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# Hegel's Logical Determinations



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0-612-46569-1

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### A Note on References

I have, after each quote, placed in brackets the author's last name followed by the page number from the work (listed in the 'Works Cited') where the quote can be found. In some instances where more than one work by the same author has been used in this thesis (i.e. Geraets, Harris, and Hegel) I have placed in brackets after the author's last name, but before the page number, the first word in the title of the book or article. In the case of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia Logic* and *Phenomenology of Spirit*, I have also included the sub-section where the quote can be found, which I have denoted with '§', and whether the quote belongs to an Addition (add.) or Remark (rem.).

## Abstract

The system of logical determinations outlined in Hegel's *Science of Logic* is capable of further development because it is an aspect of a living process called the Idea. The system does not develop by the addition of new categories of thought, rather it develops when philosophers achieve insights into the nuances in the ways the logical determinations interrelate. Philosophers attain this nuanced knowledge by witnessing the process at work, and by actively analyzing the various experiential events occurring around them.

## Introduction

From the day I was first introduced to Hegel's philosophy I knew that his thought would leave a lasting impression on me. When I decided to write a thesis there was little doubt in my mind who it was that I would make the main focus of my reflections. But studying Hegel's philosophy is no easy task; singling out one aspect of his thought to focus on is difficult, given the nature of his systematic thinking. Inevitably, analyzing one part of the system will require some comment on other parts. That is the joy, and burden, of Hegelian scholarship.

Having read the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, I was keen to read the *Science of Logic* and attempt to think solely in terms of concepts. I wanted to write a thesis where the *Logic* would have a central role in the analysis. More than simply studying the *Logic*, trying to comprehend its dialectical movement, the role of the logical thought determinations, and the role that each of its chapters plays in the overall process, I was most interested in understanding the relevance of the *Logic* in the work of philosophers living today and in the days to come. Hegel describes the Idea as a living process in which the *Logic* plays an important role. I am interested in assessing how a system of logical determinations, a system that is part of a living, developing process, is active and shows itself in our experience here and now—long after Hegel had conceived and written about it.

With his system of logic derived from a dialectic that he himself perfected, Hegel has created an impressive land mark on the philosophical landscape of the Western world. After the

publication of the *Science of Logic* in three parts in 1812, 1813, and 1816, the world came to know what a particularly gifted individual Hegel was and what an immense challenge it would be to comprehend fully the logical system he espoused. Though the *Science of Logic* is a daunting dose of speculative thinking, the determined reader who immerses herself in it will, I believe, see the world as if with new eyes, as I myself have. The system of logical categories is impressive because Hegel's goal is impressive: to articulate the thinking core of experience, that is, to analyze the thought content of experience and to show how that thinking core develops.

My main interest concerning the system of logic has to do with the activities of philosophers living and working today. This may seem an odd interest, for what do the activities of philosophers today have to do with a system of logical categories articulated early in the nineteenth century. The two are, however, related and their relatedness is due to the peculiar nature of Hegel's notion of logic. Logic for Hegel is fluid and active because it is an aspect of a living process. What does it mean for a system of logic to be part of a living process? This is a challenging question, and it is one that will act as a theme running through the course of this thesis. The essential problem is this: how does one describe a complete system of logic that continues to be an active part of a living process? For the term 'living' necessarily implies development, whether progressive or regressive. But how does a complete system of logic develop? A short answer to this question is that it develops by having philosophers come to know more about each logical determination in its relationship with the others. This answer should provoke the question "how do philosophers come to know more about each particular logical determination that makes up the system of logic?" I hope to demonstrate how through the

use of two distinct models; but more on this matter later.

In chapter one, I examine Hegel's notion of the dialectic, and the Idea. In order to understand the dialectical movement that permeates Hegel's *Logic* and the nature of the Idea one must first understand what Hegel is attempting to accomplish. The *Phenomenology of Spirit* provides some insight into his plans, and it proves to be a means of preparing the would-be philosopher for speculative thinking. The outcome of that preparation should see the philosopher as able to allow thought to unfold as it may without imposing upon it any presuppositions or prejudices when assessing thought's progress. For thinking, according to Hegel, moves under its own power through the activity of the negative. Negation, sublation, and understanding each play important roles in dialectical thinking, and I examine each of them in turn. What the dialectical movement gravitates towards is the Idea: the realization that the whole process of thought is what is most important and that no one particular moment should be understood apart from this process. The whole process is not the system of logical thought determinations alone (i.e. the logical Idea) but also Spirit, and Nature. All three comprise the Idea which one can comprehend as a universe of meaning.\*

In chapter two, I introduce the two models that I think will aid us in understanding the complexities of how philosophers come to know more about logical determinations. I will also

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\*This phrase 'universe of meaning' was first coined by Theodore Geraets, and I find merit in using this idea when studying Hegel's works. I do not pretend to speak for Geraets when discussing the universe of meaning, and it is not inconceivable that I may see this idea somewhat differently than he does (Geraets, *Thinking*.4).

mention how and why these two models differ from the universe of meaning, which is much more than a model for how a completed system of logic can develop. The first of these models I have termed the 'alphabet model', and it takes the position that philosophers actively read into experiential events what logical determinations are at work in the event. By 'experiential event' I mean anything that one may experience during the course of a day from the grand, such as new discoveries in physics, to the mundane, such as, taking out the garbage or having a conversation with a friend. The second model I have termed the 'observation model', and through it I argue that philosophers take from experience insights into the system of logical determinations—they are witnesses to the process at work. From these reflections some important questions about the relationship between Hegel's *Logic*, Nature, and Spirit, as well as questions about the role of the philosopher in this relationship arise.

In chapter three, I assess the philosopher's role in facilitating the development of logical determinations. Scientists, theologians, even psychologists, truly anyone, can find meaning in experimental events with a sufficient amount of reflection, but philosophers, in making sense of whatever they see, hear, etc. avail themselves of concepts all of which can be found in Hegel's *Science of Logic*. It is the philosopher's task to articulate the meaning content in experience, that is, discuss the concepts active in experiential events. In assessing how logical determinations interrelate to produce the meaning content of an event I question whether the philosopher is engaged in describing the experience, revealing what concepts are involved in it, or whether she dictates what meaning can be garnered from the experiential event. The answer Hegel provides is that philosophy does both: it is active in its search for new insights into the interrelating of

logical determinations, and it is also passive in simply articulating how logical determinations progress. The two models of logical determination development reflect these two sides of philosophizing.

There are philosophers who criticize Hegel's notion of dialectic for not being open to a genuine 'other', that is, not being open to the concerns of others who conceive of reality in ways that oppose Hegel's conception of the absolute process. They charge that Hegel's Idea is not open to criticism because it treats *all* criticisms as moments of the Idea. But the dialectic negates and preserves, and so it fulfills the absolute Idea's drive for the identity of identity and non-identity. As a result, there can be no philosophical perspective outside the Idea; rather, the philosopher must come to realize that the Idea provides an other for itself. Throughout the *Logic* there is always a counter point to the one currently assumed; thus, at every moment the Idea posits an other towards which it relates itself so as to learn more about itself, and so to become itself. The exact manner in which the Idea conducts this self-relation to an other that is itself is the main focus of the first chapter.

Before commencing our look at Hegel's logical determinations it will prove beneficial to remind ourselves what a logical thought determination is. Many philosophers have attempted to define explicitly what a thought determination, or category of thought is with varying degrees of success. Kant describes 'categories' as the "original pure concepts of synthesis that the understanding contains within itself *a priori*" (Kant, 113). The translators of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia Logic*, T.F. Geraets, W.A. Suchting, and H.S. Harris, were keen enough to provide a valuable glossary of the more opaque terms which Hegel utilizes in that book. I refer

to the definition in that glossary as a starting point for examining the logical determinations, and hope that this paper contributes some further clarity. Under section eleven of the “Notes on Glossary” the following definition of ‘*Denkbestimmung*’ is provided:

*Denkbestimmung* means a determination of thought; Hegel also uses *Gedankenbestimmung* for it. Especially in the *Logic* these terms stand for what we (and sometimes Hegel himself) call ‘the categories’, i.e., those meanings that have become thoroughly independent of any particular form of reality. When these properly logical universals are meant, we speak of ‘the thought-determinations’, just as we do of ‘the categories’ (*Kategorien*). Every moment in the *Logic* is a *Bestimmung* of pure thought; so there are more ‘categories’ in Hegel’s *Logic* than there are in the familiar lists of Aristotle and Kant (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.348 §11).

It is this definition that I have in mind when using the terms ‘logical thought determination’, or ‘category of thought’.

## Chapter One:

### *The dialectic, and the process that is the Idea*

It is important, more so with Hegel than with other philosophers, to remain aware of the role that each of his philosophical works plays in the process, or system of philosophy which he wishes to explain. Hegel wrote his *Phenomenology of Spirit* with the intention of creating a means of preparing the would-be philosopher for the science of logical categories. If the *Science of Logic* represents the summit of speculative philosophy then the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is the strenuous climb up the mountain. The *Phenomenology of Spirit* is one of Hegel's more readable works, for it is not as abstract as some of his other writings, mainly because Hegel wanted to show people how they could come to think speculatively. Our first concern in chapter one is to access the role of the *Phenomenology* in preparing the way for the *Science of Logic*. We will then examine how the logical determinations unfold, and how they provide the core thought structure for the universe of meaning.

#### A: From the *Phenomenology of Spirit* to the *Logic*

The *Phenomenology of Spirit* is Hegel's attempt to articulate the whole of experience as a dynamic process which preserves the integrity of each moment or aspect of experience. The philosophical point of view, according to Hegel, requires that the philosopher has undergone a study of the series of shapes of consciousness described in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. H. S.

Harris, a noted Hegel scholar, explains

The *Phenomenology* was conceived as both the introduction for and the “first part” of a “system of philosophy”. Its introductory function is easy to comprehend, because it leads us from our normal “enlightened common sense” to the standpoint of Absolute Knowing from which the “pure thinking” of speculative Logic begins. (Harris, *Hegel: Phenomenology*. 98).

The *Phenomenology* is a study of Spirit’s phenomenological presentation in our shared experience of the world. I will say more about Spirit later, but for now let us turn once again to the glossary of terms found in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* translated by Geraets, Suchting, and Harris and under the word *Geist* (normally translated as Spirit) we find the following comments,

“Spirit” refers primarily to the interlocutive and interpersonal relation that underlies and activates all community. It names the concrete subject of the production of meaning, a production in which we all participate, but which none of us can claim for oneself. Ultimately, however, the process of articulation of meaning has no other subject but meaning itself: In that sense “spirit” is nothing but the Idea “as being for-itself and coming to be in and for itself” (§18R) (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*. 350 #25).

Part of the task that Hegel sets for himself in the *Phenomenology* is to explore the significant events that have shaped our society, and to ensure that through such an exploration the reader will become aware of spirit’s dialectical movement as she moves towards absolute knowing. Throughout the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel penetrates into the philosophical meaning in concrete historical events by disclosing the ideas that drive those events and the circumstances that brought them about; in so doing he avails himself of such varied experiences as Roman law, ancient Greek art, and phrenology. But what Hegel finds as he undertakes this grand project is that the content, the meaning inherent in the events that have shaped our society, displays a pattern, that is, the content examined reveals a philosophic ‘method’: the dialectical

method. This method is the movement of the Concept, the logical Idea, but as finite consciousness proceeds through the *Phenomenology* it is not yet fully aware that the dialectical development is the development of the Concept, because it has not yet shown this to be so and we cannot presuppose it. What is significant about this insight into the phenomenology of our shared experience is that it is an insight that we as a society have achieved together, it is not a notion that we have had possession of from the start of our philosophical heritage. That a method can be discerned from the content of historical events is only possible once enough of those events have actually occurred; thus, Hegel was aware that he began his philosophical studies at an opportune time, the moment when society was becoming aware of the dialectical rhythm that permeates our history. The content of philosophy, the philosophical method itself, cannot be explained from the start, but is clarified in its conceptual form as Western civilization develops to the point where Hegel is able to bring the great wealth of accumulated wisdom to systematic science, the introduction of which is the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The goal to be achieved by this intensive study of the meaning inherent in the historical events that have shaped our society is the attainment of wisdom in the form of systematic science. Hegel writes, “[t]o help bring philosophy closer to the form of science, to the goal where it can lay aside the title ‘love of knowledge’ and be *actual* knowing—that is what I have set myself to do” (Hegel, *Phenomenology*.3. §5). Hegel has set for himself the bringing into order, or system, all of the philosophical insights accumulated over centuries by philosophers of the Western tradition who have waged war on human ignorance. He is one of those rare examples in human history of genius suddenly come aflame.

The *Phenomenology of Spirit* traces the path of natural unphilosophical consciousness to philosophical consciousness. Beginning with sense certainty, natural consciousness arduously treks through each shape of consciousness believing each will bring ultimate satisfaction, but inevitably becoming frustrated by each shape's inadequacies. Yet through each shape of consciousness, through each new hope and inevitable disappointment, natural consciousness learns, matures, and in the end prevails by achieving the speculative philosophical point of view that is absolute knowing. Harris writes that

if there is to be any "absolute knowledge" it has to be the knowledge expressed in the religion of a community which has arrived at a rational relationship with the world, and with itself; it is knowledge that is finally and demonstrably necessary...for the complete realization of human Reason. Reason is not "common" to humans in the way that their body skeletons are. It is communally recognized, because it is the constructive achievement of the human community, by the community (Harris, *Hegel's Ladder* v. II. 709).

This achievement signifies the philosopher's preparedness for the central philosophical task: the study of the logical thought determinations that comprise the *Logic*—to think purely in terms of concepts. With absolute knowing the separation between our consciousness of the object and the object itself is overcome, which is why Hegel does not discuss consciousness in his *Logic*.

Thinking as it develops throughout the *Logic* is de-subjectified.

Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is a means of helping the would-be philosopher achieve the proper intellectual disposition before commencing a study of the logical categories of thought. He contends that the "Concept of pure science and its deduction is...presupposed in the present work [i.e. *Science of Logic*] in so far as the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is nothing other

than the deduction of it” (Hegel, *Science*.49).\* The *Phenomenology of Spirit* records the progress of consciousness from naivety to philosophical speculation—from consciousness of simple immediacy to the form of systematic science. The study of logic “presupposes liberation from the opposition of consciousness”, Hegel argues. “As science, truth is pure self-consciousness in its self-development and has the shape of the self, so that the absolute truth of being is the known Concept and the Concept as such is the absolute truth of being” (Hegel, *Science*.49). The *Science of Logic* presupposes that the gap between one’s knowledge of the object and the object itself is overcome; that is, what is thought *is* what is. Stephen Houlgate, a noted Hegel scholar, understands Hegel to mean that “philosophy must acknowledge its categories to be *ontological*” (Houlgate, 72). The requirement of assuming no discrepancies between the object and one’s knowledge of it stems from the need to abandon all presuppositions, including the one which maintains that there is a distinction to be made between our thoughts and the things we think about. It may very well be the case that this distinction is in fact a valid one, but it must be shown to be valid and not presupposed from the start.

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\* In his translation of *The Science of Logic*, A.V. Miller translates *Begriff* as Notion. I prefer to use the word Concept which I believe captures more appropriately the developmental nature of thinking, of thought’s movement towards self-comprehension.

## B: Logical Determinations and the Dialectic

Hegel writes that the “business of logic...is to clarify these categories [of thought] and in them to raise Spirit to freedom and truth” (Hegel, *Science*.37)\*. The logic, if articulated properly, will demonstrate the logical thought determinations unfolding in their truly intelligible order. The difficulty with this project will be in allowing thought to tell its own story by resisting the urge to pull it into directions of one’s choosing. Perhaps one way to avoid this urge is to demonstrate how the *Logic* can account for our own finite ways of thinking. Harris in his book, *Hegel’s Development: Night Thoughts*, describes how Hegel relates the project of systematic logic to his students: “the task of logic is to identify the forms of our cognition which are genuinely basic structures of our thought-world, and then ‘nullify’ the finiteness of these forms by relating them to the Absolute” (Harris, *Hegel’s Development II*.36). Implicit in our finite ways of thinking are the categories of thought that do not govern only your thought or mine, but thought as such, that is, thought as the articulation of meaning. Logical thought determinations do not govern thinking as some exterior power. They are not rules of thinking. Rather, thought determinations *are* thought in its purest form.

Allowing thought to unfold unfettered requires a new way of conceiving philosophy. Traditionally philosophers have presupposed some law, or method of approach to their

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\* Where A.V. Miller in his translation of the *Science of Logic* uses the word ‘Mind’ for *Geist* I believe that the word ‘Spirit’ is more appropriate; ‘Mind’ has the connotation of a strictly mental activity, a connotation which I think Hegel wants to avoid.

philosophical pursuits. Descartes, for example, in working out the implications of his systematic doubt presupposed that the truth was necessarily clear and distinct and never once questioned this assumption. Kant emphasized the critical attitude in philosophical endeavors when drafting his famous *Critique of Pure Reason*. Houlgate argues that a “science such as Hegel’s, which seeks to determine the character of thought without presupposing any specific categories or rules of thought, cannot presuppose any given method of procedure, but must obviously determine its own method as it proceeds” (Houlgate, 58). Hegel writes that “the exposition of what alone can be the true method of philosophical science falls within the treatment of logic itself; for the method is the consciousness of the form of the inner self-movement of the content of logic” (Hegel, *Science*.53). The method of logic is to be conscious of thought’s own movement: being conscious of the ‘inner self-movement’ of thought is to be inseparable from that movement. In a very real sense the philosopher in contemplating the system of logical determinations, the self-movement of thought, is contemplating her own thought as it develops.

“I know that it [being conscious of thought’s self-movement] is the only true method”, Hegel confidently proclaims, for it is “self-evident simply from the fact that it is not something distinct from its object and content” (Hegel, *Science*.54). This is Hegel’s proclamation of the discovery that content and method must be identical. The philosopher must become aware of thought’s dialectical rhythm, she must adjust her internal metronome to this rhythm, or more accurately, she must learn to allow thought to proceed as it does without imposing upon it presuppositions or prejudices. However, one must ask: how is it that thought is able to develop on its own? Most philosophers who have spent a sufficient amount of time in the discipline

recognize the difficult strain of ferreting out one's own presuppositions so as to argue as rationally unbiased as one can—far from moving on its own, thought often seems to require a push.

Hegel shows little sympathy for the art of rhetoric. Arguments are not weapons used to defeat one's opponent in dialogue by purposefully twisting logic, or by altering the connotation in one's voice to give words an added, but nonetheless illusory, value. The notion that the philosopher must bend and shape the rules of logic so as to construct arguments is both archaic and incorrect:

argumentation is freedom from all content, and a sense of vanity towards it. What is looked for here is the effort to give up this freedom, and, instead of being the arbitrarily moving principle of the content, to sink this freedom in the content, letting it move spontaneously of its own nature, by the self as its own self, and then to contemplate this movement. This refusal to intrude into the immanent rhythm of the Concept either arbitrarily or with wisdom obtained from elsewhere, constitutes a restraint which is itself an essential moment of the Concept (Hegel, *Phenomenology*.35. §58).

According to Hegel,

Philosophical thinking proceeds analytically in that it simply takes up its object, the Idea, and lets it go its own way...To this extent philosophizing is wholly passive. But philosophical thinking is equally synthetic as well, and it proves to be the activity of the Concept itself. But this requires the effort to beware of our own inventions and particular opinions which are forever wanting to push themselves forward (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.305. §238 add.).

The difficulty with comprehending Hegel's science of logical categories is threefold: firstly, one must restrain oneself from interfering with thought's immanent development; secondly, one is required to grasp the different ways in which each category of thought develops; and thirdly, one must comprehend the entire process and its unique moments together in their unity as the

living core of the Idea, i.e. of a developing universe of meaning.

Let us examine, then, the manner in which categories of thought develop themselves. According to Houlgate, “by explicating...[each] category...we do not merely restate in different words what is obviously ‘contained’ in it, we generate a new category” (Houlgate, 60). The necessity inherent in thought’s unfolding of the logical determinations lies in its restless desire to articulate ‘the whole’ of the Concept with each determination, and it moves to more developed categories until it achieves ultimate satisfaction in the absolute Idea. There is a drive in thought, when dealing purely with concepts, to move towards the apprehension of a stable content. Every concept is legitimate and flows along with thought in its dialectical movement, but each concept has only relative validity (Geraets, *Thinking*. 8-9). The relative validity of each concept is unsettling, a state which nourishes the stages of the dialectic, which are, for the sake of brevity, the moments of the understanding, negation, and the positive speculative moment. Having only relative validity is an unsatisfactory state because thinking is content only with total comprehension. Hegel contends, “What we are dealing with in logic is not a thinking *about* something which exists independently as a base for our thinking and apart from it, nor forms which are supposed to provide mere signs or distinguishing marks of truth: on the contrary, the necessary forms and self-determinations of thought are the content and the ultimate truth itself” (Hegel, *Science*. 50). The categories of thought are the necessary forms of thinking. There are no further categories to be disclosed after the absolute Idea because, if the philosopher has not directed thought in any way with preconceived notions of what the final outcome of the science of logic should be, thought grasps the truth that there are a finite number of categories

which in their totality constitute the extent of the logical Idea.

Thinking for Hegel develops immanently, it moves under its own power. “That which enables the Concept to advance itself is the...*negative* which it possesses within itself” (Hegel, *Science*.55). By ‘Concept’ (i.e. *Begriff*) Hegel means “logical thinking as it develops through the entire movement of self-comprehension” (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.348. §5). In his thesis *Hegel's Logic: Its Function, Method, and Necessity*, Pierre Chetelat writes

the Concept which is developed explicitly as Concept throughout the whole third book of the *Logic*, represents the culminating phase of the logical development. The Concept “in its simple self-relation is an absolute *determinateness* which however, as purely self-related is no less immediately a simple identity” (S.L. 582...). To the extent that it is a determinateness the Concept contains parts within itself, but these parts, as moments of the Concept, are identical with the other parts encompassed by the Concept and with the Concept itself. As the differentiated union of all its parts, the Concept is the totality (E.L. §160). It is not this or that finite concept but “*that same Concept* which is the foundation of the specific concepts” (S.L. 39...); it is that which unites all the finite concepts in the development of the logic while allowing them to still maintain their distinction (Chetelat, 14-15).

The negative acts like an engine propelling logical thought along in its development. Being conscious of thought's movement means being able to discern how new categories arise out of the previous categories which have failed to adequately express the absolute Idea. The philosophically interesting moments of the science of logical determinations lie in the aspects wherein the individual determinations prove themselves to have only relative validity. It is in those areas where logical determinations show weakness, or limitation as expressions of the absolute that one can discern the newly emerging category of thought that will attempt to remedy those very weaknesses, and suppress those limitations.

Thought determinations arise as moments of the *Logic* in ways peculiar to each. When the Idea moves from one determination to another as though passing-over each, it is in the sphere of being. Hegel explains,

Being is the Concept only in-itself; its determinations [simply] *are*, in their distinction they are *others vis-a-vis* each other, and their further determination (the form of the dialectical) is a *passing-over into another*. This process of further determination is both a *setting-forth*, and thus an unfolding, of the Concept that is in-itself, and at the same time the Concept that is *in-itself*, and at the same time the *going-into-itself* of being (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*. 135. §84).

In the sphere of essence the concept proceeds through a series of determinations where these determinations shine into one another. As Hegel explains,

In Essence the determinations are only *relational*, not yet as reflected strictly within themselves; that is why the Concept is not yet *for-itself*...essence is being that has gone *into itself*, i.e., its simple self-relation is this relation, posited as the negation of the negative, or as inward mediation of itself with itself...[essence is] being that has gone *into itself* or is *self-contained*: this *reflection*, its shining within itself, is what distinguishes it from immediate being (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*. 175. §112 and rem.).

And when the Idea attains the level of Concept its movement is best described as development “for the [moments] that are distinguished are immediately posited at the same time as identical with one another and with the whole, and [each] determinacy is as a free being of the whole Concept” (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*. 237. §161). Thus logical thinking can advance with thought determinations that shine one into the other, or that polarize by jumping from one extreme to the other, or that progress as though through stages. Each category “will reveal the *truth* of the previous determination in two senses: it will render explicit what was implied, but also concealed by the previous category, and it will reveal the limitation of the previous category

itself” (Houlgate, 60-61). This procedure is possible because “the various stages of the logical Idea can be considered as a series of definitions of the Absolute” (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.237. §160 add.). These are not ‘definitions’ in the normal use of that term where one provides a set of words explaining the meaning of a term. What Hegel has in mind here is, for example, that one can attempt to explain all of experience through the determination ‘quantity’: the size of the universe, the degree of pleasure a certain sensation brings oneself, the number of votes a political leader receives in an election as an indication of the desires of a populace; all show experience through the determination ‘quantity’. But Hegel demonstrates that though “logical determinations in general...may be looked upon as definitions of the Absolute” each will display inherent weaknesses as such a definition (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*. 135. §85). It is for this reason that each category is sublated because each has only relative validity outside of the process as a whole. Therefore, serious study of the logical categories requires the philosopher to undergo “constant and subtle revisions of the way [she] think[s]” (Houlgate, 60). For the weaknesses inherent in each logical determination’s attempt at a definition of the absolute Idea will show itself in different ways. New categories of thought will emerge from the inadequacies of previous categories, and it is the ways in which they emerge that philosophers must diligently be on the watch for.

Hegel places a great deal of importance on the concepts negativity, and ‘*aufheben*’ which is usually translated as ‘sublation’. According to Hegel, sublation has a double meaning, “we understand it to mean ‘clear away’ or ‘cancel’...But the word also means ‘to preserve’” (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.154. §96 add). Perhaps the best insights we have into sublation come from a

comparison of it with how the understanding fixes thought contents in an abstract ‘either/or’ relation. For example, the understanding grasps finite and infinite as completely distinct from each other. According to Hegel,

the Logic demonstrates the opposite instead, namely,...the finite that is supposed to be merely finite, and the infinite that is supposed to be merely infinite...do not have any truth; they contradict themselves and pass over into their opposites.—As a result, the passing-over and the unity, in which the extremes are [present] as sublated—as a shining or as moments—reveals itself as their truth (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.289 §214 rem).

So sublation is the way by which reason progresses beyond the fixedness with which the understanding holds a concept, such as finiteness, apart from its counter concept, in this particular case the infinite. Hegel is at pains to say that sublation does not reduce a thought content to nothing, for “[n]othing is *immediate*; what is sublated, on the other hand, is the result of *mediation*; it is a non-being but as a result which had its origin in a being” (Hegel, *Science*. 107). Sublation is one of the more important ideas that Hegel uses in explaining the dialectic, and its importance has to do with describing what occurs to a concept during the advancement of the logical Idea. A category is sublated because of its finiteness, because it has only relative validity, that is, each category plays a role in the absolute process and does not constitute that process on its own. But this does not mean it is discarded, or set aside as irrelevant. Sublating a thought determination also means that its contribution to the overall determination of the absolute Idea is affirmed and incorporated into the process. Thus sublation is an act of mediation because it is a means for disclosing the essentiality of a thought determination as an integral part of the process—an essentiality that is not immediately apparent.

In reference to the distinction between the understanding and reason, Hegel writes, the “understanding *determines* and holds the [thought] determinations fixed; reason is negative and dialectical, because it resolves the determinations of the understanding into nothing” (Hegel, *Science*.28). But he insists that this resolving of the determinations of the understanding into nothing “is positive because it generates the universal and comprehends the particular therein” (Hegel, *Science*.28). Both are essential: the understanding is required so that our concepts have a fixedness to them, so that they are capable of being isolated and held on their own as unique identities; but reason is also necessary as an act of resisting this fixedness of concepts so that one can assess their roles in the dynamic process that is the Idea by determining what other concepts are related to the one being studied. Concepts require fixedness, but the dynamic process requires fluidity. The positive result of the dialectic is the relaxing of fixedness, which means that each determination remains a comprehensible entity unto itself, but with the flow of the process each determination also surrenders its isolation and in union with other determinations loses itself so as to achieve its true self as a moment of the process that is the Idea. The science of logical categories develops immanently because it is propelled by the negative which produces a positive result, and by sublation which preserves the content of a thought determination while moving beyond that content.

What these two terms, ‘negative’ and ‘sublation’, reveal is that “the very nature of thinking is the dialectic” (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.35 §11 rem.). Hegel defines the dialectical moment as “the self-sublation of these finite determinations on their own part, and their passing into their opposites” (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.128 §81). Dialectical thinking “is the product of [the

philosopher's] readiness to take nothing for granted and to respond to the way thought itself develops" (Houlgate, 62). Along with the moments of the understanding, and negation one must also

recognize the unity of thought determinations in their opposition [this] is the positive result of the dialectic; it is 'speculative' (or positively rational) thinking which is 'concrete' because it is concerned with the identity-in-difference of all its contents. The mirroring ('speculative' from the Latin *speculum*) is not that between the world and the mind, but between the two opposite contents themselves. 'Finite' and 'infinite' cannot be truly comprehended, unless thought in their unity (Geraets, *Thinking*. 6).

Hegel calls this recognition of the unity of logical determinations in the process that is the Idea "[t]he *speculative or positively rational* [moment which] apprehends the unity of the determinations in their opposition, the *affirmative* that is contained in their dissolution and in their transition" (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*. 131 §82). To demonstrate dialectical thinking, let us examine the first logical category, being, and observe how it leads to other thought determinations.

Hartnack writes,

Because the *Logic* "is to be understood as the system of pure reason as the realm of pure thought", or as Hegel also states, "the system of logic is the realm of shadows, the world of simple essentialities freed from all sensuous concreteness" (SL 50, 58), it follows that the *Logic* cannot begin with anything that already is a something (a 'something' already contains categories). Consequently, the beginning must be a being without a determination, that is, the beginning must be a pure being (Hartnack, 15).

And so beginning with the most indeterminate category 'pure being', Hegel goes on to describe how thought in its attempts to hold indeterminate being firmly in understanding lapses into the thought of 'nothing'. Dale M. Schlitt extracts the following definition of 'pure being' from the

more laboured definition Hegel supplies: “Being is the simple unity of subject and object...it is characterizable neither within nor without in terms of differentiation...Its only acknowledgeable determination is its very indetermination” (Schlitt, 57). Hartnack reminds us that “[a]lthough this concept is ontologically empty or, better, cannot be used as an ontological concept, it does not follow that the concept has no sense. If it were a nonsensical concept, we could not assert that the concept was a nonontological concept” (Hartnack, 12). The transition from being to nothing is made possible by “reference to thought: there is nothing in being to intuit, nothing to think” (Schlitt, 58). Pure being is so lacking in determination that to think it is to think nothing. Yet Hegel is adamant that pure being and nothing are not one and the same, analyzing the one does reveal something of the other, but though the two are intrinsically linked because they are opposing concepts and though their play with one another may blur their separateness, they remain unwaveringly two discernable moments of the *Logic*. Schlitt writes, “[n]othing brings the negation, that is, the emptiness and determinationlessness of being, to explicit expression” (Schlitt, 60). The unity between being and nothing is becoming. Schlitt continues, “[b]ecoming is this identity [between being and nothing] in so far as the transitions both from being to nothing...and from nothing to being...are the same. They are both a going over into the opposite: both are becoming” (Schlitt, 64). There is no denying that throughout Hegel’s *Logic* there are many instances of triad category relationships, and there is within the *Logic* three distinct phases—the doctrine of being, essence, and concept—and in each phase the triads relate somewhat uniquely. There are nevertheless some commonalities which the triad being/nothing/becoming is the first to introduce, namely, a relationship between two terms that

finds expression as a union in a third category, and the negative which proves to be an engine moving the categories to relate with one another. From this brief example we see that the understanding, sublation, negation, and speculation all play important roles in generating new thought determinations, that is, in dialectical thinking. The understanding holds firmly the concepts being and nothing; but nothing is the negation of being and vice versa; yet thought goes on to sublimate the two, and discovers in their union the determination becoming. This is the dialectic in motion.

I would like now to mention some controversy over the status of 'pure being' and 'nothing' as logical categories. Geraets writes that " 'pure being' is always already 'nothing'; and what we really think is the immediate oscillation between the two: each of them vanishes into the other. This is 'becoming', in its two senses of coming to be and ceasing to be. Becoming is the first concept; the first thinkable meaning content. What precedes, 'pure being' and 'nothing' are not really concepts, they are only, one could say, pre-concepts" (Geraets, *Thinking*. 8). Though Hegel does state that "Becoming is the first concrete thought and hence the first concept", pure being and nothing still play important roles in the dialectic and this is shown by their appearance in the *Logic*, thus calling them concepts does have the benefit of ensuring their places in the absolute process. The true status of the concepts, or pre-concepts, pure being and nothing constitutes an interesting debate, one that I will mention but leave unresolved.

The concept 'becoming' develops as logical thinking progresses towards the absolute Idea. As Hegel writes, "[a]n inward deepening of becoming is what we have, for example, in *life*. This is a becoming, but its concept is not exhausted by that. We find becoming in a still higher

form in *spirit*. This, too, is a becoming, but one that is more intensive, richer than the merely logical becoming” (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.145 §88 add.). Like becoming, all the other logical determinations to be disclosed during thought’s self-articulation toward its fullest expression—the absolute Idea—will be enriched as thinking develops. Eventually, with the realization of the logical Idea, all of the categories will find their fullest expression as moments of the absolute Idea.

Not everyone is satisfied with Hegel’s formulation of the dialectic. Michael Rosen is one such critic who argues that “Hegel’s philosophy is taken to embody a conception of rationality (the reflective movement of consciousness) sufficiently persuasive to make entry into the system inevitable. Even historical materialism is a ‘reflective activity’. Yet, on the other hand, there is no point from which the process itself may be criticized” (Rosen, 25). For Rosen, as for other critics of Hegel’s dialectic, the process of dialectical thinking is too restrictive in that it does not really allow for an opposing viewpoint; any argument raised against the dialectic is subsumed into the process as just another moment of dialectical thought. The frustration that some philosophers who study Hegel’s works experience, at this seemingly condescending attitude which the dialectical process demonstrates towards objections thrown its way, is essentially directed at Hegel’s failure to include genuine ‘otherness’ as a moment in philosophical dialogue, that is, other points of view that are not subject to the rules (or rhythm) of the dialectic. Whether or not this is indeed a failure of Hegel’s rendition of dialectical thinking will be discussed in chapter three. For now it will suffice to say that for Hegel the “True is the whole. But the whole is nothing other than the essence consummating itself through its development” (Hegel.

*Phenomenology*.11 §20). All points of view find a voice in the processional development towards the absolute Idea; that is what the ‘whole’ is, namely, every concept or idea that there may be.

Harris writes of Hegel’s logic that it “is the absolute freedom of self-consciousness. It is the pure ‘for-itself’ of the absolute Substance set free; hence it is absolutely restless, it is negative and dialectical. When we think ‘purely’, we are never satisfied; so Hegelian logic is like the Platonic dialectic in that it can never be ‘finished’ in principle. But if we know where the circle begins and ends, it can be ‘complete’ ” (Harris, *Hegel’s Ladder II*. 741). Thought is restless, the living process is continually in motion—that is the nature of the dialectic. Yet the movement need not be an empty continuous one. if there is a pattern to the movement then we can have both endless movement and a completed system. What Hegel wants to convey to us is that the process that is the Idea has both of these attributes: ‘process’ implies continual motion (development), and there is also the aspect of pattern to any process, in this case the pattern discernable in the Idea is the dialectic. “When the expression ‘absolute Idea’ is used”, Hegel writes, “people may think that it is only here that we meet with what is right, that here everything must give itself up. It is certainly possible to sing the hollow praises of the absolute Idea...in the meantime, its true content is nothing but the entire system” (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*. 304 §237 add.). As thought develops in its self-movement, disclosing to the philosopher the logical categories, one can become misled into believing that in the progressive sublations much is left behind in the wake of logical thinking. But as we have seen above, the contribution of each determination to the process as a whole is preserved in logical thinking throughout its

development. What is revealed in the comprehension of the Idea is that all of the logical determinations are and have been present at every stage of thought's development, though not as immediately cognized. The Idea is not an independent logical determination. It is, rather, the realization that the whole process and not any one part of it is what is really essential. Thus for Hegel "[e]ach sphere of the logical Idea proves to be a totality of determinations and a presentation of the Absolute" (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.136 §85 add.). Yet such a conception of the absolute raises concerns about both the beginning and the end of the science of logic.

The logic does not end once all of the thought determinations have been disclosed as moments of the absolute Idea. Hegel states, "[w]hat we began with was being, abstract being, while now we have the *Idea as being*" (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.307 §244 add.). Once the philosopher has completed her sojourn through the science of logical categories she returns to being which is no longer indeterminate (i.e. pure being) because it is comprehended as the immediacy of the absolute Idea; upon her return to being she is able to examine it with the full wealth of knowledge of the absolute Idea at her disposal. The individual who has studied the categories of logic closely in their unfolding finds that all of the categories are aspects of a greater whole that is the Idea. This realization allows the individual to take the wealth of knowledge gained from achieving a proper comprehension of the Idea, and begin anew the study of logic fully awake to each category's place within the whole. "Logic is the definition of what makes natural *life* rational", says Harris. "This is not the end of existence, but only the beginning. It becomes an end for us, only because we begin at the real end; we are alive, and we are rational" (Harris, *Hegel's Development II*. 342). The logic, the system of thought

determinations, is not something completely and totally devoid of any usefulness for living. Quite the contrary, the science of logic is meant to bring us to existence, to our lives, more awake to the dynamic and ever moving process of life, at the heart of which lie the logical determinations and the ways in which they relate with one another. Hegel's systematic logic is not, to use a metaphor, like a house constructed on sound foundations; rather, it is like a plant, organic, in which every aspect of the plant contributes to its life, and without a single one of these aspects the plant could not sustain itself. Hegel has not constructed his system, but has observed and facilitated the articulation of this immanently developing process—like a gardener tending to his growing plants. The maturation of the system, that is, the philosopher's achieving full comprehension of the logic as a whole, is an invitation for the philosopher to return once again to the categories to study and appreciate them in greater depth. The absolute is essentially a process. It is living, or as Hegel writes, the "last step is the insight that it is the whole unfolding that constitutes its content and its interest" (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.304 §237 add.).

The logical Idea, the entire system of thought determinations, is an aspect of the greater whole: the Idea. The Idea thinks itself because it is thought process; and since there is a logical form to the Idea it is possible to analyze it philosophically. Recall earlier when Hegel indicated that the *Logic* begins with abstract being and ends with the Idea as being, he goes on to state that "this Idea that *is*, is *Nature*" (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.307 §244 add.). Nature is the Idea in its immediacy. In dialectical thinking, thought is always first confronted with an immediacy which upon further consideration is found to be mediated. There is a continual return to immediacy, for each new logical determination is always first encountered in its immediacy, but once the

absolute Idea is realized the immediacy that follows is Nature. The Idea is actually composed of the logical Idea, Nature, and Spirit. The philosopher is advised that comprehending the categories of thought alone does not entail full comprehension of Nature and Spirit.

All three aspects of the Idea must be studied and comprehended as fluid moments of the whole—all three aspects are essential for the life of absolute Idea. Theodore Geraets in his article, “The Impossibility of Philosophy...and its Realization”, writes,

the absolute idea is also more than just the logical idea...The absolute idea in this larger sense is not ‘pure idea’, but the idea as ‘the one totality’(Enz., §242) which is for the pure idea and which as such is ‘for-itself’. It is a ‘subjectivity’ which requires, or rather consists in, exteriorization and interiorization: two movements inextricably intertwined, in such a way that, although we can say that nature is the idea in its being other (*Anderssein*) in the form of exteriorization (*Entausserung*)—nature as idea is not without interiorization (Enz., §18 and annotation) (Geraets, *Impossibility*.33).

Nature does not stand apart from the other aspects of the Idea, and this is evident from the distinction between exteriorization and interiorization which can be made with respect to Nature. The interiorization, or ‘pattern’ as Harris had called it earlier, that is discernable in Nature is the logical Idea, the system of thought determinations. This system is Nature’s interior aspect because it is not immediately apparent but can be discerned in Nature through philosophical analysis. Nature, however, has also exteriority, for it presents itself as the other of the Idea—that is, Nature appears as the other of the Idea because it presents itself immediately as brute Nature, or environment. Harris understands Hegel to mean that

Nature is the concept ‘in its otherness’. That means that Nature ‘is there’ *for another*. The other for whom it is, is, of course, the thinking Concept itself; in its relation to Nature, the Concept falls from “pure thinking” to consciousness as the sense-awareness of an object other than itself (Harris, *Hegel’s Ladder II*. 744).

Houlgate contends that “upon reaching [the absolute Idea] one can say that presuppositionless thought has finally determined wherein its essential character lies” (Houlgate, 57-58). That ‘essential character’ lies in the articulation of the interrelating of Nature, Spirit, and the logical Idea.

If Hegel is able to bring to a close the process of thought determinations of the logical Idea, does this not pose a serious threat to the further philosophic activities of future philosophers? Does philosophizing not entail discovering and articulating new logical determinations, or novel ways of thinking? Has Hegel’s scientific system not ended all such philosophical pursuits? To answer these questions we must first explore further the nature of the discontent from which they arise.

There will be some who encounter Hegel’s logic and feel that the full disclosure of all the logical determinations that there may be denies philosophers today and in the years to come challenges to overcome, that is, the challenge of discovering new categories of thought, new ways of thinking. Hegel’s critics argue that any philosopher undertaking a study of the logical categories today would find herself moving with little effort towards the absolute Idea thanks to the efforts of Hegel who has done all of the work clearing the path of thinking. Perhaps the first time one attempts to grasp the system of logical categories on one’s own, there is a great deal of difficult work to be done, but once this preliminary sojourn through the logic is complete all future studies of this same logic would provide little challenge to the philosopher—thinking the logical categories would have been made easy because the philosopher would be relearning categories she had already studied. In short, full disclosure of all the logical categories that

there may be culminating in absolute Idea would sound the death knell for philosophical discovery and, thus, of challenges for future philosophers to overcome.

The comments above describe a desire that some philosophers (not myself) share for discovering newer and newer categories of thought, or new ways of conceiving reality. Hegel views this desire as a misguided view of philosophical activity. If philosophy were nothing more than the continual exploration of novel ways of thinking, novel ways of conceiving reality, then it would be a spuriously infinite activity, and Hegel warns that

The spurious infinite, especially in the form of the quantitative progress to infinity which continually surmounts the limit it is powerless to remove, and perpetually falls back into it, is commonly held to be something sublime...while in philosophy it has been regarded as ultimate...[But] the hollowness of this exaltation, which in scaling the ladder of the quantitative still remains subjective, finds expression in its own admission of the futility of its efforts to get nearer to the infinite goal, the attainment of which must, indeed, be achieved by a quite different method (Hegel, *Science*. 228-229).

According to Harris a “systematic whole can only be constructed out of the [spurious] infinity of empirical life, by showing that there is a standing pattern or cycle in it. The cycle must have an identifiable point of return upon itself, and the circular pattern itself must have a center” (Harris. *Hegel's Development II.26*). This center is for Hegel the “intellectual intuition” of rational freedom. Though these comments relate mainly to Hegel’s thought prior to his undertaking the study of the *Science of Logic* they demonstrate Hegel’s desire to maintain a distinction between the spurious infinity of immediate subjective consciousness, or empirical intuition, and the genuine infinity of intellectual intuition, which will, once Hegel’s thought has matured, become the *Logic*. Hegel stresses the importance of “distinguish[ing] the genuine concept of infinity

from spurious infinity, the infinite of reason from the infinite of the understanding; [for] the latter is the *finitized* infinite, and it will be found that in the very act of keeping the infinite pure and aloof from the finite, the infinite is only made finite” (Hegel, *Science*.137). Progress in philosophy is not achieved through a spuriously infinite search for new logical categories, or novel ways of thinking; on this view, philosophy would find itself tediously attempting to grasp new and different ways of thinking, continually searching for the next idea or revolutionary vision of reality and, thus, never grasping the genuine infinite. Hegel writes, “the image of true [genuine] infinity...[is] the *circle*, the line which has reached itself, which is closed and wholly present, without *beginning* and *end*” (Hegel, *Science*.149). This circle, this genuine infinite, radiates new meaning through its own inner-articulation—herein lies philosophy’s development.

### C: The Universe of Meaning

All humans, as free rational beings exist in, and are a part of a universe of meaning. Recall when earlier it was said that there are three challenges that face one who wants to grasp the science of logical categories. The first is allowing thought to progress in its dialectical movement unfettered. The second being the challenge of grasping the different ways in which each category of thought develops; to this can be added the task of comprehending the roles which negation, sublation, and understanding play in dialectical thought. And the third challenge is comprehending the entire process and its unique moments in their unity as a developing universe of meaning. Thinking generates, and is, the articulation of meaning. Social institutions,

sporting events, and leisure activities, or commerce, meditation, and relating with family members all reveal this universe of meaning which is the Idea. The core of thinking of the meaning content implicit in all our dealings throughout our lives is the logical Idea—the system of logical determinations. How does the Idea generate new meaning without developing new logical determinations? This is a difficult question to answer. There are a finite number of thought categories, a circumstance analogous to the twenty-six characters of the English alphabet, and just as these characters can combine to produce an infinite variety of words, sentences, and paragraphs, so too can the logical determinations develop new meaning contents by interrelating with each other in various ways. The analogy between the alphabet and the thought categories is, however, faulty: for the relation between the alphabet and the words, sentences, and paragraphs that are developed using it, is not as close as the relationship between the logical determinations, and thought contents. The determinations are inseparable from the experiential event, that is, the experiential event is an immediacy (e.g. the stock market), and the logical determinations are the mediated knowledge of the content (e.g. the stock market understood through quantity, force, the one and the many, etc...). Houlgate agrees: “[t]he logic thus provides the categories and method by which the philosophy of reality proceeds, but these categories are not *applied* to a given reality: they are developed further to generate new and more complex determinations of what it means to be”. Indeed, “these categories are not *applied* to a given reality”(Houlgate, 74). Rather they can be discerned in the institutions, and cultural activities that define a society. Far from being the cessation of philosophical pursuits, philosophers after Hegel will be quite busy discerning the logical determinations in the new

meaning articulated by successive new generations of humans.

Is the new meaning generated by the Idea providing us with new logical categories? Or perhaps the new meaning generated by the Idea provides more insights into the existing logical determinations of the science of logic? Does our knowledge of thought determinations develop, or does a completed system of logic bring to an end all such development? The relation between the meaning content developed in the universe of meaning and the logical determinations which are the fundamental units of thought that structure this universe is a complex one. In chapter two it is this relation that is examined.

## Chapter Two:

*Whether or not the completion of a system of logical categories necessarily entails that there can be no further development of that system.*

### A: Thinking and Thought Content

According to Hegel, thinking permeates every aspect of our lives. He writes,

[w]hatever kind it may be, the *content* that fills our consciousness is what makes up the *determinacy* of our feelings, intuitions, images, and representations, of our purposes, duties, etc., and of our thoughts and concepts. Hence feeling, intuition, image, etc., are *the forms* of this content, a content that remains *one and the same*, whether it be felt, intuited, represented, or willed, and whether it be *only* felt, or felt, intuited, etc., with an admixture of thought. or whether it is thought quite *without any admixture* (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.26 §3).

In all our dealings in society, when events evoke feelings in us, when we argue with each other, or when we sit quietly alone, each of these moments is infused with thought content. In chapter one we looked briefly at a distinction Hegel makes between the thinking we do in our everyday lives and the thinking that occurs when we philosophize. Hegel explains,

since philosophy is a peculiar mode of thinking—a mode by which thinking becomes cognition, and conceptually comprehensive cognition at that—philosophical thinking will also be *diverse* from the thinking that is active in everything human and brings about the very humanity of what is human, even though it is also identical with this thinking, and *in-itself* there is only One thinking (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.25 §2).

“This distinction”, between philosophical thinking and the thinking that goes on in our everyday

lives, Hegel argues, “is connected with the fact that the human import of consciousness, which is based on thinking, does not *appear in the form of thought* straightaway, but as feeling, intuition, representation—which are *forms* that have to be distinguished from thinking *itself as form*” (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.25 §2). Thought in its immediacy appears as the shiver down one’s spine when one is frightened, or the cars which one can see pass by one’s house. Contemplating each one of these experiences reveals the meaning content in each: being frightened has something to do with not wishing to be harmed; the cars outside are mechanical wonders of engineering. An analysis of each of these two examples would take more time than is available to us here, and it would reveal an entire array of logical determinations in their interrelatedness.

Geraets describes why Hegel makes the distinctions between the forms of thinking as follows.

Underlying the plurality and diversity in appearance of languages, symbolisms, institutions, sciences and value systems, there is thinking in its original and indestructible unity. However difficult it may be to retrieve or articulate this unity, it is precisely the task of philosophical thinking to make “thinking” in all its forms appear in its genuine form, as thinking, i.e. as articulation of meaning. This is where the “thinking” that is taking place in our entire life of experience and expression becomes genuine cognition; it is the same thinking, in its entire extension and variety, but now recognized or known as such, i.e. as articulation of meaning (Geraets, *Thinking*.2).

Though the distinction can be made between thought in its purest form (i.e. as the system of logical determinations) and in its everyday form (i.e. as feelings, languages, institutions, ect.) this distinction is one based on the desire of some, namely, philosophers, to study thought in its ‘original and indestructible unity’; many others, however, have no desire to pursue such a study and so never push on towards a full comprehension of logical determinations.

I have used two different terms, 'thought content' and 'meaning content', which are essentially synonymous. The meaning content is something that is mediated, that is, the meaning or significance of an experiential event is arrived at through a careful consideration of the thought content of the event. Likewise, thought content is also mediated—one must analyze an experiential event to determine which categories of thought are in motion. Thus both are synonymous in that they both involve analysis of logical determinations. Geraets, as has been noted above, describes thinking as the articulation of meaning; he explains,

Something can be seen, heard, felt, without explicit awareness of the articulation of meaning that is always involved; or we can be somewhat aware of this articulation; or this articulation can be attended to specifically. No human experience, however elementary it may be, is totally undetermined, i.e. devoid of meaning being articulated. But this meaning can remain mostly implicit, unrecognized as such: it is simply "lived". Or there can be a beginning of recognition, without much explicit thematisation. Or this articulation is thematised scientifically or philosophically (Geraets, *Thinking*.2).

Geraets also reminds us that

When we see [the term thinking] most of us will take for granted that we know very well what it means: reflecting, forming thoughts or ideas about anything and everything. The first requirement for understanding Hegel, is to look at the way he uses this term, and be open to discover other possible meanings of it (Geraets, *Thinking* 1).

Perhaps it is here, with Hegel's views on thinking, that most individuals will either want to follow Hegel in his new way of comprehending thought, or will turn their backs on Hegel and label his philosophy as prone to the same inconsistencies inherent in such positions as idealism, and solipsism.

It is true that for Hegel thought is the articulation of meaning, but he recognizes that

thought can take various forms such as feeling, or intuiting. Yet he insists that what is most concrete is what the understanding takes to be the most abstract, namely, the Idea and the logical determinations that make up the core thought structure of the universe of meaning. Hegel focuses on our need (or ability in the case of philosophers) to discover thought content in its various forms. We never experience meaning content or logical determinations immediately. Meaning is always something mediated. What we experience is, for example, opening the door, stepping outside, and crossing the street to buy a newspaper to read up on Gretzky's retirement. All of these experiential events, as I call them, are immediate, but further reflection reveals their meaning. Further reflection mediates the immediate experience and provides access to the system of logical determinations. Granted not everyone will be interested in analyzing all of the varied forms of thought as philosophers do. But each of us is certainly capable, with the proper training, of doing so.

How can Hegel consider feelings, and intuitions to be thoughts? Are feelings not physical experiences and thinking a mental activity? For Hegel, we make sense of our feelings and intuitions by analyzing the meaning content in them. Feelings can be made sense of because they possess thought content—all experiential events are mediate because they possess thought content. Hegel explains:

the activity and productions of thinking are *present* in [feelings, intuitions, and representations] and are *included* in them. But it is one thing to have feelings and representations that are *determined* and *permeated by thinking*, and another to have *thoughts about them*. The thoughts about these modes of consciousness—generated by *thinking them over*—are what reflection, argumentation, and the like, as well as philosophy, are comprehended under. (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.25 §2 rem.).

Hegel makes a distinction between simply thinking things over, and ascertaining the meaning content in feelings, intuitions, and representations. He was aware of the prejudice of his day to “separate *feeling* and *thinking* from each other in such a way that they are supposedly opposed to each other” (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.25 §2 rem.). Hegel maintains that this ‘thinking things over’ is “reflective thought that has *thoughts* as such as its *content*” (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.25 §2 rem.). But he also contends that everything is not just thoughts plain and simple, and philosophers are involved in a much more complex business than simply thinking about thoughts. Such a simplistic understanding of philosophic endeavors into the nature of thought, would see philosophers blind to the reality around them. Philosophers are well aware of the importance of feelings, intuitions, and representations in our lives, but Hegel stresses that these are forms of thought and comprehending them as forms makes it possible to derive meaning from them. Comprehending feelings, intuitions, and representations as thought forms allows us to move beyond their abstract immediacy towards a concrete mediated understanding of their interrelatedness. As Harris states, “[t]he principal importance of the necessary identity between ‘experience’ and ‘Science’ [understood in its broadest and philosophical sense] lies in the implication that *nothing* we experience can *transcend* our logical grasp” (Harris, *Hegel’s Ladder II*, 744). Philosophers examine the meaning content of experience which is continuously being developed in society unbeknown to the populace as a whole; and, furthermore, philosophers are aware that their examinations will not eliminate the immediacy of thought, that is, feelings, intuitions, and representations, to mediation (thought in its purest form: logical Idea).

As rational beings each of us contributes to the articulation of meaning. Each one of us is also aware of the great variety of ‘intelligible circles’ that can be found in a society. By ‘intelligible circle’ I mean the various disciplines such as zoology and history, social structures such as our system of laws and family relationships, and professions such as plumbing and journalism that each of us experiences and participate in every day. As members of a modern society we operate in, for example, a political system and are aware of the different levels of government, our freedom to vote, and the duties of those who represent us. Not everyone will have explicit and total knowledge of all facets of a political system, but one’s minimal awareness of it does not forfeit one’s contribution to this intelligible circle. Together these various intelligible wholes constitute a universe of meaning because we continually discuss, and participate in, their development. This universe of meaning is the Idea: the living process involving Nature, Spirit, and logical Idea. Each of the ‘intelligible wholes’ can be understood as

a circle that closes upon itself; but in each of them the philosophical Idea is in a particular determinacy or element. Every single circle also breaks through the restriction of its elements as well, precisely because it is inwardly [the] totality, and it grounds a further sphere. The whole presents itself as a circle of circles, each of which is a necessary moment, so that the system of its peculiar elements constitutes the whole Idea—which equally appears in each single one of them. (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.39 §15).

Each intelligible whole is like a circle—complete unto itself; but all the circles belong to one process that is the Idea: the universe of meaning. Though each circle is complete in itself, it is possible to find in each individual circle logical thought determinations that are also found in other intelligible circles. For example, in physics labs students learn about gravitational *force*, in

the banking industry financiers learn about the *forces* that shape global markets, and with regards to political institutions more than one elected leader has been *forced* out of office. Each intelligible whole is complete in itself, but each is also essentially an expression of the greater whole that is the Idea. Hegel contends that “[w]hen anything whatever possesses truth, it possesses it through its Idea, or, *something possesses truth only in so far as it is Idea*” (Hegel, *Science*.755). All of the intelligible wholes (e.g. the education system, relationships between the sexes, etc.) have meaning content because of the Idea which mediates our experience of them.

The creation of new content, or articulation of new meaning, is continuous. Hegel writes that “philosophy should be quiet clear about the fact that its content is nothing other than the basic import that is originally produced and produces itself in the domain of the living spirit...the content of philosophy is *actuality*” (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.28-29 §6). As society develops and grows more complex, does our philosophical knowledge of the logical determinations also develop? Perhaps society changes but the thought content that provides its intelligible structure does not change, that is, the system of logical determinations remains fixed despite the visible changes that continually occur in our communities. Hegel’s philosophy represents an argument against the view that as society develops the intelligible structure which underlies it remains unchanged. For Hegel the logical determinations, which are the pure thought content infusing our experiences with meaning, are not so disjointed or separable from Nature and Spirit that they remain unaffected by the motions of Nature and Spirit. The logical determinations, though distinct moments of the Idea, are nonetheless part of a *living* process and thus act and react to the motions of Nature and Spirit. More will be said on the relationship between Nature, Spirit,

and the logical Idea later, but for now it will suffice to say that for Hegel as society grows more complex there is a corresponding development of the logical thought determinations.

### B: A Developing System of Logic

Is there any evidence in Hegel's oeuvre that gives weight to the claim that the system of logical determinations is capable of further development? Hegel certainly does not think that there are any more chapters to be added on to the *Science of Logic* which follow the absolute Idea; rather, we learn more about each specific chapter. He writes, "I could not pretend that the method which I follow in this system of logic—or rather which this system in its own self follows—is not capable of greater completeness, of much elaboration in detail" (Hegel, *Science*. 54). We will look more closely in a moment at the relation between the method and the content which Hegel espouses in his *Logic*, but what we can say now about the method he adopts is that it is capable of "much elaboration in detail". In another instance Hegel shows his humility,

In respect to this attempt [writing the *Science of Logic*] it is not, strictly speaking, permissible to offer any apology; but in respect of the execution, I may plead in excuse that my official duties and other personal circumstances allowed me but scattered hours of labour at a science that demands and deserves undistracted and undivided exertion (Hegel, *Science*. 576).

I would never say that Hegel's work is anything less than extraordinary, but even he recognizes that no work, no matter how well accomplished, is ever perfect, thus, the *Science of Logic* is not only capable of elaboration in detail but should be developed by future philosophers in the years

following its completion at the hands of Hegel himself.

The best means of assessing the viability of the view that logical thought determinations do in fact develop is through the study of models, or examples of how such development may be possible. By studying these models we can assess the controversies that arise from holding such a view. To this end, I will examine two important but divergent models of the development of new content. I recognize that there can be other models for construing logical thought determination development, but the two I have chosen will, I believe, provide a satisfactory beginning to our queries into whether or not Hegel's system of logical categories is capable of developing and how. The first model suggests that the development of the system of logic is essentially a development of our insights into the logical determinations of the Idea such that in studying the various experiential events occurring around us we come to know the nuances in the ways those determinations behave. I will term this view the 'observation model' because according to this model philosophers witness the process that is the Idea at work and through their observations gain insights into the system of logic. The second model maintains that philosophers purposefully avail themselves of the logical determinations that they feel will help elucidate the meaning of an experiential event. In this way a logical determination is placed in a relationship with other logical determinations which are not immediately associated with it in the hopes of gaining some insight into the experiential event, while simultaneously gaining insights into the system of logical determinations—an act that is similar to manipulating the letters of an alphabet to produce new words, sentences, and paragraphs. I will term this view the 'alphabet model'.

I would like to take a moment now to explain the differences between my models for how the system of logical determinations can develop, and the universe of meaning. To begin, the universe of meaning, as I understand it, is not a model, for the Idea *is* a universe of meaning articulation—that is, the Idea is a process of articulation of meaning. The universe of meaning does not stand against the Idea as a measure or model for how the process acts. On the contrary, my ‘observation’ and ‘alphabet’ models are only ways of helping us understand how philosophers can achieve further insights into the existing logical determinations, thus developing the system as a whole. The activity of articulation of meaning continually occurring in society demonstrates the development of the Idea, and as the Idea develops so too does the system of logic. My models are attempts to show how a system of logic can develop.

One can also find in Hegel’s philosophy many instances of models that can be used to understand the Idea. For example, Hegel writes

the members and organs of a living body should not be considered merely as parts of it, for they are what they are only in their unity and are not indifferent to that unity at all. The members and organs become mere ‘parts’ only under the hands of the anatomist: but for that reason he is dealing with corpses rather than with living bodies. This is not to say that this kind of dissection should not happen at all, but only that the external and mechanical relationship of whole and parts does not suffice for the cognition of organic life in its truth (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*. 204 §135 add.).

Hegel is discussing the relationship between whole and parts and reminds us that this relationship “does not suffice for the cognition of organic life in its truth”, that is, that understanding life strictly on a ‘whole and parts’ model is only relatively valid. One can comprehend life with this model but not completely, for ‘whole and parts’ does not exhaust the

meaning of life. When Hegel uses models he uses them to represent the Idea or universe of meaning, and never fails to mention that every model is inevitably flawed as an explanation for the Idea. To use the example above, Hegel contends that “members and organs become mere ‘parts’ only under the hands of the anatomist”; here we see an example that illuminates what Hegel means when he says that the logical determinations must be comprehended in their dialectical, living movement and not as lifeless thought-forms in the hands of an anatomist, which we can take to represent the logician. Again my ‘observation’ and ‘alphabet’ models do not share the same role as Hegel’s models, such as whole and parts, for these are logical determinations which seek to explain and bring us closer to the Idea. My models, again, are attempts to show how a complete system of logical determinations can develop.

In light of the continuing activity occurring in society, perhaps not all of the logical categories that there may be have been disclosed (though Hegel seems to indicate the opposite in his writings), and these as yet unknown logical determinations may provide reasons for society’s development since Hegel’s demise. Let us examine, then, the challenges involved with introducing genuinely new logical determinations into the Hegelian system of logic.

In the systematic science of logic which Hegel expounds, each thought determination relates with others, and in the sphere of ‘essence’ each determination has an other that is its opposite. The logical determination is self-relating and in this self-relating it simultaneously relates with others. With respect to the sphere of essence Hegel writes, “each [logical determination] has its own determination only in relation to the other: it is only inwardly related insofar as it is reflected into the other, and the other likewise; thus each is the other’s *own* other”

(Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*. 185. §119). If any new logical determination were to be introduced it could potentially disrupt the synchronistic (dialectical) relating of the determinations with each other, and in the sphere of essence it would be necessary, if a new determination were introduced, to include also a second thought determination, the other of the first. I do not want to state unequivocally that including a new logical determination will disrupt the harmony of the process that is the Idea, but only to suggest that in light of the intricate workings, that is, self-relating of the logical Idea it is more probable than not that including a genuinely new logical determination would prove disharmonious to the process.

One of the difficulties with introducing new determinations into the Hegel's system of logic is that for him the content and the method of philosophy are the same. Chetelat in his thesis reminds us that

the various sciences possess an external method. This is the case in so far as their method can be defined independently of and prior to scientific investigation...In contrast, Hegel's form of philosophy does not involve an external method, since he believes that philosophy, unlike the other sciences, does not have the luxury of being able to presuppose its method (E.L. §1). Philosophy involves a different procedure in which the content of philosophy generates the method which is particular to it (Chetelat, 41-42).

Hegel explains.

Philosophy, if it would be science, cannot, as I have remarked elsewhere, borrow its method from a subordinate science like mathematics, any more than it can remain satisfied with categorical assurances of inner intuition, or employ arguments based on grounds adduced by external reflection. On the contrary, it can be only the nature of the content itself which spontaneously develops itself in a scientific method of knowing, since it is at the same time the reflection of the content itself which first posits and *generates* its determinate character (Hegel, *Science*. 27).

Recall how we earlier discussed Hegel's claims that his method is the one true method and is "self-evident simply from the fact that it is not something distinct from its object and content" (Hegel, *Science*. 54). Thus if one were to add a new logical determination the dialectical method is such that one would also need to add a second and, indeed, a third term which would bring the first two into dialectical union. But if Hegel has already articulated the absolute Idea, as was his intention in writing the *Science of Logic*, introducing even one new logical determination would disrupt what is a closed and concluded system of logical categories. Hegel maintains that "[i]n true cognition...the method is not merely an aggregate of certain determinations, but the Concept that is determined in and for itself" (Hegel, *Science*.827). The philosophical method is not to treat the various logical determinations as a list of definitions that stand ready made: the method is, rather, the activity of the Concept that is in and for itself, that is, the Concept that is self-defining. Thus the method is essentially tied to the process that is the Idea. But Hegel also contends that "what constitute[s] the method are the determinations of the Concept itself and their relations" (Hegel, *Science*. 827). Here we have Hegel asserting that the method is *constituted* by the logical determinations and the ways in which they relate, but he also holds that the method is the activity of the Concept. Thus the ways in which determinations self-relate and relate with one another and the activity of the Concept are synonymous. One must ask, then, would not the introduction of a new logical determination disrupt the dialectical movement of the Concept in some way? In altering the Concept does Hegel's system of logic unravel, that is, would the inclusion of a new logical determination not disrupt the intricate workings of the process that is the Idea?

There is also evidence in Hegel's work which suggests that a change in the Concept will in turn alter the absolute Idea. Hegel contends that "the Concept *as such* is not yet complete, but must rise to the Idea which alone is the unity of the Concept and reality" (Hegel, *Science*.587). If the Concept or logical Idea, which has concluded its rise to the level of Idea, is changed by the inclusion of some new logical determination, then there must be a corresponding change in the Idea. Hegel writes that the "logical Idea is the [absolute] Idea, itself in its pure essence, the Idea enclosed in simple identity within its Concept prior to its *immediate reflection* [*Scheinen*] in a form-determinateness" (Hegel, *Science*.825). And further that "the absolute Idea itself has for its content merely this, that the form determination is its own completed totality, the pure Concept" (Hegel, *Science*.825). The pure Concept is the logical Idea, and as such it is also the pure essence of the absolute Idea. The content of the absolute Idea is the pure Concept, that is, the logical Idea. Changing the Concept means an altered logical Idea which in turn changes the absolute Idea. But how can the absolute Idea be changed, for is it not absolute? Since the method and content are so closely related, in fact they are one and the same, changing one means changing the other. Introducing a new logical determination must surely alter the content and, in turn, the method. As we have seen earlier, this has adverse repercussions for the absolute Idea.

Another dilemma associated with introducing a genuinely new logical determination into the logical Idea is that it would mean a fundamental change in the way we think, that is, an alteration in how we experience events. Let us remind ourselves that the logical determinations are the fundamental units of meaning in the universe of meaning; the system of logic is the core thought structure of experience. Introducing a new logical determination would mean somehow

comprehending reality in a new way. To use an example, the introduction of a new logical determination would be similar to suddenly seeing the world in four dimensions rather than three. One might suggest that surely introducing one new determination into the system of logic would not have so drastic a consequence on our experience of the world, but I insist that it would because these categories of thought are, again, the fundamental units of meaning that structure our experience.

Thus, there are three difficulties with introducing new logical determinations into Hegel's completed system of logic. Firstly, the process which Hegel laboured for so many years to perfect (a process which he admits is capable of elaboration) is a very intricate and well measured one, and because of its intricacies it would be difficult to include a new determination without disrupting the harmony of the process. Secondly, since the Concept (the logical Idea) and the absolute Idea are so closely related, changing one entails changing the other which would mean that the absolute Idea was somehow less than absolute. And thirdly, introducing a new determination would mean comprehending experience in some radically new and unfamiliar way.

But do the problems associated with discovering new logical determinations and including them in the system of logic entail the impossibility of genuine philosophical development in society? Not exactly. Hegel does insist that the content and method are one, but as is the case with opposing thought determinations, such as finitude and infinity, he demonstrates how method and content are intrinsically related and yet distinct as self-identities. He argues,

the determinateness of the Idea and the entire course followed by this determinateness has constituted the subject matter of the science of logic, from which course the absolute Idea itself has issued into an existence of its own; but the nature of this its existence has shown itself to be this, that determinateness does not have the shape of a *content*, but exists wholly as *form*, and that accordingly the Idea is the absolutely *universal* Idea. Therefore what remains to be considered here [in the section titled 'The Absolute Idea'] is not a content as such, but the universal aspect of its form—that is, the *method* (Hegel. *Science*. 825).

The philosophical method is stated or explained at the end of the *Science of Logic* because it cannot be assumed or explained before philosophical inquiry has begun. Though the system, or method is complete the content that fills out the system is not. The articulation of content, or rather of meaning continues.

Harris describes the thought determinations as they are shown to develop in the *Science of Logic* as “pure essentialities”...generated from the simplest in a chain that is extratemporal. This logical chain exhibits the structure of the human world of discourse at any and all times equally” (Harris, *Hegel's Ladder* 1.82). Where Harris uses ‘discourse’ I think ‘articulation of meaning’ provides a better indication of society’s continual development or filling out of the system of logical categories. And this articulation of meaning is generated by the relationships between the logical determinations. The system is present in all that we do, but society may on occasion exaggerate one category of thought over others or neglect certain relationships between the categories of thought. For example, in a consumer society such as North America, it is widely accepted that attaining more material goods is an ideal approach to a happy life, and thus life is often judged good or bad according to the quantity of one’s possessions. With so much emphasis on the quantity of material wealth, the quality of one’s life suffers. In fact, there

are more and more people in North America extolling the virtues of having less, believing that less material possessions means a simplified and ultimately happier life. In Hegel's own time it was popular "to find all distinctions and all determinacy in the world of objects merely in what is quantitative". But he argues that "we know very little about these [objects] and the distinction[s] between them, if we simply stick to a 'more or less' of this kind, and do not advance to some grasp of specific determinacy, which is here in the first place qualitative" (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.160 §99 add.). One can describe the system of logical categories as flexible, a characteristic attributable to its organic nature. As society grows more dynamic (or less so), certain logical determinations and relationships between determinations will become more prominent while others remain not fully conceived. Since introducing genuinely new logical determinations into the system of logic appears problematic perhaps the development of the system of logical determinations is better understood as a disclosure of the many nuances in the relationships between the determinations through the articulation of meaning.

I have used the term 'nuance' to describe the shape of the developed knowledge of the categories of thought. By 'nuance' I mean that the logical thought determination is not radically altered but that we learn more about its self-relation and its relation to other thought determinations. By self-relation I intend that when a logical determination is comprehended in isolation the attempts at knowing the nature of this individual concept will reveal that it is essentially related to an other, thus self-relating reveals the intrinsic union with other determinations. For example, when contemplating what 'cause' is, one will come to the realization that it is related to 'effect'; though it is distinct from effect, the cause is

fundamentally related to its other, that is, it cannot be properly comprehended without reference to effect. But my contention is, and what I wish to demonstrate with both the 'observation' and 'alphabet' models is, that as society develops so to does our knowledge of cause in relation to such other categories of thinking as power, or force. For example, we have learned to relate cause to quantity and quality. In the middle ages philosophers like Aquinas explored the infinite power of God and regarded God as the first *cause* or prime mover; being the prime mover thus became one of God's qualities. In our present day economy, different events occurring around the world, such as the 'Asian economic crisis', *cause* the Canadian dollar to devalue and become quantifiably worth less against the American dollar—this is an instance of economists learning new insights into cause and effect in the realm of macro-economics. As society develops we know more about cause and the other logical determinations without altering them to the point where, for example, cause is no longer cause but something other.

One advantage with understanding logical determination development as occurring through insights into the nuances in the ways determinations relate with each other is that philosophers will not confuse apparently new categories of thought with the Concept in its varied forms. In our present society we may be quick to praise ourselves for the 'obvious' advances we have made in regards to our philosophical understanding of our shared experience. for example, insights gained from existentialism, or analytic philosophy. But there may be a danger here. The philosopher, properly trained in the science of logic, will not be fooled by the new clothes, new gadgets, and new words of our modern society in relation to prior epochs. Through the unfolding of the logical chain of essentialities, as Harris describes it, the Concept

reveals itself to be the logical Idea: the pure form, or thought of the Idea. This is how the Concept has determined itself without the interference of the personal prejudices of philosophers; thus, there can be nothing beyond the absolute that is 'more' absolute because the Concept has determined this to be so. The only means of developing the process is from within the process either through the disclosure of new logical determinations, or with insights into the various ways in which the thought determinations described by Hegel relate with one another. We have seen the difficulties which plague the former, but with the latter there is the advantage of there not being a need to go beyond the absolute Idea, or altering it in any way.

In his book, *A Commentary on Hegel's Logic*, John McTaggart makes several interesting comments about the absolute Idea. He writes that "Hegel's position will hold good until some future philosopher shall discover some inadequacy in the absolute Idea which requires removal by means of another category" (McTaggart, 309). I have attempted to show earlier that such a view can lead to difficulties, namely, that adding a new thought determination to the process would alter the logical Idea which in turn alters the absolute Idea due to the close connection Hegel makes between method and content, and that Hegel's intention in describing the absolute Idea is that it is just that 'absolute' and not relatively so. McTaggart also says that "Hegel believes himself to have...a dialectical process such that the last term, and the last term alone, gives us the truth about spirit" (McTaggart, 310). Both comments, as interpretations of the process that is the Idea, are lax. Hegel insists that the process as a whole, and not any particular part of it, is what is essential, and that individually the categories have their value as the unified thought structure of this process. Hegel sums up the essentiality of the entire process

over any one of its moments in his simple claim that “[t]he True is the Whole” (Hegel, *Phenomenology*.11 §20). Because he realized that any aspect of the process must always be considered in light of the ‘whole’ process, Hegel was keen to ensure that he ‘closed’ the system of logical determinations by articulating and describing the movement of each and every particular logical determination; but he left open the possibility for further articulation of new meaning because he realized that experience would provide new insights into the categories. By ‘closed’ I mean that he took on himself “the strenuous effort of the Concept” and meticulously detailed all of the philosophical information on each of the logical determinations as they unfolded in their immanent dialectical rhythm up to the point of the absolute Idea (Hegel, *Phenomenology*.35 §58). These efforts are displayed in his *Science of Logic*, a work that begins with ‘pure Being’, and concludes with the ‘absolute Idea’. One can infer from this that Hegel does indeed close the system of logical categories because he concludes the section ‘absolute Idea’ with an invitation for the philosopher to go and search out the thought content in the new meaning generated in society by returning to Nature, the Idea in its immediacy, and comprehending it no longer as indeterminate being but the Idea as being. And in this return to being the circle is complete.

Let us, then, in light of the difficulties surrounding the introduction of genuinely new logical determinations into the system of logic, explore whether or not the disclosure of the many nuances in the relationships between the determinations provides a better means of understanding how the system of logic can develop. We will turn now to analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of the alphabet and observation models which are attempts to

explain how nuanced knowledge of the logical determinations is possible.

### C: The Alphabet Model

The alphabet consists of twenty-six characters—a finite number, much like the number of logical determinations—but from these twenty-six characters one can create an infinite number of words, sentences, and paragraphs. The logical determinations may develop according to this alphabet model: they relate with one another and are self-relating in an infinite number of ways while remaining the same finite number of thought determinations as found in the *Science of Logic*. The world is never at rest, we are constantly inundated with new products, new theories, new dilemmas—society is this bubbling cauldron of meaning articulation. Philosophers, as members of society, experience all that a vibrant society has to offer and attempt to assess in these experiences their meaning, their inherent intelligibility. Aware of the dialectic, and of the logical determinations that provide the core thought structure of experience, philosophers seek to expand their understanding of the Idea. According to the ‘alphabet’ model they do so by analyzing experiential events in light of the logical determinations that they feel will prove beneficial in gaining insights into the meaning of an event that are not readily apparent. This type of analysis is possible because “we can think (almost) everything in terms of whole and part, or form and content, possibility and actuality, contingency and necessity, cause and effect. There are even extremely basic concepts like thing and reality, and finally being” (Geraets, *Thinking*. 7). Thinking purely in terms of concepts allows one to take an

immediate experiential event, such as watching a television show, and push on towards a mediated comprehension of it. Mediated comprehension of an experiential event would entail knowing something of the intelligible whole that provides the horizon of intelligibility for the event, to use the television show example, the show would have to be placed in the context of 'entertainment'; explicit comprehension of the event would also mean an analysis of the concepts involved in the experience. The philosopher under the 'alphabet' model is actively reading into experience the logical determinations of her choosing. It is her hope that in doing so she will not only achieve a greater understanding of the experiential event but also achieve insight into the logical determinations she uses in her analysis.

Perhaps an example will be helpful in explaining what I mean by the 'alphabet model'. Philosophers, as well as psychologists, and sociologists, may want to explore why more and more couples in the late Twentieth century are opting for divorce when problems arise in their marriages. Such a phenomenon reveals something of the Spirit of our time. As the philosopher probes into the phenomenon of an increased divorce rate she may be doing so with the intention of discovering more about identity, difference, and perhaps opposition. By using these logical determinations she hopes to not only learn something of why divorce is becoming a more popular option for couples facing marital woes, but also to gain further insights into the determinations identity, difference, and opposition.

The alphabet model of developing logical determinations has several disadvantages. Can one mix and match logical determinations as one sees fit and thereby come to some insight about an experiential event—can such a mix and match of determinations act as the key for

deriving meaning out of an experience? We must ask the question: does an alphabet develop by our learning more about each particular letter through the production of new words, sentences, and paragraphs using the alphabet? No, an alphabet does not develop in this way; rather, each letter could conceivably develop with regards to the phonetic sounds associated with the letter, or the shape of the written letter could also be altered and redefined over time. For the alphabet model to approach an accurate demonstration of how the development of logical determinations is possible, it would require a means of explicating how the alphabet alters itself through its use. Like the Idea, the alphabet would have to be seen as a living process that is self-defining, an image that is not easily conceptualized and which is infinitely more complicated than the straight forward understanding of the alphabet as developing through the production of new words, sentences, and paragraphs.

One of the problems with maintaining that the development of the logical determinations occurs according to the alphabet model, understood simply as a mix and match of logical determinations that will hopefully reveal some insight into the ways those determinations relate with one another is that it depicts the process that is the Idea as being open-ended and as such it does not follow the pattern of much of Hegel's thinking. Harris contends that "[w]hen our 'thoughts' become circular (or self-defining) motions...they are, at last, true 'concepts'." Conceptual knowing is a *circle* which goes round from the perceptions of the world as actual nature to the self-comprehension that knows its world as "spirit" (Harris, *Hegel's Ladder I*. 80). Yet, if there are only a finite number of logical categories, then these categories must in some way relate with each other continuously. Living implies both development and activity and since

this activity is not caused by the addition of new logical determinations, for the system is complete. The determinations that already exist must act on each other and on themselves with no apparent end. If the process were to stop it would have done so once all the logical determinations of the system were disclosed. Can the Idea as process be both open-ended (i.e. continuous) and self-defining (i.e. complete)? Once again this thought does not lend itself easily to imagining, but theocratically it must be so. The Idea is self-defining, for Spirit in its odyssey has grasped itself as its Concept, that is, as Idea—the Idea is *in* and *for* itself, thus it is self-defining. This is the great accomplishment of the history of our society. Yet, if asked, an overwhelming majority of people would say that society has developed since Hegel last put pen to paper. Whether the changes that have occurred in our society during the one hundred and fifty years since Hegel's death are of a fundamental sort or not, those changes do indicate the activity of the Idea. Moreover, society appears poised to continue changing as long as humans continue to be active. Thus the articulation of meaning is open-ended, but it occurs through a system of logic that is complete.

Another problem with the alphabet model of how the categories of logic develop is that the new words, sentences, and paragraphs developed through use of the alphabet are too distinct from the system of letters. The words, sentences, and paragraphs have meaning independent of the letters that combine to make them up; for example, the letters *t*, *r*, and *e* have little to do with the meaning contained in the word 'tree'. Shakespeare captures the same thought in one of his famous proverbs, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other word would smell as sweet" (Shakespeare, 50). Unlike the alphabet's relation to the words, sentences, and

paragraphs developed through its use, the logical determinations are not distinct from the articulation of meaning. Whether it be the failings of the Spanish empire in the mid-seventeenth century or the disgruntled moans of a population upset with the antics of its president in the late twentieth century, neither of the two events can be comprehended without some understanding of, for example, cause and effect. Thus cause and effect have a direct involvement with the meaning content of these two experiential events in a way that the letters *t*, *r*, and *e* do not have with the meaning of the word 'tree'.

#### D: The Observation Model

The great events that have rocked society since Hegel's death, the two world wars, the diminishing role of organized religion in people's lives, to name but only a few, have been the subjects of a tremendous amount of philosophical debate. Yet no less significant to philosophers have been the seemingly insignificant everyday events, the daises that have come into bloom, two strangers arguing, an old piece of newsprint blowing across the street, again to name but only a few. These insignificant events have also provided fuel for philosophical reflection. What is common to both sets of examples is that throughout these events the philosopher has been there to observe them or perhaps more accurately, the philosopher has witnessed the Idea in its self-articulation. According to the observation model, the philosopher brings with her to every event her knowledge of the Idea and the system of logical determinations and bears witness to the events unfolding around her. By conducting these observations the philosopher achieves

insights into the ways that logical determinations interrelate. For example, watching the piece of newsprint float across the street, the philosopher may begin contemplating organic life and humankind's relationship to the planet, which may in turn lead her to view the planet itself as a living organism. Now she begins to understand organic life in ways she did not before, and this new nuanced knowledge, as I call it, will benefit her studies of the *Science of Logic*.

According to the observation model, Hegel's logic, the core structure of thought, is not something that we apply to reality—it is not a pair of eye glasses which the philosopher puts on so as to see the world clearly. As Harris writes, the “Hegelian Logic is, first of all, the theoretical structure of rational selfhood. In that aspect it is the foundation of the scientific comprehension of the world in the ‘Real Philosophy’ of Nature and Spirit” (Harris, *Hegel's Ladder II*. 776). Anything in experience that we are aware of, feel, conceptualize, or discuss—indeed, experience as such—is thought; thought is structured according to laws, or logical determinations. However, Hegel would never use the phrase ‘laws of thought’ because laws are something externally imposed. The Idea is, on the other hand, a self-generating process and so the logical determinations are not laws governing thinking but are the self-expressed essence of the Idea. Harris also states that “concrete logic is capable of infinite extension; and the most we can hope for is some convincing way to fit every piece of valid conceptual analysis done in any ‘finite’ field into Hegel's conceptual theory” (Harris, *Hegel's Ladder II*.776). What Harris means is that in its ‘real philosophical’ aspect, that is, as Nature and Spirit, the thought determinations of the logic can be found at work in any aspect of our experience and as such the logic is infinitely expandable, for it has the width, depth, and breadth of experience. For example,

one can analyze the university system in many ways: examine the lecture material presented by the professors, the buildings that make up the campus, or the disciplines pursued by the students. In turn, one can focus on one aspect, say the buildings, and examine this to find the ideas driving architecture or labour forces. Each aspect of our experience is expandable in this way and at each level one can discern the logical determinations in their interrelatedness at work in each experiential event. Just as the detail in any experiential event can be examined to reveal even more detail, so too can one examine an intelligible circle and discover in it relationships to other circles. By focusing on certain aspects of experience some logical determinations, and some relationships between the determinations will be stressed over others, all of which depends on how we as a society choose to focus our energies. But though some logical determinations may play a more prominent role than others in our conceptual analysis of current experiential events, the determinations of the logic remain active as a unified system awaiting the philosopher capable of expressing the thinking continually occurring in society.

In the "Preface to the Second Edition" of the *Science of Logic*, Hegel uses the term 'plasticity' to describe the ability of the logic to have some categories come to the forefront while others remain in the background. He writes that "[n]o subject matter is so absolutely capable of being expounded with a strictly immanent plasticity as is thought in its own necessary development" (Hegel, *Science*. 40). As we have seen from the previous discussions on the dialectic, the logic is capable of undergoing variations in its growth (i.e. shining into, passing over, or developing) as each determination is addressed. Hegel insists that such "a plastic discourse demands, too, a plastic receptivity and understanding on the part of the listener...

listeners such as Plato feigned, who would attend only to the matter in hand, could have no place in a modern dialogue” (Hegel, *Science*. 40). Plasticity, as Hegel indicates, is required on the part of the one studying logic, that is, the ability to comprehend the connected concepts to the one being examined—an ability that some might call lateral thinking.

Hegel also writes that

The activity of thought which is at work in all our ideas, purposes, interests and actions is...unconsciously busy...what we consciously attend to is the contents, the objects of our ideas, that in which we are interested; on this basis, the determinations of thought have the significance of *forms* which are only attached to the content, but are not the content itself (Hegel, *Science*. 36).

I think that the ability of the logic to have some logical determinations play a more prominent role than others, according to how we as a society choose to focus our energies when participating in the intelligible circles, is due to our ‘usual’ way of regarding the logical determinations as external forms: because our attention is usually focused on the content of our ideas and not their logical determinateness. It is this content that captures our imaginations and the thinking about categories of thought follows afterwards. Society becomes excited about the content of a new idea and focuses on that content (for example, the Internet and what it is capable of) and it is only after an idea has had time to permeate a society that philosophers consider its meaning, that is, consider the logical determinations at play in the idea. In this way the system of logic shifts and moves according to the attention being given to various contents.

The logical Idea, or the structure of thought determinations, lies in all that is experienced. Hegel writes,

it is only an ill-minded prejudice to assume that philosophy stands antithetically opposed to any sensible appreciation of experience, or to the rational actuality of legal rights and to simple-hearted religion and piety. These shapes [of consciousness] are themselves recognized by philosophy, and even justified by it. Rather than opposing them, the thinking mind steepes itself in their basic import; it learns from them and grows strong, just as it does from the great intuitions of nature, history, and art; for this solid content, once it has been thought, is the speculative Idea itself (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.5).

The system of logical determinations can be complete and yet not exhaustive, that is, the system can still allow for development through meaning articulation. Whether it be legal rights, simple-hearted religion, and piety or movies, agriculture, and urban planning, the thinking mind steepes itself in all of these meaning contents and discovers at their core the determinations of the logical Idea at work.

Bearing this in mind, the observation model for logical determination development has several advantages: firstly, it allows for the system of logical determinations to be closed, contrary to the open-ended mix and match of categories espoused by the alphabet model, which is how Hegel envisaged the system. Secondly, it allows for the articulation of meaning through insights into the relationships between the logical thought determinations from within the absolute process. Unlike understanding the development of logical determinations as only occurring through the disclosure of 'new' determinations, the observation model does not have the philosopher reaching out to an illusory beyond past the absolute Idea to account for the development of the logical Idea, but rather the philosopher stays within the circle of interrelated logical determinations and finds within this system new meaning content to explore.

But like the view of the development of logical determinations as possible only through

the discovery of new categories, the observation model is also problematic. Is the entire system of logical determinations present everywhere at all times such that if the philosopher analyzes any aspect of experience she is confronted with the entire system—every single logical determination comprehended at once? Or are only certain categories of thought present at any one time in any given experiential event? Or are they all present, but only certain ones are stressed while the others remain not fully conceived? All three questions deal with the availability of the entire system of categories to the philosopher who contemplates various experiential events. If, as in Plato's cave analogy, the philosopher steps into the light of the absolute Idea is not the whole process revealed, and if so, does this not make the disclosure of new nuances in the relations between the categories of thought now impossible? What determines whether or not new meaning contents will disclose nuances in the relationships between thought determinations is the degree to which the process that is the Idea is closed.

Hegel writes,

No subject matter is absolutely capable of being expounded with a strictly immanent plasticity as is thought in its own necessary development; no other brings with it this demand in such a degree...Such an exposition...demand[s] that at no stage of the development should any thought-determination or reflection occur which does not immediately emerge at this stage and that has not entered this stage from the one preceding it (Hegel, *Science*.40)

From this passage it would appear that the Concept follows a very strict path towards the absolute Idea and, thus, there is no room for any nuanced knowledge of the logical determinations because the meticulously conducted study of the science of logic has left no stone unturned. However, Hegel goes on to say that “such an abstract perfection of exposition

must...in general be dispensed with” (Hegel, *Science*.40). Hegel too realizes the detrimental effects on the system of logical determinations of an exposition of thought that is too restrictive. But what accounts for the flexibility or openness of the system of logic is not the degree of care exercised in its exposition. Rather, it is the fact that philosophers do not know how society will develop itself. Philosophers do not know which logical determinations, and which relationships between logical determinations, will be emphasized because they cannot foretell to what ends society will focus its energy. As a result, though the philosopher is aware of all the thought determinations of the system of logic, she does not know what ‘shape’ the system of logic will take because she cannot foretell how society will develop. By ‘shape’ I mean the complete system of logical determinations with some determinations stressed over others.

Perhaps an example of how nuanced knowledge of the relationships between logical determinations can be discerned in experiential events will prove beneficial in assessing the viability of the observation model. Hegel lived and died long before computers were invented, but there is a passage in his *Science of Logic* which is poignant with regards to the computer age. He contends that,

Calculation being so much an external and therefore mechanical business, it has been possible to construct machines which perform arithmetical operations with complete accuracy. A knowledge of just this one fact about the nature of calculation is sufficient for an appraisal of the idea of making calculation the principal means for educating the mind and stretching it on the rack in order to perfect it as a machine (Hegel, *Science*.216-217).

Much has been made of computer intelligence in the late twentieth-century and there is fervent debate as to whether or not computers are indeed intelligent and can, therefore, think. Hegel,

even in his acumen, likely could not foresee such a debate occurring. Though the passage quoted above does not explicitly contribute to the debate, it does lend itself towards it. Our knowledge of the parameters of the debate about computer intelligence allows us a more nuanced understanding of the logical determinations at work in it. Hegel had no access to the nuances in this debate because the society in which he lived had not experienced the computer age. Thus we have an example here of how logical determinations can develop through insights into the ways in which they interrelate; in this particular example mechanism, measure, life, definition, and other categories relate in ways that constitute the debate about computer intelligence in ways Hegel could not have foretold.

The philosopher must be weary, however, that the term 'nuance' is not applied liberally to any and all concepts. Hegel contends that "[t]here is as little to be said against the expression *power* when it is used only as a *symbol*, as there is against the use of numbers or any other kind of symbols for concepts" (Hegel, *Science*.325). There is a danger with maintaining the appropriateness of the observation model for how logical determinations can develop, namely, that the undisciplined philosopher may, in bearing witness to the experiential events occurring around her, be lax in her judgement as to what constitutes a genuine insight into the interrelations of logical determinations. The same vigor, and strictness which Hegel demonstrates in his studies of the logical categories is still required when analyzing new insights into the interrelations between thought determinations.

### E: The Difference Between the Observation and Alphabet Models

The observation model appears promising as a means for understanding how the logical Idea can develop itself, but it would require more analysis and time to determine whether indeed philosophers can gain insights into the interrelating of the logical determinations by witnessing the process that is the Idea in action. Such an analysis would require studying the development of our philosophical knowledge since Hegel, and studying the evolution of our society in all its varied aspects, such as, law, business, and interpersonal relationships. One could, however, argue that the alphabet model and the observation model are similar in many respects, for like the observation model the alphabet model seeks to discover some new insight into the nuances in the ways that the logical determinations interrelate. Though similar, there is one major difference between the two models. According to the observation model the philosopher in analyzing experiential events gains from those events insights into the various ways logical determinations relate. Experience leads the way and the philosopher, as it has been mentioned earlier, must be in tune with the dialectic and the movement of the Concept to gain from the experiential event those insights she covets. The philosopher, in this particular instance, is a passive observer (though not entirely, since she still has the difficult task of comprehending the logical determinations in their dialectical movement). On the contrary, the alphabet model has the philosopher actively analyzing some experiential event utilizing what she knows about one logical determination, say external reflection, and comparing it to another logical determination, say appearance, in order to discover some insight into those and other determinations. As we

will see later, Hegel describes the philosopher as being both active and passive, which may lead one to conclude that a combination of both the observation and alphabet models would prove more satisfactory as an explanation for how a complete system of logic can develop by gaining new insights into existing logical determinations. What is important to note here is the arrival of a central question that many Hegel scholars have addressed, namely, how do the phenomenological experiential events link up with the logical determinations? What is the relationship between Hegel's logic and his real philosophy? These are very difficult questions, and one can truly spend a lifetime contemplating them without ever reaching a plausible answer. I would like to suggest a way of examining these questions more closely. To that end I propose that we must first determine the role of the philosopher in analyzing experiential events. For if the system of logical determinations is going to develop it will be through the activities of philosophers. Moreover, philosophers are unique in that they are aware of the categories of thought while at the same time their embodiment in the physical world makes them susceptible to all sorts of experiential events.

### Chapter Three:

#### *How philosophers may facilitate the development of logical thought determinations*

In several places Hegel examines the syllogistic relationship between Nature, Spirit, and the logical Idea. This relationship between the real philosophy of Nature and Spirit and the *Logic* is a complex one because of the different ways in which one can understand it. Moving from Spirit to Nature will reveal a different aspect of the relationship between the real philosophy and the logic than would the movement from Nature to Spirit, or from Spirit to the logical Idea. In addition to comprehending the syllogistic relationship between Nature, Spirit, and the logical Idea, one must also understand the philosopher's place in the process. The philosopher represents the relationship between the real philosophy and the *Logic* in microcosm. As Harris writes,

The living Earth is the being that is the 'body' of this community [the rational community to which the philosopher belongs] on its natural side, and the student can use any symbols that her own cultural tradition has given her to express the unity of the body on its spiritual side. That the community *has* an ideally permanent logical structure, in its passage from the natural 'body' to the spiritual one, is guaranteed by her own embodiment as a student. The rational structure of selfhood, the identity of "the we that is I and the I that is we" is the key to what is 'logically necessary'. This is the heart and center of philosophical logic, and it is safe from the continual change and transformation that must be dominant in Real Philosophy, because the structure of our embodied life-experience will not change. (Harris, *Hegel: Phenomenology*. 103-104).

We will return to the syllogistic relationship between Nature, Spirit, and the logical Idea in a moment. For now let us turn to the philosopher in the present age.

Since Hegel's death in 1831 several important philosophical movements have asserted themselves. Existentialism, pragmatism, analyticism, and post modernism have each stamped their mark on western society's collective consciousness. Moreover, the titanic events that have occurred since Hegel's passing, most notably the two world wars, have thrown individuals such as Miguel D'Unamuno, Bertrand Russell, and Jean Paul Sartre into the political arena where their respective philosophies have taken on practical consequences. Indeed, philosophers have not been in want of subject matter in regards to philosophizing and in fact the opposite seems true. Whatever may be said of Hegel's complete system of logic, it must be stressed that if it fails to account for society's ongoing philosophic activity, then it is fundamentally flawed.

If either the observation or the alphabet models of the development of logical determinations, or some combination of the two, is correct, then what the philosophers who have come after Hegel have contributed to society's philosophic endeavors is insights into existing logical determinations and not insights into genuinely new categories of thought. For example, Kierkegaard contends that Hegel's grand philosophical system is flawed for, though it is impressive in its retrospective analysis of past historical events (as is the case with the *Phenomenology of Spirit*), it cannot account for the fact each individual human must live life towards an undetermined future. He boldly claims that "[n]othing must then be incorporated in a logical system that has any relation to existence" (Kierkegaard, 196). One can argue that Kierkegaard provides us with valuable insights into the logical determination 'life'. Kierkegaard is correct in suggesting that the future plays an integral part in people's lives, for people work

and attend school all with the thought of securing for themselves a better future. Existentialism raises important points about human existence that contribute to the absolute Idea and our shared philosophical knowledge. However, I disagree with those who, like Kierkegaard, argue that Hegel's system is fundamentally flawed because of its apparent lack of a satisfactory account of 'the future', and that as such the process that is the absolute Idea must be sent to the litter box of philosophical ideas. Quite the opposite is true. A proper understanding of the Idea can help society appreciate existentialism more by disclosing what concepts dominate that philosophical movement and why it struck such a cord with society. In turn existentialism can enliven and shed light on aspects of the Idea by demonstrating important connections between thought determinations like 'life' and 'possibility'.

Hegel believed that with his philosophy he effectively brought all of the philosophical contributions of his predecessors to systematic science. In so doing he closed the system, or process, that is the Idea by completing the circle: showing how our society has risen from natural consciousness to philosophical consciousness, then explaining what is involved in speculative thinking, and finally explaining why we must return to Nature, once we achieve an awareness of absolute Idea, to witness the process at work. This circle is the proper shape of philosophy, for we begin with indeterminate being and rise to the absolute Idea, but then return to determinate being; once again, I say 'determinate' because we now comprehend being's place in the Idea:

the simple being to which the Idea determines itself remains perfectly transparent to it and is the Concept that, in its determination, abides with itself. The passage [from the Idea to being] is therefore to be understood here...in this manner, that the Idea *freely releases* itself in its absolute self-assurance and inner poise (Hegel, *Science*.843).

Hegel describes here, with some ambiguity, the Idea's movement back towards nature. Thus the entire process is like a circle: it begins with indeterminate being, rises to absolute knowledge, and returns again to determinate being. But the return to being is markedly different, for now the Idea has achieved 'self-assurance and inner poise'. Though the system of logical determinations is complete, there is still the difficult work of understanding the myriad ways in which the determinations relate with one another. Achieving awareness of the absolute Idea is like reaching a plateau. On the plateau the Idea is set free, or as Hegel describes it, the Idea is "an absolute liberation for which there is no longer any immediate determination that is not equally *posited* and itself Concept" (Hegel, *Science*.843). This freedom is what nourishes the self-assurance and inner poise of the Idea, for now it is aware of its self-determination. On this plateau the Idea steps itself in its own-self by exploring the inexhaustible nuances of the interrelations between logical determinations. But before moving on to how the philosopher facilitates the acquisition of this nuanced knowledge, let us examine more closely the relationship between Spirit, Nature, and the logical Idea.

#### A: Spirit, Nature, and the Logical Idea

The Idea, it should be reiterated, is not like a machine and one should not look upon the logical Idea, Nature, and Spirit as one would the parts of a car engine. The process that is the Idea, as has been stated earlier, is organic—it develops and grows, it is not constructed. In the 'Doctrine of the Concept', Hegel discusses the three forms of 'the object'—a moment of the

Concept. One of those forms is the mechanically determined object. Hegel writes,

what constitutes the character of *mechanism* [is] that whatever relation obtains between the things combined, this relation is one *extraneous* to them that does not concern their nature at all, and even if it is accompanied by a semblance of unity it remains nothing more than *composition, mixture, aggregation* and the like (Hegel, *Science*. 711).

The ‘parts’ of the mechanical object remain indifferent to one another and have their unity as a machine imposed on them from the outside. What I mean by an ‘imposed unity’ is that, for example, the piston can be explained and defined without reference to the car engine and can be defined completely isolated from other parts of the engine such as the carburetor. The same cannot be said for the living organism. For example, “[t]he single members of the body are what they are only through their unity and in relation to it. So, for instance, a hand that has been hewn from the body is a hand in name only, but not in actual fact” (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*. 291 §216 add.). Hegel explains.

Life...is in and for itself absolute *universality*; the objectivity that it possesses is permeated throughout by the Concept and has the Concept alone for substance. What is distinguished as part, or in accordance with some other external reflection, has within itself the whole Concept; the Concept is the *omnipresent* soul in it, which remains simple self-relation and remains a one in the multiplicity belonging to objective being (Hegel, *Science*. 763).

Thus, the Idea is best understood organically because none of the ‘parts’ of the Idea have any meaning outside of their relation to the other parts and to the Idea as a whole.

The logical Idea, Nature, and Spirit are really aspects of a single process, and in each the other two can be found. Hegel writes, “the Concept is to be regarded not as the act of the self-conscious understanding, not as the *subjective understanding*, but as the Concept in [and for] its

own absolute character which constitutes a *stage of nature* as well as of *spirit*" (Hegel, *Science*.586). Spirit and Nature are two necessary shapes, or sides to the Concept, the logical Idea. However, Hegel will go on to argue that "the logical form of the Concept", that is, the system of thought determinations, "is independent of its non-spiritual, and also spiritual, shapes...It is a point that must not wait to be established within *logic* itself but must be cleared up *before* that science is begun" (Hegel, *Science*.586). What Hegel means here is that the logical Idea, or Concept is independent in so far as it is in and for itself, that is, self-determining. The preliminary steps in the Concept's movement towards independence were taken in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and the conclusion of that work marked the point of presuppositionless thought. Presuppositionless thought in turn means that there is no distinction made between thought and that which is thought, that is, no distinction between thought and the object of thought. Herein lies the logical Idea's independence for, though Nature is objective and Spirit subjective, each has also within itself the Concept, which is distinctive because it has overcome the division between subject and object.

Hegel wishes to maintain a strict distinction between philosophical tasks. He contends that "logic as the *formal science* cannot and should not contain that reality which is the content of the further parts of philosophy, namely, the philosophical sciences of nature and of spirit" (Hegel, *Science*.592). The science of logic is concerned solely with the adequate rendering of the logical determinations in their own movement and relating. And though the philosophies of both Nature, and Spirit are important to the process that is the Idea, they both remain open in that their movement is continuous. Both are continuous because events continually

occur in the life of a society as long as that society exists, thus displaying the activity of Spirit. Likewise, brute Nature is in constant flux as it moves through its various stages of growth and decay. The type of openness of the sciences of Nature and Spirit does not apply equally to the system of logical determinations, for in the Concept openness is not a matter of the system undergoing continuous change. Rather, it is a matter of our insights into logical determinations in their relating activity grounding us further in the Idea. Openness in this respect means that we are capable of learning more about the existing categories rather than having to discover newer and newer categories.

Though Hegel does make distinctions between the logical Idea, Nature, and Spirit he also maintains their equality as attributes of the Idea. Hegel goes so far as to call the logical Idea, Nature, and Spirit “the members of the absolute syllogism”. He explains,

As the immediate totality, Nature unfolds itself in the two extremes of logical Idea and Spirit. Spirit, however, is Spirit by being mediated through Nature. In the second place, Spirit which we know as what is individual and actuating is the middle, and Nature and the logical Idea are the extremes. It is Spirit that knows the logical Idea in Nature, and elevates it to its essence. Equally, in the third place, the logical Idea itself is the middle: it is the absolute substance of Spirit and of Nature, that which is universal, and all-pervading (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*, 263 §187 add.).

The logical Idea, Nature, and Spirit each assume the role of middle term and, as middle term, act on and through the other two. It should be noted, however, that assuming responsibility for the middle term is not a temporal succession—it is not the case that Nature *first* takes the middle position *then* Spirit *then* the logical Idea. Rather all three terms act as middle term and as the periphery simultaneously. Once again, this thought is not something that can be conveyed

through images, or picture thinking.

I have tried to argue in chapter two that though the logical Idea is complete in that there are no genuinely new logical determinations to be disclosed, there is still opportunity for developing the logical Idea through insights into the many nuances in the interrelationships between the logical determinations. One may, however, argue that developing our philosophical knowledge is possible solely by analyzing the ways in which the logical Idea, Spirit, and Nature interrelate, rather than studying the logical determinations. Though the logical Idea is a completed system of categories of thinking, Nature and Spirit remain open for they move or are altered continually with the passage of time. Hegel, in concluding his *Encyclopaedia Logic*, writes. “we have now returned to the Concept of the Idea with which we began. At the same time this return to the beginning is an advance. What we began with was being, abstract being, while now we have the *Idea as being*; and this Idea that *is*, is *Nature*” (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.307 §244 add.). Hegel could mean one of two things here (or both?). It may be the case that the Idea in thinking itself will now go out to Nature and Spirit to learn more about itself. What this ‘more’ would consist of is not clear. Perhaps if either the observation or alphabet models of logical determination development is correct then ‘more’ would mean further insights into the interrelations between the categories of thought. On the other hand, Hegel could mean that the Idea will recommence its odyssey beginning anew the movement through the logical determinations beginning with determinate being. One may argue that such a renewal is a waste of time, for why repeat all the steps one has just taken? However, retracing

the steps one has taken would have the effect of solidifying or assuring the correctness of each particular step and erasing any errors along the way—an idea akin to memorizing the spelling of a list of words by continually repeating them to oneself. By going over the list in such a way the words become a part of the speller in that spelling those words becomes second nature, or instinctual.

All of these considerations bring us back to reflections on the nature of the Idea itself. Hegel states that “actuality appeared merely as an objective world without the subjectivity of the Concept, here [in the section titled “*The Idea of Cognition*”] it appears as an objective world whose inner ground and actual subsistence is the Concept. This is the absolute Idea” (Hegel, *Science*.823). The Idea is a process which thinks itself, which actualizes itself because it is both *in* and *for* itself. But there is more to the absolute Idea than its actualizing itself. This ‘more’ deals with the role of the philosopher in relation to the absolute process. The philosopher represents the Idea’s awareness of itself, that is, awareness of the Idea’s appearance as an objective world. This has been shown to some extent in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, where Hegel comments on the history of philosophy in the Western tradition. The reader should bear in mind that he never mentions any philosopher by name, because for him the particular personalities of the philosophers are irrelevant and what is important is their ideas, their arguments. In each epoch the philosopher expressed the movement of the Idea in its spiritual form: as the thought of a society. It is so even today that philosophers express the in and for itself of the Idea, for they are the witnesses of the absolute process, the eyes, ears, and mouth of the Idea.

Are philosophers solely concerned with the Idea as concept whether in Nature, Spirit, or in the logical Idea? For Hegel, the answer is yes: philosophers are speculative thinkers. But one should not be fooled into thinking that Hegel is concerned solely with the conceptual aspect of experience ruling out all the other aspects that make religion, sensual pleasure, or immediate sense perception rich and wonderful. He contends that although a religious person can have knowledge of the absolute in the form of a deity without the corresponding philosophical insight, the philosopher, on the other hand, must grasp the significance of religion to the human experience in order to fully grasp the Idea. Houlgate affirms this interpretation,

Hegel clearly thinks that the religious believer can remain ignorant of philosophy and still know the truth through genuine faith, he does not think that the philosopher can do without religion. Philosophy itself must be totally independent of religious faith. But if the philosopher as an individual is to have a complete and pervasive comprehension of the truth, he must feel the truth of what he grasps with his intellect, and have profound faith in the presence of reason in the world as well as an exact conceptual understanding of it (Houlgate, 183).

To fully understand, and appreciate a work of art, for example, one must not only become cognizant of the meaning content which it attempts to portray, but one must also be moved in some way by its presentation or appreciate that it has the power to move others. Therefore, the philosopher deals with concepts and seeks out the meaning content in all aspects of experience. However, at the same time she is not completely divorced from her feelings. Indeed, the perfect model of a philosopher is one who studies the logical determinations while remaining aware of, and moved by, the experiential events which provide their expression.

## B: The Philosopher's Task

Some critics of Hegel's philosophy, such as Michael Rosen, argue that Hegel is not altogether clear as to what philosophy is for. Rosen asks, "is the *Science of Logic* an exercise in *descriptive* or *revisionary* metaphysics?" (Rosen, 58). There will be detrimental consequences for Hegel's philosophy regardless of which of the two is chosen as most representative of the philosopher's task. Rosen explains, "if the *Science of Logic* is revisionary then in what sense has ordinary consciousness already 'attained possession' of science? Yet if the *Logic* is descriptive are we to conclude that dialectic has no *critical* role and that the interest of the discipline is... 'merely academic'?" (Rosen, 58). If one describes philosophical activity as revisionary in nature, where the philosopher dictates what meaning can be garnered from the experiential event, then it would be an endless exercise of critique and analysis of arguments. Philosophers would be continuously revising their arguments, thus stalling any philosophic advancement. The problem with describing philosophy as strictly revisionary in nature is that one can never achieve a completed system of logical determinations because the system and its being closed would constantly be put into doubt—one would continually revise one's position according to whatever arguments may be levied against it, thus never coming to an end. On the other hand, if philosophy is a descriptive science then it really adds nothing to our knowledge of the world that we do not already discern in the ideas and events that shape our society. So the question remains: is Hegel unclear as to what the philosopher should do? Here we see the observation and alphabet models in tension. Are philosophers in their work supposed to be active or passive?

With regard to philosophy as definition Hegel writes,

philosophy has absolutely nothing at all to do with merely correct definitions and even less with merely plausible ones, i.e., definitions whose correctness is immediately evident to the representing consciousness; it is concerned, instead, with definitions that have been *validated*, i.e., definitions whose content is not accepted merely as something that we come across, but is recognised as grounded in free thinking, and hence at the same time as grounded within itself (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.158 §99 add.).

The philosopher must have at the very least a basic understanding of what magnitude, finitude, object, and all other logical determinations are in order to discuss and study them. All learning and intelligent discourse requires some level of accepted definition. True definitions are the specifications of concepts. What a thing is, its definition, is the particular nature of its concept. Part of the philosopher's task is to present a precise rendering of the concepts we use, that is, to analyze their roles as logical determinations.

The philosopher, as was described in chapter one, must be prepared to follow the path of thinking as it moves, without imposing upon it her own prejudices and presuppositions.

Houlgate describes the ideal philosopher this way,

[The philosopher] will not attempt naively to escape from [her] historical perspective and get direct, unmediated access to 'things'. Rather, [she] will see the need to develop the proper categories in order to disclose the true nature of the world, and [she] will realize that, if [she is] going to come to an understanding of the true character of thought, [she] must come prepared...to be open to what thought determines itself to be (Houlgate, 63).

The logical determinations of the Idea are self-determining and they unfold according to a dialectical rhythm which has the negative as its source of movement. Since thought is self-determining, the philosopher's task is not to interfere in its movement but to comprehend it and

to understand it in all experiential events.

In reference to the activity of philosophers, Hegel indicates that the philosopher must discover the meaning content within experiential events. He contends that “[i]f numbers, powers, the mathematical infinite, and suchlike are to be used not as symbols but as forms for philosophical determinations and hence themselves as philosophical forms, then it would be necessary first of all to demonstrate their philosophical meaning, i.e. the specific nature of their Concept” (Hegel, *Science*.325). The philosopher in analyzing experience must disclose the logical determinations at work in the event. By doing so the philosopher will discover new insights into the event by relating logical determinations which do not present themselves immediately as related to the event to those which do. In turn, the experiential event will provide the philosopher with new insights into how the logical determinations relate with one another, such that the philosopher will gain new knowledge of particular categories of thought and the role they play in experience. For example, the phenomenon of interest in the Internet can be analyzed for its thought content in several different ways. One can explore how the Internet as a system or ‘web’ is a reflection of the one and the many in that the web is ‘one’ entity with ‘many’ computer points of entry. One can analyze the Internet in terms of force or power either in respect to the energy required to run the computers and programs or with respect to the marketing wars being waged by the different Internet providers. One could also view the phenomenon of the Internet in relation to Western civilization’s technological superiority over the poorer third world nations. There are infinitely many ways to explore the Internet through analysis of its meaning content and, with such analysis, expand our knowledge of logical

determinations. New insights can be garnered from conceiving how, for example, the 'one and the many' as a category of thought can be related to 'force' and 'power' in new and philosophically fruitful ways.

Hegel mentions the 'philosophical method' in several places throughout his works. Philosophical, or speculative thinking relates mainly to the ways logical determinations interrelate and produce the meaning content of the events we experience and ideas we share throughout our lives. However, one can also argue that the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is a type of philosophical education where one moves from a more primitive consciousness of experience to a properly philosophical outlook. With regards to the method of speculative thinking and to the education conducted in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, it is fair to say that the "philosophical method is both analytic and synthetic, but not in the sense of a mere juxtaposing or a mere alternation of both these methods of finite cognition: instead, the philosophical method contains them sublated within itself, and therefore it behaves, in everyone of its movements, analytically and synthetically at the same time" (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.305 §238 add.). Thus, philosophy, according to Hegel, is active in assessing the content of ideas and it is also the act of bringing to a synthesis various meaning contents into a unity that is not static but dynamic.

The philosopher in some instances concentrates on one content and explores it with the full weight of the negative in her dealings with the content. In so doing the philosopher assesses how a logical determination moves and why it is only relatively valid as an all encompassing expression of the Idea. These points of relative validity also announce the arrival of the next logical determination which attempts to remedy the problems besetting the first, thus attempting

to express the Idea more soundly. This pattern of assessing the relative validity of a logical determination which in turn heralds the arrival of a thought determination not prone to the weaknesses of the first is also apparent in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* where, instead of logical determinations, it is shapes of consciousness which are assessed for their soundness.

Hegel contends that “thinking proceeds analytically in that it simply takes up its object, the Idea, and lets it go its own way, while it simply watches the movement and development of it, so to speak. To this extent philosophizing is wholly passive. But philosophical thinking is equally synthetic as well, and it proves to be the activity of the Concept itself” (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*.305 s.s.238 add.). Passive and active, philosophers in their work should, according to Hegel, be both.

How are philosophers passive and active in their work? A full account of the work that philosophers accomplish would take more time and space than is available to us here. But let me state briefly that if one accepts what Hegel has to say about the process that is the Idea, then philosophers are passive in that they perceive the self-articulation of the Concept. In this respect, what is really ‘active’ is the Concept, or thinking itself, and the philosopher witnesses society’s development. But philosophers also study and learn about the events that are shaping society, and in this way philosophers are active in applying what they know about the Idea and the categories of thought to derive meaning from those events. Thus, philosophers are co-producers of meaning. As was stated earlier, they have the special task of being the eyes, ears, and voice of the Concept—they are the ones who are aware of the thinking of Society.

As societies develop, so too do their institutions and ideals. Systems of government are

continuously updated, new technologies impact on the lives of citizens in often unforeseeable ways, economies grow progressively complex, and through all such development the philosopher is busy in her quest to assess meaning content. But where is this meaning to be found? As was stated earlier, meaning content can be discerned in 'thought' and one should not be dismayed by the apparent abstractness of the term. Thought *is* the updated system of government, it *is* the unforeseeable impact on our lives that new technologies produce, and it *is* the economy that grows more and more complex. In the debates that fuel such change in society and in the events that shape our lives as a result of those changes, the philosopher is continually reminded of the workings of the absolute Idea. As was mentioned earlier, logical determinations are not laws of thinking that stand above the world dictating how reality should be. Rather, society develops and in so doing certain categories of thinking will be stressed while others neglected. As a result of this bending and shaping of the system of logic, philosophers can not foretell what the future holds for society, for they cannot know which logical determinations and relationships between determinations will be accentuated and which overlooked. They can never tell what shape the logical Idea will assume though they recognize all of the determinations that comprise the system of logic.

### C: The Other

Earlier we mentioned the notion of the 'other'. Can a process that is dialectical be open to an other? This is an important question because it has bearings on the role philosophers play

in society. It directly affects their work. The Idea must by definition express every philosophical position that there may be. Indeed one of the tasks Hegel set for himself in drafting the *Phenomenology of Spirit* was to comment on the major movements in philosophy from the simplest sense certainty to more complex philosophical systems that deal with, for example, the thing-in-itself. Skepticism, romanticism, stoicism all can be found as moments of the absolute, which leads one to wonder: if all ideas are moments of the absolute then there can be no genuine other, for any other is really only the absolute in one of its many disguises.

William Desmond believes there is much to Hegel that is philosophically important, but he also adds that there are problems with a systematic philosophy that has the dialectic as its method of analysis. He argues,

The logic of dialectical self-mediation includes a reference to what is other, but also always ends by including that other as a subordinate moment within a more encompassing self-mediating whole. This dialectical inclusion precipitates one of the chief questions that occupies me: the issue of the limits of systematic philosophy itself, relative to its claims to comprehensiveness (Desmond, 2).

Desmond holds that according to this manner of construing philosophy as system, philosophers do not debate and analyze new ideas. Rather, philosophical activity is restricted to analyzing already known logical determinations in the new meaning content developed in society. This is not like either of the models that I have presented of logical determination development because there are no new insights into the ways in which the categories relate with one another to be gained. Rather, the content is examined with the intention of finding the already known logical determinations therein—an exercise in ensuring that everything is as it should be, rather than an

effort to develop our knowledge. The problem with Hegel's dialectical system, as Desmond sees it, is that "[t]he doubleness of the self and other is not fully recognized as the basis of a togetherness that is irreducibly plural; it becomes dialectically converted into a dualism that is to be mediated and included in a higher and more embracing process of self-mediation" (Desmond, 7). There can be no other to the Idea, Desmond contends, because any genuine other that attempts to assert itself is brought into the fold of the Idea under the rubric of a 'moment' in the absolute process. Rosen echoes Desmond's criticism by arguing that the "dialectical process of criticizing presuppositions is not open to criticism before the point of its completion; criticism of the system can always be shown to fall back into criticism *within* the enterprise of the system itself" (Rosen, 39). Does Hegel's philosophy, then, spell the end of philosophical debate and the sharing of ideas?

Hegel would disagree with the views expressed by both Desmond, and Rosen. Philosophy does attempt to ground all concepts in the Idea, but it is equally important for philosophers to remain aware of the distinctions between the concepts. Hegel asserts the importance of remaining aware of these distinctions in philosophic pursuits when he states, "it is precisely philosophy, and above all speculative logic, which exhibits the nullity of the mere identity that belongs to understanding, the identity that abstracts from distinction. This philosophy...also insists, to be sure, that we should not rest content with mere diversity but become cognizant of the inner unity of everything there is" (Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*, 184 §118 add.). Both contradiction and identity (unity) are essential to philosophy. The other is never completely subsumed into its opposite to the point of vanishing; on the contrary, the relationship

between an idea, or concept and its other is one of union in a higher ground. But even in their union they remain distinct.

Harris agrees with Hegel that speculative philosophy not only allows for an other, but requires it. He contends that

*A Begriff* is a circle. It comprehends its own opposite. Hence there is no more need for *sides*. We do not do speculative philosophy by opposing what ought to be thought to what is thought (or to the absence of thought). We let what *is* thought develop itself. What is thought usually has two sides to it; and since we are not (like Socrates) thinking against it, we must be sure that both sides receive a hearing (Harris, *Hegel's Ladder: Part I*.82).

The other is an essential moment in every stage of the logic, it is necessary for the process to develop itself. Thought in developing itself will, through the power of the negative, contrast itself to what is other. It is a mistake to think that Hegel's notion of other is devoid of thought content or that it is something that is non-thought. We are, thus, reminded of Hegel's essential goal in respect to his vision of speculative philosophy: to comprehend what thought is and how it moves.

Recall that for Hegel the "True is the whole" (Hegel, *Phenomenology*.11 §20). The whole grasped as process is what is true, but this whole, though it is complete, is capable of further articulation through the interrelating of logical determinations without losing its essential 'whole' nature. The reason why philosophers criticize Hegel for failing to include, in their opinion, a genuine 'other' in the process that is the Idea is because they feel frustrated at the manner in which the process assumes all sides of an argument. The flexibility of the process allows all sides the opportunity to speak—thus some philosophers may feel cheated because they

want their argument(s) to ‘oppose’ Hegel’s process in the sense of not being just another voice adopted into the chorus of the Idea like all the others. However, since Hegel is exploring thought any argument that is brought against him is going to be subsumed into the process, for the very reason that an ‘argument’ entails thought—that is what an argument is. Thus, arguments, opposing viewpoints, opinions, even laughter all express some thought content, some meaning that discloses something of the process that is the Idea. There is no ‘outside’ in the sense of a transcendent point beyond the Idea; all our ideas, flashes of inspiration, and theories are the process itself at work.

### Concluding Remarks

The science of logical categories is a complex one, and all of its many facets are worthy of much greater depth of analysis than I have provided here. However, any decent philosophical work should provoke more questions than provide answers. To that end I hope this paper proves an impetus for debate concerning the relevance of Hegel's logic in our present day philosophical discourse.

Why is it important to determine if and how logical categories develop? The answer stems from humankind's inherent desire to know. The system of logical categories is the essential structure of thought and, therefore, of reality. To investigate this system is to investigate the nature of reality.

By determining how logical categories develop we discover new insights into ourselves and our society. It may seem odd that the two, the system of logical determinations and our self-knowledge, are related but, as I have attempted to show throughout this thesis, they are very closely related. We discover in experiential events the interrelationships of logical categories; this in turn reveals which determinations are being stressed and which are being neglected by our ever restless society. This is important information because it discloses what concerns are occupying a society's consciousness and what trends are forming. Thus, logical determinations disclose the thinking of a society in the process of developing.

Philosophers are the eyes, ears, and voice of the thinking of society. Not everyone is

going to be interested in analyzing the meaning content in experiential events, but philosophers represent that portion of society that is in tune to the movement of the Idea. For them, every aspect of experience reveals some meaning content and, thus, some indication of the problems, concerns, and achievements of society. It is important for a society to know itself, for full knowledge of self entails freedom for self-determination.

We attend schools to improve ourselves through education, but the philosopher who does not come to realize that one is never out of school is undeserving of the title philosopher. Appreciation for all aspects of experience, for they all contribute to one's growth, is the true goal of the philosopher. The science of logical categories is incomplete in itself. What it requires is the continuous maintenance of the wide eyed curiosity of the child who finds wonder in everything and who gains a real sense of self-worth from having understood what role each thing plays in life. We should consider ourselves fortunate for always having something more to know.

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