As central to Hegel’s philosophy as the concept of thought is, it seems strange that there are only four relatively short paragraphs (§§465–68) devoted to it as the culmination of theoretical spirit. Hegel takes thinking to be the ultimate activity lying behind all worldly processes, responsible for the grand structure the world exhibits. But these paragraphs in the philosophy of subjective spirit are not an outline of that topic, to which Hegel devotes a great deal of space, for instance, in the Wissenschaft der Logik. However, in the philosophy of subjective spirit Hegel is concerned, not with Thought, the active substance of the world, but merely with thought, an ability possessed and exercised by individual human beings, the relation of which to Thought is open to discussion. Hegel claims that subjective thought and objective Thought are in reality one and the same, though admittedly in different forms.

In the first section below I restate the situation at the lowest level of thought. The second section is devoted to spelling out in greater detail what Hegel thinks goes on when we think, and in the third section we briefly discuss the transition to practical spirit, which does not concern the nature of thought itself so much as the relation between thought and will.

The Immediacy of Thought

“In the first instance, however, thinking cognition is formal; universality and its being is the simple subjectivity of intelligence. Thus
the thoughts are not determined as being in and for themselves, and the representations recollected as [or into] thought are still the given content” (§466, my tr.): thus the general situation at the end of the section on representation is stated. Spirit is taken as an abstract power standing over against a collection of words, which are the embodiment of or represent certain spiritual capacities. These words, the representations, are raised to the level of thought through a recollection. But insofar as this recollection is a kind of generalization in which we move behind the words to what is expressed in them—not subjectively (that would be a regression to an earlier stage of representation) but objectively (that is, for a hypothetical anyone who understood the words)—there are several things to be said about words recollected as thoughts.

First, such thoughts are merely abstract universals, not concrete universals. They are taken as sundered entities, each apart from all the others, and the individuals in which they are taken to be expressed are words, not the things themselves. They are not yet inner principles of activity, structural nodes organizing their local relatives to fit into a larger pattern. A concept can be understood itself to be a set of permissions, demands, and prohibitions on that power of unification which is thought in abstract generality. No concept can be an atomistic counter indifferent to the power of thought that manipulates it. Thought, therefore, must go beyond this initial abstract universal to develop the true concrete universal.

Second, thoughts here are in an important sense present to mind as merely given; that is, we find language already there and already cutting the world up a certain way. We do not invent the words we use, we learn them. We slowly learn the abstract connections between words and phrases as we learn to think. The creation of a new word for something previously unexpressible, when done consciously, is itself an act of highly sophisticated thought. The world generally seems to come to us prearticulated by our language, and we continue to see it in these terms unthinkingly most of our lives until we start theorizing, thinking in the strongest sense. The articulation of the world is taken to be a mere matter of fact for the most part, something given, but Hegel insists that all such articulation is ultimately generated out of the self-revealing nature of thought. Thought is active in subjectivity and in nature; it is not conscious of its own activity in nature; this activity is for itself
only in subjectivity. "In the first instance, thought knows the unity of the subjective and objective as wholly abstract and indeterminate, as merely a certain unity, which is neither filled nor confirmed. To this unity therefore, the determinateness of the rational content is still external and therefore given,—and cognition is therefore formal. Yet since this determinateness is implicitly contained in thinking cognition, this formalism contradicts it and is the therefore sublated by thought" (§466, Zusatz). The thinking spirit is convinced of the adequacy of its thought to the world. But at first this is an unreflective assumption; spirit merely finds its words fitting its experience. That thought and being are one is precisely the "determinateness of the rational content" that Hegel talks of here, for the "rational is the actual and the actual is the rational" (preface to the Philosophy of Right). But although at the opening level of spirit, spirit has this conviction, it is nothing but a conviction; spirit cannot back it up. Spirit's original conviction that its thoughts capture the world successfully does not result from its own thinking about thought and the world, and to this extent its claim to knowledge of the world is merely formal, awaiting fuller justification. The conviction that thought and being are one and that thought is adequate to the world is, according to Hegel, both the necessary assumption of the attitude of thought—its working hypothesis, as it were—and its ultimate result.

THE NATURE OF THOUGHT

Hegel compresses his theory of the essential structure of thinking activity into one paragraph, §467. In this culmination of the entire discussion of theoretical spirit, we find two lists of three levels within thought. What is the relation between these lists? They duplicate each other; there is one set of levels described with two different aspects highlighted. In the first list the distinction between form and content is retained; taking for granted thoughts as the "content" of thought as discussed in his previous paragraph, Hegel describes the increasingly adequate form into which these contents can be cast. Thus the first list gives us a description of the formal structure of thought. The second list is, I believe, a slightly more adequate statement, for it leaves the rather static and artificial dis-
tion of form and content behind, even as heuristic, and brings out more fully the activity that thought is.

The Formal Structure of Thought

Concepts

In respect of this content [An diesem Inhalte] thought is (1) formally identical understanding, which transforms the recollected representations into genera, kinds, laws, forces, etc., in general into the Categories, in the sense that the material first has its truth in these forms of thought. As negativity infinite in itself, thought is (2) essentially di-remption—judgment [Urtheil], which however no longer dissolves the concept into the previous opposition of universality and being but rather distinguishes it [or divides it] according to the connections peculiar to the concept, and (3) thought sublates the form-determinations and at the same time posits the identity of the differences;—formal reason, syllogizing understanding. (§467, my tr.)

We start with “recollected representations,” which I have maintained to be abstract universals, each isolated from all others. Through thought these representations are “processed” or “transformed” [verarbeitet] into genera, kinds, laws, and forces. What does this mean exactly? Three questions arise: (a) How are they transformed, what happens to them in this transformation? (b) what exactly is it they are transformed or worked up into? (c) What is the common element of genera, laws, and so forth which makes this transformation one process rather than many?

We have seen that the recollected representations are generalizations of a range of sophisticated capacities of spirit, the capacities to call up certain images and words. They are generalized in the sense that the particular idiosyncrasies of individuals have been discounted. In other terms, the representations are unities within certain activities and potentialities of individual subjective spirits. The recollected representations that are thoughts, however, are unities of such activities and potentialities within subjective spirit in general, that is, intersubjectively and objectively. The capacities of spirit embodied in thought are not all entirely separated from one another. They exhibit certain interconnections, although spirit has not yet become aware of these interconnections. There are
patterns of cooccurrence, or permissible association, for instance, and the transformation undergone in understanding is our coming to awareness of these patterns in consciousness. As we then seek to explain and, more important, to justify these patterns, the associations are no longer mere instances of a pattern but become examples of explicit rule following. This appears first in the imposition of structured connections on the formerly discrete units in thought. One such structure is the partial ordering of genus and species. Thought now sees all its objects as essentially participating in such ordering structures. This is the first step in the overcoming of the atomism of the standpoint of abstract, formal thought, but it is only the first step, and the relations focused on tend to be highly abstract and are thought of as affecting the relata only minimally.

We have already before us most of the material for answering our second question, namely, what kind of thing the representations are transformed into. Today we think of genera and kinds as very different from laws and forces, categorically different. But Hegel did not think this, for he focused on their common character as modally laden relations of a one over a many. The one, the genus, kind, law, necessitates certain characteristics in the manifold that falls under it. The application of one of these concepts necessitates applying certain other concepts, and thus these concepts can be seen as structuring the conceptual realm, unifying our concepts into a coherent scheme. Concepts are no longer merely contingently associated with each other; they are now seen as modally related. This systematization and unification of our concepts are the activity of the concept of a concept in one of its manifestations, the essential activity of spirit.

Judgments

From the systematic classification of concepts by the understanding it is not far to progress to their explicitly asserted interconnection in a judgment, although Hegel would complain that many philosophers before him misunderstood the nature of such assertion. Judgment in Hegel's eyes is not merely the assertion of a relation between two independent and indifferent things; this is precisely the view of the nature of judgment which must be overcome, which is mired too deeply in the theory of the abstract universal.
Hegel emphasizes that judgment is a kind of distinguishing by playing on the etymological structure of the German *Urteil*—"original or primordial division or partition."¹ Hegel does not believe that judgmental structure applies only to certain subjective acts of mind:

The judgment is usually taken in a subjective sense as an operation and a form occurring merely in self-conscious thought. This distinction, however, is not present in Logic, and judgment is taken in the quite universal signification that all things are a judgment. That is to say, they are individuals, which are a universality or inner nature in themselves—a universal that is individualized. Their universality and individuality are distinguished, but the one is at the same time identical with the other. (*El* §167, my tr.)

The self-individualization of the concrete universal is a judgment. Since it is the very nature of the concrete universal to have its being in individual existents, it is of the essence of the concrete universal to develop itself in judgments. Individuals possess judgmental structure in that they realize a universal. There are no bare particulars in the world. Indeed, individuals always realize a multitude of universals, so there is no such thing as a purely simple thing in the world. Not only are individuals complex, but even their complexity is complex, with different aspects contributing to the complex in different ways. Thus a plant may be of a particular kind, say a rose, and its being both plant and rose is one kind of complexity. The plant may also have certain parts, such as roots, flowers, and leaves, and this is another sort of complexity. The flowers may be of a certain color, say red, and this is still another sort of complexity. The individual realizes different universals, but not all of the universals it realizes are equal. Some are essentially abstract, others are concrete; the judgments through which the individual and the universal are distinguished in each case are different. Hegel’s theory of judgment is a theory of the different ways the individual and the universal are distinguished and unified.

It is easy to forget that according to Hegel judgment is as much a feature or structure of objective reality as of the subjective. Individ-

uals and universals are essentially related in both realms. To forget
that everything objective is a judgment is to fall into the metaphys-
ic error of believing in bare particulars, platonic universals, and so
forth. To separate the subjective concept from the judgmental con-
texts in which it can occur is to fall into the theory of the abstract
universal, which renders all judgmental structure arbitrary.²

There is no room here for a treatment of Hegel’s full theory of
judgment as it appears in his Logics, but its outlines emerge rela-
tively easily from what we have said already. We have already
noted that judgment can be viewed as the unfolding of the neces-
sary complexity of a concrete universal, and that even this complex-
ity is complex. Hegel’s theory of judgment is an attempt to regiment
the kinds of complexity in the individualization of a concrete uni-
versal, ranking them in accordance with their ability to express the
original structural unity of the concept.

There are two different contrasts involved in Hegel’s ranking of
judgments. First, not everything propositional qualifies as a judg-
ment, for Hegel distinguishes between judgments and proposi-
tions:

A judgment [Urteil] is however distinguished from a proposition
[Satz]. The latter contains a statement about the subject, which does
not stand to it in any universal relationship but expresses some single
action, or some state, or the like. Thus “Caesar was born at Rome in
such and such a year, waged war in Gaul for ten years, crossed the
Rubicon, etc.” are propositions but not judgments. Again it is absurd
to say that such statements as “I slept well last night” or “Present
arms!” may be turned into the forms of a judgment. “A carriage is
passing by” would be a judgment, and a subjective one at best, only if
it were doubtful whether the passing object was a carriage or whether
it and not rather the point of observation was in motion:—in short,
only if it were desired to specify a representation which was still short
of appropriate specification. (EL §167)

Hegel says something similar about the distinction in the Wissen-
schaft der Logik, adding that a judgment “requires that the predicate

². The empiricists are particularly subject to this danger. Although they all leave
some room for trivial knowledge or relations of ideas, any nonanalytic judgment
tends to be conceived by them as a mere association of ideas, which, as Kant saw,
dooms their attempt to understand human knowledge or human mental activity.
be related to the subject as one concept determination to another, and therefore as a universal to a particular or individual” (SL, p. 626; WdL, vol. 2, p. 267). He adds that there is “something of a judgment in a proposition” when the fact expressed by the proposition is placed in doubt (repeating here a remark in the Encyclopedia) and the proposition is “asserted on the strength of some reason or other.”

It seems that this distinction is one of degree, not kind [see also SL, p. 683; WdL, vol. 2, p. 330], although perhaps Hegel thought that there was some break dividing the sentences into genuinely different kinds. Whether a sentence is a judgment or a proposition is not solely dependent on its grammatical form but also on the job it performs in its context. A mere statement of contingent fact is only a proposition; an attempt to theorize or explain is a judgment. Some sentences appear more naturally in theorizing contexts and carry with them, as it were, a lot of theoretical machinery because of their content; these are most clearly judgments, better realizations of judgment per se. And statements that might easily be immediate statements of fact, made in a context in which they are results of inferences, approximate judgments because of their theoretical content. The raising of a representation to thought and the raising of a proposition to a judgment are quite similar in nature, I believe. Although informed with the grammatical structures of thinking, propositions are at the level of representation and share with that level the concern with individuality per se; yet, because they use the grammatical structure of judgment (by using the copula), they give evidence of the presence even in representation of the power of the Concept. Insofar as the representer has gone beyond the occurrence of mere lists of names within its mind—and without seeing through to the inner connection of the particular things it represents to itself still wants to assert the existence of a particularly close tie or bond between them—it uses the grammatical structure of the judgment. The awareness that there are associations of representations and then that some are of a different sort from others is already the first step toward thought, and widely different strata all find some accommodation, more or less adequate to the level of the content, in the grammatical forms of judgment.

Hegel also draws a distinction between truth, or adequacy to the Idea, and correctness. A judgment is correct when it is an idealization of what is exemplified in a particular individual thing or state of affairs.
Truth, on the contrary, lies in the coincidence of the object with itself, that is, with its concept. That a person is sick, or that someone has committed a theft, may certainly be correct. But the content is untrue. A sick body is not in harmony with the concept of body, and there is a want of congruity between theft and the concept of human conduct. These instances may show that an immediate judgment, in which an abstract quality is predicated of an immediately individual thing, however correct it may be, cannot contain truth. The subject and predicate of it do not stand to each other in the relation of reality and concept. (§EL172, Zusatz)

A judgment is true according to Hegel, we may say, when it is an idealization of the concept. He would find our use of “true” in the phrase “a true friend” a perfect illustration of his intent.

At the lowest end of the judgmental spectrum we find qualitative judgments, by which Hegel means judgments in which some abstract universal is predicated of an individual:

To say “This rose is red” involves (in virtue of the copula “is”) the coincidence of subject and predicate. The rose however is a concrete thing, and so is not red only; it has an odour, a specific form, and many other features not implied in the predicate red. The predicate on its part is an abstract universal, and does not apply to the rose alone. There are other flowers and other objects which are red too. The subject and predicate in the immediate judgment touch as it were, only in a single point, but do not cover each other. (§172, Zusatz)

Hegel admits that such simple judgments may be correct; he does not consider them true. But insofar as in the judgmental form the universal and the individual are, though sundered, still connected, we have not simply “dissolved . . . the concept into the previous opposition of universality and being” (§467). The articulation of the concept in accordance with its own natural internal structure increases as we progress through the ranked forms of judgment.

According to Hegel, the judgmental relation, through its development, starts to approach a consequence relation, for we unfold a concept by seeing what follows from its use and from what other concepts it follows. Concepts are determined by their logical relations with other concepts, so the self-determining of a concept in judgment must take place through the specification of such logical relations. But although some logical relation is stated in the judg-
ment, it is not *supported* within the judgment but simply given by or in the judgment. To this extent the relation given in a judgment is external and appears as a merely given necessity. These modes of relation are what is expressed in the copula. Hegel says that the copula expresses the *identity* of the subject and the predicate, but this is misleading to us, for he means not numerical identity but identity within the concept; the subject and the predicate are themselves but moments of one (self-identical) concept. The development of the judgment is not only from correctness-incorrectness to truth but also from the copula as the merely implicit identity of subject and predicate to the explicit identity of the two in a unifying third. Identity statements are not Hegel’s ideal judgments; correct, justified attributions of essences are.

Unity in a third is a necessary condition for the judgment’s being an “objective connectedness.” In his attempt to answer Hume within the limits of an atomistic psychology, Kant developed the analytic-synthetic distinction to isolate the problem of combination, for this is where Hume’s focus also lay. Analytic judgments were uninteresting to Kant in general because there was no *new* combination; the predicate was supposedly already contained in the subject. But Hegel considers the separation as important as the combination, perhaps even more so.

Kant focused on the need for a third thing X to ground the combination of representations in a true, objective synthetic judgment. Hegel seizes this insight and generalizes it, maintaining that the copula is the representative for an implicit third that grounds both the combination and the separation in any judgment. According to Kant, in any a priori synthetic judgment the third that grounds the combination is the transcendental unity of apperception. Hegel reinterprets the transcendental unity of apperception as his Concept, and therefore a judgment is, according to Hegel, something in which the concepts are combined and separated “in virtue of the necessary unity” of the Concept (to paraphrase Kant; *Critique of Pure Reason*, B142). A judgment combines concepts according to the structure of the Concept, the concrete universal, and, to the extent to which the judgment adequately reflects that structure, it is true. Hegel goes further than Kant by insisting that all judgments be combinations grounded in a third thing. Those that are not, such as “A lion is a lion,” are not really judgments (§173). Take, for example, what Hegel calls judgments of necessity (§177),
such as "Man is an animal," which might well be thought analytic. Hegel would point out that man and animal are not immediately and emptily identical, but rather that man is a mammal and mammals are animals, and that neither of these two links is an immediate link itself. The concept of man may in some sense contain that of animal, but only mediately, because men are mammals. The concept of mammal not only ties the other two together but also separates them, for not all animals are mammals.

Every judgment leaves itself open to question, as do all things that appear merely given, and this question is answered by showing that the judgment is grounded. This ground is a third thing that mediates the relation of the subject and the predicate. Only in the ultimate stage of judgment is this third thing made explicit, but it is implicitly present throughout. Abstractly taken, this third is the Concept itself, as we have seen, but according to its own nature this must particularize itself and appear as a determinate unifying concept: "What has been really made explicit is the oneness of subject and predicate, is the concept itself, filling up the empty 'is' of the copula. While its constituent elements are at the same time distinguished as subject and predicate, the concept is put as their unity, as the connection which serves to intermediate them: in short, as the syllogism" (§180, Wallace tr., adapted). Ideally, two concepts are objectively linked in a judgment, according to Hegel, not when one is contained in another, but when both are moments of a third; this is the structure we should expect to find in philosophical propositions. Two concepts are objectively linked in a judgment when they are brought to unity in a third concept.

According to Hegel's notion of judgmental connection, any judgment implies a whole systematic network of concepts behind it and supporting it; full knowledge of a concept is a knowledge of all its conceptual relations.

The final level of judgment Hegel calls the judgment of the concept, a judgment in which the individual is assessed relative to its kind. The highest form within this level Hegel calls the apodictic judgment, although it is certainly not what was normally so called. In it the ground or reason for the assessment is also made explicit. ³

³ Perhaps he calls it apodictic because "apodictic" literally means "shown" or "demonstrated."
Thus "This rose, as fulfilling criteria (X, Y, Z), is beautiful" would count as such a judgment. "All things are a genus (their determination and end) in an individual actuality of a particular constitution. And they are finite, because the particular in them may and also may not conform to the universal" (§179). This apodictic judgment is the highest form of judgment, for it is the fullest realization of the judgmental structure implicit in the concept. The three moments of the concept, individuality, particularity, and universality, are all explicitly stated in their relations to one another. The apodictic judgment can be both correct and true, for it gets to the very heart of the matter, articulating the very essence of the thing.

Hegel believes it fully possible, indeed necessary, that in general things do not ideally embody their essences or concepts. Thus, when confronted with the booming, buzzing confusion and complexity of nature, he does not infer that the order characterized by our theorizing activity is merely imposed from without, or that the recalcitrant examples that do not fit our theoretical categories are always indications of a failure in our theory. At some point he is willing to assign the fault to nature itself; it is the "impotence" of nature that it cannot adequately embody the Concept and is prey to contingency. Thus each individual thing, although a realization of some concept or other, and thus determined through the activity of the concept, is also subject to an indeterminate range of other external influences and thus is not determined solely by its concept. Only in pure thought does a concept determine itself alone, and in pure thought a concept is an ideal.

This seems a very peculiar doctrine, for we immediately want to say that the last thing an inquirer has a right to do is toss off troublesome cases as bad or untrue simply because they do not fit a theory. But there is more to Hegel's move than blunder. It is precisely this doctrine of the imperfection of nature that allows Hegel to maintain the ideal of a rational system of the world without falling into the trap of thinking that therefore every aspect of the world (including Krug's pen) should be a priori deducible on the basis of purely a priori rational considerations.

When confronted with the extreme and recalcitrant confusion in nature, there seem to be several possible attitudes we can take. (a) There is no order in nature; all is chaos. This seems unacceptable, for then nothing is understandable, especially the fact that we do
understand much about nature. (b) There is no order in nature; an order is imputed to nature by us. But then, Hegel would argue, our "knowledge" of nature is only appearance, and not knowledge; this is too Kantian a solution for Hegel and smacks of the thing-in-itself. (c) There is a complete order in nature, but it is deeply hidden. This still does not account for our present knowledge of nature, and it allows the deduction of Krug's pen if we ever gain knowledge of the order of nature. Finally, (d) there is an order in nature, but order only imperfectly realized. Thus we can have real knowledge of nature, yet certainly we cannot deduce Krug's pen. "Perfection" here has teleological underpinnings, and if we rid our concept of nature of all vestiges of teleology, this alternative becomes senseless to us (as it probably has).

From another point of view we can note that, if one has a very good theory about some range of phenomena, one often throws away or otherwise dismisses some conflicting or recalcitrant data as spurious. Hegel is, in effect, elevating such a pragmatic methodological maxim into a constitutive principle, for he is ready to accept the possibility that in the long run the ideal theory could be developed and yet not account for everything natural, that a classification scheme could be ideal, for instance, even though there were anomalies. Hegel wants us to take the fact that there will always be a discrepancy between theory and nature as a necessary truth, and he attributes the shortcoming to nature, not to theory. It is the mark of nature and the natural to be less than ideal.

Is there not a danger in this Hegelian view? It seems all too easy to relax one's scientific vigilance. At what point in our investigation of nature are we justified in claiming that further attempts at a new theory are neither necessary nor sensible—not merely for economic or pragmatic reasons but for intrinsic theoretical reasons? Perhaps Hegel would reply that the natural (and social?) sciences could not reach such a point, and that this is itself an example of a bad infinite, a going on endlessly. This response would make sense within his system, for one of the imperfections of nature is that the true infinity of the concept, the infinite return into self, is never fully realized in nature. There we find only bad infinites. It would, then, be fully appropriate that the sciences of nature be subject themselves to infinite progression toward adequacy.

It is crucial to remember that the sciences of nature are not the
highest forms of knowledge for Hegel. The highest forms of knowl-
edge, religion and philosophy, are in principle and in fact perfect-
able, and it is from the point of view of philosophy, not science, that
we evaluate nature as imperfect. This position still diverges widely
from philosophical beliefs held today, and again it is Hegel's accep-
tance of a teleological worldview that is the foundation of the differ-
ence. Empirical science is not, however, dispensable according to
Hegel. Empirical science tries to build a theory of the world from the
bottom up and is doomed to be caught in the infinite detail and
complexity of nature. Philosophy constructs a theory of the whole
from the top down, but it can never reach the individual per se. The
complete enquirer must follow both paths.

Whatever we think of the doctrine of the necessarily imperfect
realization of concepts in nature, its counterpoint is played by the
document of the possibility of perfect "realization" of concepts in
mind—the doctrine of the self-determination of the concept in
thought. Natural things are imperfect because what they are does
not depend on or is not explainable solely on the basis of their
concept. Men are different because they have different heritages,
live in different environments; these differences are all indifferent
to the concept of man and account for the contingent variation in
men and the impossibility of a perfect exemplar of the species. But a
concept in a subjectivity is in a slightly different position from the
concept as realized in nature. A concept is realized in nature by an
individual that simultaneously realizes an infinite number of other
concepts, even if ultimately subordinated to the most essential
concept. Some of the concepts may not be compatible with the
others, thus forcing change and ultimately finiteness and destruc-
tion on the thing.

In mind each concept is individualized abstractly. It is the great
contribution of the abstractive powers of representation and under-
standing to thus isolate the individuality of concepts. Working with
these "given" concepts as material, intelligence as pure thought is
the activity of reconstituting the purely conceptual links and rela-
tions between them. Since they are purely conceptual and deter-
mined by the concepts themselves, the relations discovered (or
reconstructed) in thought are modalized.

Since in pure thought concepts appear in their abstract individu-
ality rather than their concrete and complex individuality, they
need no longer be involved in contingent, arbitrary relations, as they are often in nature or in Vorstellung. Pure thought perceives only those relations between concepts which are intrinsically involved in the concepts. Thus removed from the imperfection and recalcitrance of nature and representation, the concepts are realized as ideals. We have realized the true concept of man when we know what the ideal man is.

**Inferences**

The mediated relation of one concept to another is a syllogism according to Hegel, and just as a concept has its "truth" in judgment, so does judgment have its "truth" in the syllogism, which makes explicit what is the implicit nature of the judgment. We turn to the role of the syllogism, of formal inference, in Hegel's theory of mental activity.

As much as Hegel may have disliked the traditional Aristotelian logic, he was still mightily under its sway in his consideration of the formal aspect of thought, and this is particularly evident in his discussion of the syllogism. It seems that what Hegel really has in mind is a general theory of our forms of inference; the German *schluß* can as well mean "inference" pure and simple as "syllogism," and under this rubric Hegel discusses inductive and analogical reasoning as well as the deductive, three-termed syllogism. Working within the confines of the rather narrow understanding of formal logic available at the time, Hegel constructs an interpretation of the significance of inference and a rank ordering of kinds of syllogisms which we must find quite strained. Yet it is masterfully woven into his philosophical system and reflects the structures and themes dominant in the system in a rather natural way.

What Hegel would have to say in reaction to the richness of contemporary logic—not just the logic of Russell and Whitehead's *Principia Mathematica* but also modal logics, many-valued logics, logics of relevance and entailment, intuitionistic logic, paraconsistent logics—we shall never know. Hegel's mind was certainly keen

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4. When we talk here of an intrinsic relation between concepts we do not have in mind the Leibnizian ideal of analysis into simple natures. The picture that seems to me best to capture Hegel's vision here is rather that of a set of nodes in a net, each of which is identified solely by its relations to the other nodes.
enough for him to have realized that these developments would motivate a fundamental rethinking of much of his system. Perhaps the most significant difference between the logic that Hegel knew and contemporary logic is that, whereas Aristotelian logic is through and through a logic of terms, the fundamental level of virtually every branch of contemporary logic is propositional. Today terms are always introduced in a more complex logic on a propositional base. What Hegel would have thought of this change we can only guess. Would he take our systems as expressing more adequately the relations between concept, judgment, and inference, or less? But such speculation is not to the point here; rather, by pointing out this difference we can bring to the fore a feature of Hegel’s interpretation of the syllogism that might otherwise confuse us. We think of inferential relations as obtaining between propositions (or sentences, or statements, or what have you). Due to his confinement to a logic of terms, Hegel thinks of the inferential relation as obtaining at the basic level between terms, as being a more complex connection between terms than the judgmental relation. The term is the all important piece in the logical puzzle, and finding the right term, the right concept, is like finding the passkey that will unlock the nature of the world by permitting inferential access from every part of it to the whole in terms of which it can be understood.

The syllogism is, then, seen by Hegel as an interrelation of concepts. In judgment in general we also find an interrelation of concepts, but this is, Hegel claims, quite a rigid relation, each term of the judgment seemingly independent in its own right of the other and possessed of certain formal characteristics that distinguished it unfailingly from the other term. Thus one term, say the subject, is formally determined as a universal or a particular, and therefore as formally of a distinct kind from the first. In the syllogism, however, “thought sublates the determination of form and at the same time posits the identity of differences” (§467). This is best exemplified by the middle term of a syllogism, which occupies (standardly) both the subject and the predicate positions in different premises. The form determinations of the concepts are sublated still further in that the premises in which the middle term occurs can also be premises or conclusions in further syllogisms, where the former middle term has become an extreme, that is, a major or minor term.

In the syllogism, the full systematicity of our conceptual net
Hegel's Theory of Mental Activity

comes to the fore explicitly, and the lesson Hegel draws from his understanding of syllogistic is about the nature of concepts. Concepts are individual, differentiated among themselves, excluding one another; they are particulars, that is, specifications of a higher universal; and they are universals, having species and ultimately individuals under them. These are the moments of the Concept, and in the syllogism they are all brought to a unity, the unity of the Concept. A concept starts its unfolding in judgment but completes it and shows its true structure in syllogisms.

The syllogism has been taken comformably to the distinctions which it contains; and the general result of the course of their evolution has been to show that these differences work out their own abolition and destroy the concept's outwardness to its own self. And, as we see, in the first place, 1) each of the moments has proved itself the systematic whole of these elements, in short a whole syllogism,—they are consequently implicitly identical. In the second place 2) the negation of their distinctions and of the mediation of one through another constitutes independency [Fürsichsein]; so that it is one and the same universal which is in these forms, and which is in this way also explicitly put as their identity. In this ideality of its moments, the syllogistic process may be described as essentially involving the negation of the characters through which its course runs, as being a mediative process through the suspension of mediation,—as coupling the subject not with another, but with a suspended other, in one word, with itself. (EL §192, Wallace tr.)

The syllogism shows that every concept is implicitly a system of conceptual relations; the concept comes to its truth in the syllogism. In the syllogism, in our abilities to infer, we idealize most adequately the complex structures exemplified in the world: "Everything is a syllogism. Everything is a concept, the existence of which is the differentiation of its members or functions, so that the universal nature of the concept gives itself external reality by means of particularity, and thereby, and as negative reflection-into-self, makes itself an individual. Or, conversely; the actual thing is an individual, which by means of particularity rises to universality and makes itself identical with itself” (EL §181, Wallace tr., adapted).

In the syllogism, concepts are brought to an articulated unity. But the unity given in any one syllogism presupposes other such uni-
ties. This sequence of pro-syllogisms could go on and on, but Hegel would call such an infinite progression a bad infinite (not a vicious regress, which it clearly is not). Reason refuses to remain content with the bad infinite and conceives instead the true infinite, the totality of conditions which is itself unconditioned. There must be, according to reason, an overarching unity, for reason, the great unifier, is self-reflective. The ideal lying behind the syllogism, then, is that of the articulated totality, the ultimate unity of all things in one system. This, the totality of conditions, is the unconditioned, the absolute. Here, obviously, Hegel joins battle with Kant. Kant saw that reason, the syllogizing faculty, has an innate urge to push onward to the unconditioned, the totality of conditions. But, he claimed, since such a totality can never possibly be given to our sense experience, and since knowledge is possible only through the conjoining of sense experience and thought, we can never claim knowledge of the totality of conditions. Kant is willing to grant the idea of the unconditioned totality of conditions (of which he thought there were three subspecies) a regulative role in the use of our reason.

The status of the unconditioned, together with the problem of the thing-in-itself, forms the major point of contention between Hegel and Kant, but the issues in this debate are so complex that we cannot hope to do them justice here. Kant, following his empiricist bent, rejects all ontological claims of the Ideas of reason because the Ideas transcend possible experience; Hegel, with his opposing rationalist bent, considers their transcendence of possible subjective experience to be a strength ontologically. Perhaps the most straightforward way to state the disagreement is as follows. As regulative principles, the Kantian Ideas are maxims for action, prescriptions, oughts. But they are not constitutive, and they represent ideals that can never be fulfilled, maxims that prescribe an impossible task. But, as Kant himself so strikingly pointed out, ought implies can. Kant seems stuck with a dilemma, an internal inconsistency, one that he escapes by saying that what is commanded is striving for the ideal, not achieving it. But this seems hollow to Hegel, like telling a midget to strive for a professional basketball career. According to Hegel such infinite striving is simply empty; an end without end is no end at all. Hegel’s proposed solution is clear: ought does imply can, and the Ideas of reason (which Hegel unifies in his own one
Idea) as the in principle achievable task or object of rational thought are not merely regulative, they are what is in and for itself, what is real.

For Hegel, to think is to transcend sensation toward universality and necessity. The fact that through reason we pose ourselves an object that transcends all possible sense experience shows that here we have finally freed ourselves from the immediacy of sensation—finally begun to think purely: "The rise of thought beyond the world of sense, its passage from the finite to the infinite, the leap into the super-sensible which it takes when it snaps asunder the chain of sense, all this transition is thought and nothing but thought. Say there must be no such passage, and you say there is to be no thinking" (EL §50, Wallace tr.). This does not mean that Hegel thinks we can achieve the ideal scientific theory of natural phenomena; for reasons we have already discussed, the theory of nature is open to infinite refinement on Hegel's view. But philosophy studies thought itself, the universal and necessary structure of the world, and furthermore comprehends the ideal of thought, which is knowledge of the absolute, the unconditioned, itself none other than thought. Hegel's system, as has been noted before, seems to pull itself up by its own bootstraps. But since thought is not itself an item in our sensory experience, it is necessary to transcend sense experience if thought is to comprehend itself, if it is to be thought at all.

There is another way we can put this dispute. C. D. Broad suggests that there are two fundamental principles in Kant's discussion of the proofs for the existence of God, the Ideal of Pure Reason. First, if anything exists, something must exist in its own right; or, not everything derives its existence from something else. This principle has found acceptance among philosophers since Parmenides. Second, it is not possible that the existence of anything should be a necessary consequence of its nature or definition. Kant's resolution of the conflict is to make both principles regulative (although, as Broad points out, he need only have made one regulative). Hegel rejects that solution and instead accepts the first principle and denies the second outright. His reason for doing so is that, whereas the second holds of natures and definitions abstractly conceived,

that is, conceived as abstract universals, it is simply false of the concrete universal (see SL, pp. 705–8; WdL, vol. 2, pp. 353–57).\(^6\)

The Nature of Thinking Activity

I have discussed the first list given in §467 in some detail, so the discussion of the second list can be shorter. As I have said, the second list focuses on the activity of theoretical spirit. It is thus a more adequate description of the actuality of thinking, yet we have covered most of the ground already in our extensive discussion of the first list.

Intelligence cognizes as thinking. Indeed, a) if the understanding explains the singular from its own universalities (the categories), it is called self-comprehending; b) if the understanding explains it [the singular] as a universal (genus, kind) in a judgment, then the content appears in this form as given. c) However, in a syllogism the understanding determines the content from itself in that it sublates the distinction of forms. The last immediacy that remains attached to formal thinking disappears with the insight into necessity. (§467, my tr.)

What first strikes our attention is that Hegel consistently uses the word "explain" (erklären) to describe the activity involved in thought. Hegel adopts a rather Aristotelian view of explanation, recognizing different "why" questions in answer to which explanations can be given. But he gives pride of place to teleological explanation, for it is a form of explanation grounded in the concept of the thing explained; it alone relies on intrinsic necessities. The philosophical theory of the world is a teleological theory, and only such a theory, according to Hegel, could count as a philosophical explanation of the nature of the world.\(^7\)

Some parts of this second list seem confusing. If the understanding tries to get at something's concept, to explain the singular thing

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6. Applied to the ontological argument, though, Hegel's position begs the question, for he has not demonstrated the correctness of his theory of the concrete universal.
by means of "its own [the understanding's] universalities (the categories)," what is it doing, and why does this count as "comprehending itself"? First, Hegel seems to reserve the term "categories" for the concepts of the objective logic, Being and Essence, so he is here talking of explaining something in terms of its qualities, quantities, relations, and so forth. This certainly seems straightforward enough; but how does this result in understanding's comprehending itself? We have already seen that Hegel's theory is a version of the macrocosm-microcosm view; intelligence has reconstructed the world within itself, and understanding any part of the world, it is also in part understanding its own activity in reconstruction. The categories are generic rules by which it operates, and knowing how to apply them is a form of understanding, just as knowing how to use the tools properly is a form of understanding construction work. And, of course, the categories are themselves the product of intelligence; to understand them, understanding must understand itself in its product. The formulation Hegel gives the last part of this paragraph in the 1827 edition of the *Encyclopedia* bears this out: "In that it comprehends, intelligence has the determinedness which in its sensation is at first sight an immediate material, in itself as simply its own. In the insight into the necessity of the content first given to thought itself, the course of its own activity is, for intelligence, identical with the implicit being of the determinedness of the content, intelligence being for itself as determining" (*PSS*, vol. 3, pp. 221–23).

This passage also brings out the important fact that Hegel believes that, in thinking, the activity of the mind is "identical" with the "implicit being" of the determinateness [*an sich seyenden Bestimmtheit*] of what is thought about. Hegel takes it to be the case that the structure of thought is the structure of the world. All things are judgments; all things are syllogisms, according to Hegel. The structural relations discernible in the activity of thought are the same as the ontological structures of the world. There is, however, no argument here for this position; such an "argument" is the burden of the *Logik* and of the system as a whole.

In §467 Hegel encapsulates a vision of the nature of man's theoretical activity. We begin with a confrontation with the individual facts and entities of the world, yet this is not a mute acceptance, for they have been raised to exemplars of the universal, they belong to kinds. This point is made explicit in the second stage of thought,
judgment. The content of thought still *appears* to be *given* here, insofar as we are still making explicit the interconnections between the universals, which universals appear otherwise independent of each other. An example of this kind of approach might be taking "mass" to be an independent concept that can enter into different theories, such as the Newtonian or Einsteinian, without being intrinsically affected in any way.

This point of view is superseded at the highest level of thought, where our awareness of the importance of the inferential connections among our concepts is explicit. Even the universals through which we first grasped the individual facts and entities are now seen to be specifications of the one universal activity of thinking. Thought is to this extent a closed system, adapting itself to itself, giving itself its own structure. By dealing thus only with itself, building within itself a pure system of relations, thought has transcended all particular content and all immediacy, achieving "insight into necessity."

This final stage is not, one must realize, a form of a special science; it is not an empirical scientific theory of an aspect of nature, nor of nature as a whole. It is the unitary, philosophical theory of how things in the broadest sense hang together. A scientific theory, which must have some particular subject matter, never achieves this exalted status, for it always depends on some form of given, something that spirit merely finds before it. Only in the theory that unifies not only the particular phenomena of nature but also religious, ethical, and aesthetic phenomena and, perhaps most important, philosophical theorizing itself into one complete picture of the world-whole is all particular content transcended. By transcending all particular content, philosophical theorizing is left with only the universal content: thought. Philosophy, like the absolute, thinks thought. The goal of pure thought is the comprehensive knowledge of itself, of the conceptual articulation of the world, of which it is itself an aspect and of which it is the goal. Its method is pure inference, taking everything offered to it and following out all its consequences (where deductive inferences are the most trivial and least important form of reaching consequences).

The universal is known here as self-particularizing and as collecting itself together from the particularization into singularity—or, which is the same—as the particular reduced from its independence to being a
moment of the concept. Accordingly, the universal is no longer external to the content here, but is rather the veritable form that produces the content out of itself—the self-developing concept of the subject-matter [Sache]. Thinking, therefore, has at this point no other content than itself, than its own determinations, which constitute the immanent content of the form. Thinking seeks and finds in the object [Gegenstand] only itself. The object is therefore distinguished from thinking only in that it has the form of being, of subsisting for itself. Thus thinking stands here in a perfectly free relationship to the object [Objekt]. (§467, Zusatz, my tr.)

The goal of thought is the construction of a completely self-contained, self-explanatory conceptual system, one identical with the conceptual articulation of the world itself. The explanations that this system will afford, however, are not deductive arguments in which a particular event, property, or object is shown to be necessary; they are teleological, interpretive "makings sense of" particular aspects of the world. Philosophy will never allow us to predict the course of the world or its individual events, but it should enable us to understand in retrospect how it all hangs together. Through philosophy we gain a vision of the whole through which the individual parts make sense. But this vision metaphor must be handled gingerly, for the perceiver is normally distinct from the perceived. The "vision" of the whole gained through philosophy can only be achieved by identifying with that whole; our "vision" is better called a re-creation: "In this thinking that is identical to its object [Gegenstand] intelligence achieves its completion, its goal, for it is then in fact what, in its immediacy, it was only supposed to be—self-knowing truth, self-recognizing reason. This mutual self-penetration of thinking subjectivity and objective reason is the result of the development of theoretical spirit through the stages of intuition and representation that precede pure thinking" (§467, Zusatz, my tr.).

**The Transition to Practical Spirit**

Although the internal re-creation of the structure of the whole is the culmination of theoretical spirit, it is of course not the final end
to the story, for theoretical spirit develops into practical spirit, which transition is the topic of §468: "Intelligence, knowing itself to be the determinant of the content, which is determined as its own no less than as being, is will." Concepts are ideals, and the theorizing activity of spirit produces knowledge of ideals. In particular, spirit's self-knowledge is a knowledge of its own ideal nature. Intrinsic to the notion of an ideal, however, is that it is a goal to be pursued, and the knowledge of its ideal which results from spirit's theoretical activity necessarily culminates in practical activity.

Pure thinking is, to begin with, a disinterested (unbefangenes) activity in which it is absorbed in the object. But this action necessarily also becomes objective to itself. Since objective cognition is absolutely at home with itself in the object, it must recognize that its determinations are determinations of the object, and that, conversely, the objectively valid determinations immediately present in the object are its determinations. By this recollection, this withdrawal into itself of intelligence, the latter becomes will. (§468, Zusatz, Miller tr.)

It is part of our nature to be knowers, and we therefore strive to achieve the ideal theory of the world. But we are not, and could not be, only knowers. The task of the lower levels of theoretical spirit is to idealize that which is realized in the world; as it progresses and develops, spirit develops its content from within itself through its theorizing. There is a certain amount of practical activity here, of course—creating words, making judgments and inferences. Hegel does not intend us to think that theoretical and practical activity can be divorced from one another; the relation between them is only that levels of practical activity conceptually presuppose levels of theoretical activity. In fact, however, they cannot be disjoined. When Hegel turns to the analysis of practical spirit, he has to backtrack quite a bit, to a conception of "practical feeling." In actuality the theoretical and the practical are simultaneous aspects of the activity of spirit, but as we all know, exposition is always linear, even if the subject matter is not.

In emerging into the sphere of practical spirit, spirit testifies to its freedom and its self-certainty. It is now sure of itself as the moving power of the world, sure that its own products must be realized in the world. To the extent that nature does not exemplify the ideals of
Hegel's Theory of Mental Activity

spirit, nature falls short, and spirit must undertake to work its will on nature. This process is itself subject to a complex dialectical progression, but that lies beyond the bounds of this essay.

CONCLUSION

Hegel maintains that, in thinking, concepts are active within me, and I am their vehicle, as it were. These are one and the same concepts that are active in the world, and they constitute the true substance of the world. The problem of a divorce between my concepts and the natures of things as they are in themselves therefore does not arise. But although the problem of a thing-in-itself may not arise for Hegel, it would be more than naive to think that no other problems arise.

The notion of a creative, self-structuring activity is awesome, fascinating, and powerful—but also quite hard for us to accept. It is hard to tell, of course, whether we fully understand Hegel's concept of spirit and reject it because of lingering suspicions about its coherence, or whether we have not yet succeeded in comprehending the concept—a concept, supposedly, in which comprehension breeds credence. Neither our suspicions nor our lack of insight can count as a refutation of such a notion, but the notion is so vague that more exacting criticism of it is equally elusive. We do know that self-reflection often generates paradoxes in otherwise straightforward matters, especially where all-inclusive self-reflective totalities are concerned. The set-theoretical paradoxes are the best examples of this. But how would one even begin to construct an argument that Hegel's notion of a self-reflective totality, the Absolute, is as barren as the notion of the set of all sets? One tends to avoid self-reflective totalities whenever possible, because of their extreme complexity, yet, in Hegel's defense, it is not clear that we can avoid them altogether. We certainly cannot rule out limited self-reflection—it is too obviously a feature of the world we live in and of our own being.

Someone of naturalistic bent might easily point out that there seems to be no particular problem involved in one part of the world "mapping" another part, even if it is an element of what is mapped. There need only be restrictions on the detail of the map. I have much sympathy with such an approach, but working out the de-
tails, we also know, is an extremely difficult task. Hegel did not adopt such an approach for a reason the strength of which I am still uncertain. The world as he saw it was too obviously teleological.

Standard physical theory tells us that the world ought to run down, approaching a random distribution of energy. Organic and mental phenomena seem to gainsay this result (remember that Hegel wrote well before Darwin). Explaining organic and mental phenomena on the basis of the principles adequate for the explanation of the inorganic, material world did not look feasible. The only alternative, if the world was not to be bifurcated into alien realms, was to explain the material, inorganic, and mechanical somehow on the basis of the teleological principles used in the explanation of the organic and the mental. This is the route Hegel took. But the attempt to fit the material and mechanical into an organic framework, when it concerns the world-whole, raises its own problems, for there are major disanalogies between the world-whole and organisms or minds. Organisms and minds have environments with which they interact causally, for instance. Even if we accept the idea that organisms and minds are to be explained through teleological principles, an idea Hegel never doubted, deep puzzles arise when we try to apply these principles, as vague as most of them are, to the world-whole. As we learn more about what kind of thing teleology is, we may well find that Hegel's route looks even less plausible.

But even if most of us find it hard today to accept Hegel's notion of the Absolute and much of the attendant metaphysics that accompanies it, his system is still worth our attention. I have often been asked what profit there is in studying Hegel's philosophy of mind, and the subtext of the question is whether there are insights there that would transform current philosophy of mind, insights unrepresented in the current debate. Perhaps regrettably, the answer must be that there is nothing strikingly new in Hegel's philosophy of mind. Fifty years ago, however, the question would have been answered with a resounding yes! Against the atomism and reductionism of the positivists, Hegel would have been a welcome antidote. As it happened, Hegel's own primary inspiration in philosophical psychology, Aristotle, provided much of the inspiration to those who battled positivism within the Anglo-American tradition. But positivism was not simply overthrown in a movement to restore past philosophical glories; its own adherents rigorously investi-
Hegel's Theory of Mental Activity

gated its assumptions and its arguments, and its own internal dialectic gradually led to a repudiation of the atomism and reductionism characteristic of positivist thought. Hegel has little new to offer us because, after much hard work, we have finally caught up with him.

The purely historical interest in comprehending a great philosophy for its own sake is quite sufficient justification for reading Hegel, particularly when there are interesting resonances with current work in the field. Surely we understand our own assumptions better by seeing them employed or rejected by others, particularly those who have been major figures in our own history. An ahistorical philosophy is an unreflective philosophy—and that is a contradiction in terms.