is the beginning. But looked at from the speculative idea, Being is its [*ihr*] self-specializing act, which as the absolute negativity or movement of the notion makes a judgment and puts itself as its own negative' (*EL*: §238, 394). In Wallace's translation, the word 'self-subsistent' translates the 'für sich', which I here italicized and left untranslated. Wallace's translation obscures the fact that Hegel is here contrasting two perspectives, namely 'für sich' (i.e. from the beginning standpoint) and 'von der spekulativen Idee aus.'

[12] Of course, this 'pyramid of pyramids' metaphor cannot adequately present the conceptual structure of the Hegelian system. Unlike the famous 'circle of circles' metaphor, my metaphor cannot communicate the fact that the end of philosophy coincides with its beginning. We need to employ a family of such complementary metaphors simultaneously for a better approximation. However, even all such metaphors taken together would not be a substitute for the adequate conceptual expression.

[13] When I say that the individual philosophizing subject who recognizes himself as self-knowing reason is the peak of reality as a whole, I do not mean to claim that there has to be only one Hegelian philosopher. Just as the mechanical and chemical spheres of nature are not simply eliminated when they are sublated in the organic sphere, so do the Hegelian philosophers not cease to be empirically separate beings when they recognize themselves as self-knowing reason. However, such separation has 'conceptual' or philosophical significance only in the spheres of finite spirit and nature. For instance, there *may or may not* be more than one Hegelian philosopher, whereas there *has to be* a multiplicity of political states in the sphere of objective spirit. In finite spheres of life, the philosophical significance of such separation is precisely to be its own negation. For instance, the wars between states display the necessity of the movement from the finite to the absolute spirit. However, the empirical separation between Hegelian philosophers has no such significance. They may of course disagree on many issues regarding the finite spheres of life, such as the political life, but not on their being the philosophizing subject who recognizes himself as the self-knowing reason. This philosophizing subject is the fully actualized individuality and therefore necessarily a sensuous 'this', but not necessarily 'this' rather than 'that' individual. It is ultimately a contingent matter how

many Hegelian philosophers there are and who they are as merely historical personalities. Here, the contingency itself is necessary and this is how the right of contingency is recognized at the very peak of the Hegelian philosophy.

[14] Hence, Hegel likens the ultimate insight of his philosophy to Aristotle's νοήσεως νόησις imperfectly imitated by all beings. However, whereas Aristotle's self-thinking thought is superior to the human mind, for Hegel it is nothing but the human mind thinking its own thought-determinations. The self-thinking mind of the fully actualized philosophizing subject is the peak of Hegelian reality.

[15] Therefore, Hegel accuses Kantian philosophy of remaining on the standpoint of consciousness (*EPM*: §415, 144-5). Hence, this first dimension of the 'phenomenologization objection' is another variant of the 'Kantianization objection' that I already responded to.

[16] The alternative reading that I am proposing here may potentially be rendered compatible with that of Houlgate. The 'double perspective' that he says we are permitted to hold can be viewed as these lower and higher perspectives. I agree with Houlgate that what the philosophizing subject may know from the latter perspective should not be a motivating factor when he initially takes the former perspective. As we begin philosophizing, we have to take the appearance of logical categories moving on their own at face value and suspend our knowledge that this is a mere appearance, because this knowledge must first be demonstrated by going through the encyclopaedic presentation. In that sense, my interpretation would not necessarily conflict with that of Houlgate. However, in my reading these are not just two different perspectives, but there is a clear and definite relationship between the two. Therefore, unlike Houlgate, I would not say that the logical categories themselves move, but rather that they must appear to move in this way to the philosophizing subject in the beginning of philosophy even though this is not what actually takes place. Hence, those who are convinced by Houlgate will not necessarily be persuaded by my interpretation.

[17] I would like to raise the following question without venturing an answer. What is the exact place of the second person perspective in Hegelian philosophy and can Hegel do justice to it?

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