From Actuality to Concept in Hegel's *Logic*

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter examines Hegel's treatment of the concept of actuality in his Science of Logic. It argues that Hegel's treatment of actuality serves two functions: first, it provides the argument for the 'genesis of the Concept', Hegel's version of Kant's transcendental deduction; second, it allows Hegel to determine a specific type of activity characteristic of both life and freedom. The key to understanding the transition from actuality to the Concept (der Begriff) lies in Hegel's concept of reciprocity (Wechselwirkung), a reciprocal relation between cause and effect that constitutes an inner purposiveness of form. The author develops this argument by examining the key moves of the three chapters that close out the Objective Logic—"The Absolute," "Actuality," and "The Absolute Relation"—taking up Hegel's relation to Aristotle and Spinoza, his treatment of the modal categories, and his critique of mechanistic accounts of causality.

Keywords: Hegel, Science of Logic, actuality, concept, purposiveness, modality, form

THE concept of actuality (*Wirklichkeit*) is omnipresent throughout Hegel's system and is widely recognized to be of utmost importance for understanding the key tenets of his philosophy. Although much has been written about this concept in the context of Hegel's social and political philosophy, its significance and place in *The Science of Logic* remains obscure and is less well understood. What is actuality in the context of the *Logic*?

As the third and final section of the Doctrine of Essence, actuality provides a conclusion not only for this second book of the *Logic*, but also for the Objective Logic as a whole, presenting the transition to the Subjective Logic, or the Doctrine of the Concept. In order to serve as such a transition, actuality has to fulfill at least two related and essential functions. First, it must provide what Hegel calls the genesis of the Concept.[1] Like so many of Hegel's ideas, the genesis of the Concept can in part be understood both in comparison and in contrast with Kant. We can compare this section of the *Logic* with

Kant's transcendental deduction, insofar as what Hegel is trying to show is the necessity of the Concept—his highly altered version of Kant's 'I think', or the original synthetic unity of apperception—as the self-determined ground or foundation of the categories that have already been generated in the Doctrines of Being and Essence.[2] Actuality must show that the unity of the Concept, a kind of self-actualizing form, is necessary for the determination of anything as *actual* (*wirklich*), for the determination of anything that has a sufficient reason or self-determined *end* (*Zweck*). From here we can already begin to see some of the differences from Kant, for Hegel's deduction appears to be much more demanding. Whereas Kant's deduction only aims to establish the necessary (p. 270) conditions for the *possibility* of experience (more specifically, the deduction establishes the legitimacy of the a priori applicability of the categories to objects),[3] Hegel's deduction aims to determine the conditions for *actuality* (but importantly, *not existence*) and *actual* knowledge. Far from being an extravagant form of idealism, we can read Hegel's deduction here as an argument for the priority of actuality over possibility in our knowledge claims. We can also identify a further difference at the level of method: in contrast with Kant's *transcendental* deduction, Hegel refers to his genesis of the Concept as an "immanent deduction" (SL 12.16/582). Specifically, Hegel attempts to develop the basic determinations of the Concept immanently from the idea of substance as it has been understood in modern philosophy, particularly in Spinoza. If successful, Hegel's deduction should bring us from substance to subject.

In connection with the transition from substance to subject, the second function that actuality must fulfill is the transition from necessity to freedom. Proceeding immanently from the Spinozist conception of substance, the section on actuality aims to determine a kind of self-relating, self-actualizing form—the form of freedom itself—making good on Spinoza's definition of substance as *causa sui*.[4] Actuality provides the argument for Hegel's important and oft-cited claim that with the Concept "we have opened up the realm of *freedom*" (SL 12.15/582). Given that the Doctrine of Essence is a study of relations and relational determinations of being, at its conclusion, Hegel aims to secure a form of self-relation that can be characterized as self-determination, a kind of relationality that can properly be called free. Hegel's turn to the notion of actuality hinges on his interest in determining the form of self-actualization as such, and his argument will attempt to resolve, or perhaps better, dissolve, one of the biggest debates in modern philosophy in a distinctively post-Kantian vein, namely, the opposition between necessity and freedom and the threat this poses to the latter determination in particular. Of particular importance here is the overcoming of mechanism as the definitive and exclusive mode of causality and a vindication of the relational mode of *Wechselwirkung*, reciprocity, or reciprocal action. In determining a self-relating reciprocity between causes and effects akin to Kant's notion of inner purposiveness, Hegel hopes to philosophically demonstrate not only the possibility of freedom, but also its actuality.[5]

(p. 271) Having dived right into the thick of the *Logic*, we can already see that Hegel places a huge burden on the concept of actuality, particularly as it appears in these highly condensed pages that bring us to the Doctrine of the Concept. In order to argue that the 'actuality' section in the *Logic* fulfills the two preceding functions—namely, the genesis of

the Concept and the determination of the form of freedom—I will begin with a brief overview of the concept of actuality as it appears in Hegel's system and its place in the *Logic* in particular (section 12.1). I will then build Hegel's argument through the three chapters that comprise the section on 'actuality': "The Absolute," "Actuality," and "The Absolute Relation" (sections 12.2, 12.3, and 12.4). What will emerge in the development of these moments is the significance of purposiveness in bringing us from actuality to the Concept. In particular, I will argue that Hegel arrives at the self-relation of the Concept by first determining the self-relating activity of living beings, presenting the self-conscious Concept as an actualization of living activity (section 12.5). In order to present the trajectory of all three final chapters of the Objective Logic, each of which could be the topic of independent studies of their own, this essay will inevitably overlook certain details of each chapter and does not aim to be an exhaustive account of the section on 'actuality'. My goal is to establish the overarching philosophical importance of this idea for understanding Hegel's Concept, and to situate this idea within the *Logic* as a whole.

12.1. What Is Actuality?

Actuality is Hegel's appropriation of Aristotle's notion of *ènérgeia*, and is generally employed to combat dualistic ways of thinking in philosophical conceptions of nature, spirit, and logic. What brings Hegel to return again and again throughout his system to the notion of actuality is his interest in articulating a determinate conception of *activity*, or more specifically, an activity of form (*Formtätigkeit*) in which form and matter, inner and outer, are not opposed.[6] Hegel explains actuality in Aristotle in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* as follows:

> There are two leading forms, which Aristotle characterizes as that of potentiality (*dúnamis*) and that of actuality (*ènérgeia*); the latter is still more closely characterized as entelechy (*èntelecheia*), which has the end (*tò télos*) in itself, and is the realization of this end… . To Aristotle, the main fact about Substance is that it is not matter merely … matter itself is only potentiality, and not actuality—which belongs to form—matter cannot truly exist without the activity of form. With Aristotle *dúnamis* (p. 272) does not therefore mean force (for force is really an imperfect aspect of form), but rather capacity which is not even undetermined possibility; *ènérgeia* is, on the other hand, pure efficaciousness out of itself [*die reine Wirksamkeit aus sich selbst*].
>
> (LHP 19.154/2.138–139)

Matter, being, especially substance, cannot exist without the activity of form; in fact, matter taken 'in itself' is simply an abstraction from the activity of form that gives shape and determinacy to anything identifiable as such. Activity of form not only brings form to matter but can also be characterized as an activity of *determination*, insofar as the lack of form entails indeterminacy, indefiniteness, vagueness, abstraction, and in general,

something unknown. We can think of *Formtätigkeit* here in one of two ways. First, activity of form brings form and determinacy to *objects*. When Aristotle suggests that matter cannot exist without the activity of form, he is arguing against the idea of 'pure matter', suggesting that 'matter' can only be something determinate insofar as it has form—either a form given externally or a form that is the result of its own activity. Form that is the result of a thing's own activity is, secondly, a kind of activity that also forms and determines a *subject* of activity. This kind of activity brings determinacy to and is formative of a self, in addition to or alongside the activity of determining objects. Activity of form is therefore what makes a thing (an object or a subject) *actual*, for without it, matter remains indeterminate and not even an "undetermined possibility."

Thus, although Hegel famously identifies the rational and the actual in the preface to his *Philosophy of Right*, it might be more accurate to identify actuality with formative activity that constitutes an end in itself. Of course, rational activity is certainly exemplary here, but note that Hegel's characterization is in fact much broader than what would generally be construed as rational. We can consider for a moment how Hegel takes up the issue of form-activity from three distinct but related perspectives, which make up the keystones of his philosophical system. First, from the perspective of *nature*, what exemplifies the unity of form and matter characteristic of the 'actual' is the activity and productivity of living nature, and in particular, of animal organisms. In the *Philosophy of Nature*, Hegel discusses the totality of the earth as an implicit process of formation (*Bildungsprozeß*), which is fully realized only in animal activity, for the animal is nothing but the product of "its own self-process" (E §339A). Reminding us that Kant had defined the animal as an end-in-itself, Hegel follows suit by describing the animal as a *Selbstzweck*, insofar as the animal produces itself from its own activity: whereas the earth merely *endures* (dauert), undergoing transformations due to external forces, the animal produces and reproduces itself and its species through its own formative activity. In the productivity of organisms, form and matter, inner and outer, are not opposed, but exist in a necessary, internal relation of self-production.[7] The productive activity of animal organisms in the natural world exemplifies for Hegel the kind of activity that, with further determinations, will be ultimately characterized as free. The idea of (p. 273) "pure efficaciousness out of itself" finds its first actuality in the self-production of living beings.

Second, from the perspective of *spirit*, Hegel defines *Geist* itself as "*manifestation*" and "absolute *actuality*" (E §383). As the collective intellectual and material history of individual and social agents, spirit, as has been noted by Robert Pippin, is "not a thing."[8] Rather, spirit is nothing but its ongoing activity, and we determine what spirit *is* by attending to what it *does*. Using the terms of Hegel's *Logic*, we can say that understanding what spirit is (the *being* of spirit) is to understand the formative activity that constitutes its *essence*; put somewhat differently, we could also say that understanding the determinate practices, institutions, customs, laws, and culture of spirit is to understand them as manifestations of spirit's free activity. Spirit itself, and particularly its development as traced in the *Phenomenology*, is often described as a process of *Bildung*, here understood as the social and historical activity of cultural formation. In the domain of spirit, actuality is a key concept for understanding both the

philosophy of action and Hegel's social philosophy, where the latter attempts to assess the rationality of our institutions on the basis of the degree of individual and collective freedom they enable, the degree to which they provide the conditions for spirit's self-actualization, thereby allowing agents to be "at home with one self in one's other" (E §24A).[9] We can thus understand the rationality of the actual both as a critical method for coming to self-knowledge of our present age, and as a thesis concerning the conditions for the reality of freedom. Grasping spirit as absolute actuality and being at home in the world requires that we not only view the world as the product of our own activity, but further, that the products of our activity provide further conditions for and continue to enhance our ongoing self-realization.

Finally, from the perspective of *logic*, which will be our focus here, actuality takes up the problem of the unity of essence and appearance at the highest level of formality, the most developed version of which is discussed by Hegel under the heading of the relation of inner and outer. It is important to note that at the beginning of the section on actuality, the form-activity characteristic of freedom has not yet been fully determined. Instead, Hegel describes the unity of inner and outer as a kind of self-revealing and self-expression. The key concept that brings us to actuality is the idea of *manifestation*: on the one hand, essence must appear, essence must manifest itself in appearances; on the other hand, appearances themselves are nothing but the manifestations of essence. In determining this essential relation between the inner and the outer in terms of manifestation, Hegel begins to move away from the dualistic framework presumed in the very distinction between essence and appearance. Again, we can see why the appropriation of Aristotle's notion of actuality can be helpful in this context: just as Aristotle protested the Platonic separation of ideas (intelligible essence) from their instantiations (sensible appearances), Hegel is protesting Kantian versions of this separation throughout his presentation of the categories of essence.[10] Once Hegel has established the essential (p. 274) relation between the inner and outer as manifestation, we arrive at the logical determination of actuality.

12.2. The Absolute

Hegel begins the final section of the Doctrine of Essence with a chapter titled "The Absolute." Proceeding from the categories of reflection and appearance and immediately following the categories of the essential relation (whole and parts, force and its expression, inner and outer), the arrival of the absolute at this juncture immediately presents at least two interpretive puzzles. The first is simply, why have we reached the absolute at this point? Initially, it appears to be a rather uncharacteristic place for the absolute to make an appearance, given that Hegel usually reserves the denomination for the conclusion of his texts. The second puzzle concerns the status of the absolute at this juncture and its connection to actuality. Why is the absolute the first moment or

determination of the actual? How does the absolute function here as a step toward the development of the idea of form-activity?

To address the first puzzle, we can begin by noting that Hegel's use of the term at this particular moment in the *Logic* is self-consciously ambivalent. There is something clearly premature about the announcement of the absolute in the Doctrine of Essence, and yet, there are good reasons for its appearance as the first moment of actuality. One clue that the absolute presented here is premature can be found in Hegel's use of absolute in the nominative, which, while not by any means unprecedented, is unusual, and deviates from his more official uses of the term. Within Hegel's system, the term 'absolute' usually appears in an adjectival form, describing a specific determination of something—*Wissen, Form, Idee, Geist*—rather than denoting something substantial in itself.[11] Our form of knowing is absolute, for example, when it is self-consciously determined and carried out in a certain way, mode, or manner, something that is only possible as the result of a particular development. Absolute spirit—art, religion, and philosophy—consists of specifically defined modes of self-knowledge that are essential for understanding human freedom. *The* absolute, then, as a substantive, is something rather empty and indeterminate, and "the absolute itself [at first] appears only as the negation of all predicates and as the void" (SL 11.370/530). To develop the concept of the absolute into something determinate and actual, Hegel will ultimately conclude the chapter by turning to the mode (*Modus*) of the absolute as the absolute's "way and manner," the way and manner in which the absolute comes to be manifest (SL 11.374/535).[12] (p. 275) The utter abstractness and obscurity of *the* absolute in its initial pronouncement is thus no accident, for we do not yet know exactly what it is that is being described as absolute.

Nonetheless, Hegel has good reasons for introducing the absolute at this moment in the Doctrine of Essence, for it is an important marker of both an end and a beginning at once. As the marker of an ending, the absolute is the result of the cumulative determinations of the *Seins-* and *Wesenslogik* which make up the first volume of the *Science of Logic*. The absolute is thus a "negative outcome," and we can read the progression of the *Logic* thus far, the entire movement through the categories of being and essence, as "the *negative exposition* of the absolute" (SL 11.370–371/530–531). As negative, the absolute denotes the end of the Objective Logic (which corresponds in part with Kant's transcendental logic),[13] and can be viewed as a refutation of the modes of thinking expounded by its categories, in particular, the metaphysical realism of being and the irreconcilable, unself-conscious dualisms of essence.[14] The absolute is "the ground in which [the previous determinations] have been engulfed," expressing at once the insufficiencies of an Objective Logic, as well as providing the true basis presupposed by being and essence, a presupposition that has now been posited and made explicit through the exposition of the prior categories. However, as ground, the absolute is not only something negative, but "this exposition has itself a *positive* side" and also represents a new beginning (SL 11.372/532). The beginning for which this section provides the transition is, as mentioned earlier, the Doctrine of the Concept or the Subjective Logic, the final book and undoubtedly the key to the *Logic* as a whole. In laying the ground for the determination of the Concept, the absolute in the beginning of its exposition is not only abstract, but

further, can only be spoken of from a limited, external perspective. If, as suggested by the opening section of the chapter, the absolute is nothing ahead of displaying and exhibiting its content, nothing ahead of the very process of its own exposition (*Auslegung*), then at the outset, and in referring to it as a substantive rather than exhibiting it as a mode, the beginning can only be "the *absolute of an external reflection*" (SL 11.372/533). *Qua* beginning, the absolute is not yet actual, but a mere seeming (*Scheinen*), a merely relative absolute that is as yet premature.[15]

Turning to the second interpretive question concerning the status of the absolute and its connection to actuality, it is important to recall Hegel's oft-cited claim that the absolute must be grasped not only as substance but equally as subject.[16] Determining the absolute as both substance and subject *is* to determine the actuality or true reality of the absolute. Perhaps more than in many other places where Hegel attempts this transition, the development presented in the *Logic* is quite literal: the absolute represented by Spinoza's substance must be actualized into a mode of post-Kantian subjectivity (p. 276) represented by the Concept (*der Begriff*). Thus, the trajectory of the "Actuality" section brings us from *the* absolute (which Hegel wryly and absurdly refers to as the "absolute absolute" [SL 11.373/533]), the absolute attribute, and the mode of the absolute (the three moments of Spinoza's substance metaphysics), to an absolute self-relation of universality, particularity, and individuality, the three moments of Hegel's Concept. To make this transition plausible, Hegel must develop a philosophically defensible notion of self-actualization, a mode of activity that is proper to self-determining subjectivity. If the absolute is to be actual, and not merely an empty definition or dogmatic concept, it must show itself to be the result of its own activity of self-production, it must reveal its actuality to be a process of self-actualization.

Although there are hints that this is where Hegel is heading (he refers to the "act" of the absolute as well as to absolute form), we have reason at this point to be skeptical. The chapter on the absolute is obscure even by Hegelian standards, providing few arguments toward developing the idea of activity, and at most, attempts to present two objections against Spinoza's conception of substance, which appear most clearly in the "Remark" that concludes the chapter.[17] The first is that Spinoza's axiomatic, geometric method, which begins with a series of assumed definitions, fundamentally regards substance from the perspective of external reflection rather than immanently determining the inner necessity of the matter at hand. To complete this argument, it will in fact take Hegel the rest of the *Logic* to present his own immanent exposition of the absolute, and further, the presentation of his alternative account of method will only come at the very end of the *Logic*, concluding the text as a whole. The second complaint is captured by Hegel's famous remark that substance lacks individuality or personality [*Persönlichkeit*]. By defining substance *without* subject as absolute, Spinoza cannot adequately account for the determinations of subjectivity and self-consciousness that are essential to substance according to Spinoza's own exposition. More specifically, Hegel contends that the typology of substance, attributes, and modes cannot adequately account for the determination of thought within its prescribed tenets as not only actual and necessary, but most important, as free. In order to develop his own conception of free subjectivity,

Hegel turns directly to the determination of modes that display the very power of substance as absolute. In the second chapter titled simply, "Actuality," Hegel further explores the idea of the mode of the absolute by turning to the modal categories and, in particular, the modality of necessity.

(p. 277) 12.3. Modality and Absolute Necessity

Hegel's chapter on the modal categories consists of his most direct treatment of the relation between the actual, the possible, the necessary, and the contingent. The crux of the chapter is to develop a conception of absolute necessity, one that will both return us to the problem of substance as well as lay the ground for reconciling necessity and freedom. To begin, it will help to unpack two theses that underlie Hegel's treatment of actuality as the mode and manifestation of the absolute. The first is that actuality is not simply what exists, what is contingently there, what is tangible; not everything that *exists* is *actual*.[18] Actuality has a particular kind of self-determined, rational form; things that are actual must live up to their own inner principle or standard of truth and activity: a body separated from its soul or life exists, but is not actual; a state that does not live up to its own constitution surely exists, but is also not actual. Actuality is self-manifestation, a necessary relation between inner and outer, form and content, as self-expression. In order to be *self*-expression, actuality must be inherently divided against itself; it is not merely contingent existence, but "self-distinguishing and self-determining movement," a "form-unity" of existence *and* essence, and hence, "the determination of *immediacy* over against the determination of reflection-into-self" (SL 11.381/542). More specifically, the negativity of actuality is expressed as "an *actuality as against a possibility*," that is, actuality is more than what it is and already contains within itself a relation between actuality and possibility. Understanding how actuality is more than itself, goes beyond itself, and contains potentiality within itself to become something else, to produce a new actuality, is what it means for actuality to be absolute.

Second, Hegel argues for a priority of actuality over possibility; in fact, properly speaking, there is only one modality out of which all other modes are determined, namely, actuality (one reason that "Actuality" is simply the title for the whole last section of the *Wesenslogik*).[19] The claim here is, unsurprisingly, thoroughly Aristotelian: only actuality can 'beget' another actuality, meaning that understanding potentiality, the "conditions of possibility," the power of some reality to bring about, express, and determine another reality, is to understand something about actuality as a dynamic process of the actualization of its own potentialities. As Aristotle writes in *Metaphysics*, "it is by *actuality* that the potential becomes *actual*."[20] In effect, possibility, contingency, and necessity are all (p. 278) modes or determinations *of* actuality, ways in which actuality comes to be determined. Substance must be posited as actuality, as containing potentiality and power within itself to produce new actualities, and it is in unpacking the movement of this process that Hegel comes to the idea of self-actualization. Hegel thus uses Aristotelian

ènérgeia to read Spinoza,[21] and the appropriation of *ènérgeia* is required for and anticipates Hegel's account of substance as power and reciprocal causality (*Wechselwirkung*), or substance as inner purposiveness of form. Before we get there, let us turn briefly to the details of Hegel's analysis of modality.

Hegel moves swiftly in this chapter through three moments of actuality: formal modality (or contingency), real modality (or relative necessity), and absolute necessity.[22] Although Hegel is often thought of as a necessitarian who preaches the cold march toward history's end, here it becomes clear that he is in fact not only attuned to the role of contingency in the course of actual events, but further, that understanding the constitutive role of contingency is central to his account of necessity.[23] Nonetheless, Hegel does begin his argument by presenting a critique of a *certain* understanding of contingency, one that finds its beginnings in a merely formal (or logical) notion of possibility. According to formal possibility, anything that is not self-contradictory is possible. This leaves the realm of formal possibility open to a "boundless multiplicity" (SL 11.382/543): the moon could be made of cheese, I could be six feet tall, rotary phones could come back into fashion, the list of possibilities in the formal sense is potentially endless. To make matters worse, contradiction, a category presented earlier in the Doctrine of Essence, is in fact essential to the reflected determination of all finite things, meaning that everything is in fact self-contradictory, and hence, nothing is possible.[24] Hegel is suggesting that understanding the relation between the actual and the possible according to a formal conception of possibility amounts not to a determination of actuality at all, but rather, amounts only to a determination of contingency or mere existence. He writes, "The contingent is an actual that at the same time is determined as merely possible, whose other or opposite equally is" (SL 11.383–384/545). We could call this initial, merely formal sense of contingency a naïve or unself-conscious contingency—the (p. 279) thought that everything that exists could equally well not exist, the thought that everything is determined *only* by chance.

It is important to note that Hegel does not deny that even this unself-conscious form of contingency has a place in the world, and even a place in our own sense of self-understanding. Contingency "deserves its due in the world of objects," both when we are considering the realm of nature, where contingency has a certain degree of "free rein," and when we are considering the realm of spirit, where arbitrariness or freedom of choice (*Willkür*), despite its limitations as a determination of freedom, is an irreducible element of the human will (E §145A). Nonetheless, contingency as it arises out of the notion of formal possibility remains caught between two one-sided moments that cannot cohere into a plausible determination of actuality. When we refer to an event, act, or state of affairs as merely contingent, what we mean to say is that it has no ground, that it has no sufficient reason for being one way rather than another. However, as a possible event, act, or state of affairs, it must have *some* ground, it must have arisen from some other event, act, or state of affairs, otherwise it would not be possible at all. Hegel writes, "The contingent, then, has no ground because it is contingent; and, equally, it has a ground because it is contingent" (SL 11.384/545). In fluctuating between these two determinations, we come to realize that this back-and-forth between groundlessness and

groundedness is in fact necessary for grasping this form of unself-conscious contingency. Contingency as this "*absolute unrest*" is *necessary* for the determination of actuality according to this formal account of modality.

For Hegel, the shortcoming of this initial understanding of the necessity of contingency is its lack of awareness concerning the content of its own claim. In claiming that the fluctuation between groundlessness and groundedness is necessary, what one is really saying is that one lacks sufficient knowledge concerning the grounds in question, that one does not know the real conditions and circumstances that brought a particular actuality about. Thus, although Hegel acknowledges that sheer chance certainly plays a role in the determination of the actual, formal contingency operating as a *complete* determination of actuality is disingenuous insofar as it stops short of doing the work of understanding how particular events, acts, or states of affairs came to be actualized. This brings us to the second moment of real modality, which moves beyond the determination of formal possibility into considering real possibility, the concrete conditions that bring some actuality into being. Hegel describes real possibility as follows:

> What is actual *can act* [*Was wirklich ist*, kann wirken]; something announces its actuality *through that which it produces*… . if one brings into account the determinations, circumstances, and conditions of something in order to ascertain its possibility, one is no longer at the stage of formal possibility, but is considering its real possibility… . The real possibility of something is therefore the existing multiplicity of circumstances which are connected with it. This existing multiplicity is, therefore, both possibility and actuality… . real possibility constitutes the *totality of conditions*, a dispersed actuality.
>
> (SL 11.385–386/546–547)

(p. 280) Real possibility as the totality of conditions necessary for bringing something about determines actuality as something that can act, as something that can produce effects, only insofar as it is a process of actualization resulting from a determinate set of real conditions and circumstances. Thus, for the time being, it is not *really* possible—that is, the totality of real conditions are not present—for the moon to be made out of cheese or for me to be six feet tall. Moving beyond formal possibility as mere non-contradiction, but also beyond what Kant would call transcendental conditions of possibility, real modality determines the identity and difference of the actual and the possible by taking up actuality as a set of concrete, dispersed potentialities, as containing *within itself* the possibility of becoming a new configuration of conditions, and hence, a new actuality. In the "movement of translating" real conditions and circumstances into new actualities and translating existing actualities into new, concrete conditions of possibility, Hegel is already beginning to present his notion of activity (*Tätigkeit*) (E §148).[25] Conceiving of actuality as the process of actualizing real possibilities is to determine actuality as a movement that can produce effects, as a movement that "can act," as a kind of form-activity that produces and transforms itself on the basis of existing potentialities that are identical with itself. Once we move beyond formal possibility and contingency and do the

work of determining and assessing the totality of conditions, actuality is seen not exclusively as the result of sheer chance, but as a dynamic process of activity in which real conditions bring about real results.

In assessing the notion of activity Hegel is presenting here, we now can draw a distinction between activity as *absolute necessity* and activity as *purposive or free*. Although activity in the latter, fully developed sense will only be presented as the final moment in the transition to the Subjective Logic, it is helpful to have this goal in mind as we ascertain the significance and limitations of absolute necessity. To complete his account of real modality, Hegel writes, "When all the conditions of something are completely present, it enters into actuality" (SL 11.387/548). And perhaps even more emphatically in the *Encyclopedia*: "When *all conditions* are present, the matter *must* become actual" (E §147). In effect, real possibility is already real necessity because the totality of conditions is identical with a realized actuality, and thus, given a certain set of conditions, a certain actuality *necessarily* follows. Here again, however, Hegel shows himself to be attentive to the role of contingency in the determination of the actual, for in fact, this kind of necessity remains relative because "it has its *starting point* in the *contingent*" (SL 11.388/549). Although given a certain set of conditions a certain actuality necessarily follows, the multiplicity of existing circumstances are themselves contingent, leading to the necessity of contingency now in a deeper, self-conscious, and self-determined sense. Unlike the formal determination of contingency as a fluctuation between groundlessness and groundedness, the real determination of contingency requires us to grasp the constitutive role of contingency in the necessary progression of conditions into that which is actualized. What Hegel calls absolute necessity is simply the self-consciousness of (p. 281) contingency as constitutive in the process of actualization, that the progression of contingent conditions is "necessity's *own becoming*" (SL 11.390/551). Contingency is necessity's own becoming because it is constitutive of—that is, *absolutely necessary* for—the determination of actuality and its ongoing process of actualizing potentialities.

In the conclusion of the "Actuality" chapter, Hegel goes on to suggest that absolute necessity is "blind" and "light-shy" (SL 11.391, 392/552, 553). The progression of absolute necessity is blind, insofar as

> *purpose* [Zweck] is still not present *for-itself* as such in the process of necessity. The process of necessity begins with the existence of dispersed circumstances that seem to have no concern with one another and no inward coherence. These circumstances are an immediate actuality that collapses inwardly, and from this negation a new actuality emerges… . hence the necessity that constitutes this process is called 'blind'. By contrast if we consider purposive activity [*zweckmäßige Tätigkeit*] … this activity is not blind but sighted [*sehend*].
>
> (E §147A)

There are two claims here that should be highlighted. First, the notion of activity present in absolute necessity is limited and incomplete. Purpose, a sense of goal-directed activity or activity that aims at an end is not yet explicitly present, is not yet present in a fully developed or self-determined sense. That purposiveness is not yet present *for-itself* implies that at the stage of absolute necessity, purposiveness or activity is only present *in-itself*, that is, in an implicit or yet-to-be-developed sense. Absolute necessity is blind because the progression of contingent conditions has no self-determined purpose or goal, and further, the conditions and circumstances themselves are only indifferently related to one another in their ongoing progression. Second, purposive activity, where purpose is present *for-itself*, results in a form of activity that is *not blind*, but sighted. What exactly does Hegel mean by "seeing" here? Purposive activity is a form of seeing activity insofar as its ends and goals are self-determined. Conditions are actively shaped such that they are not indifferently related and have an internal coherence; the progression of conditions are goal-directed and self-organized. Nonetheless, although purposive activity determines its own ends, "seeing" here does not entail that the totality of conditions and circumstances are fully in view in advance of, or in the midst of, carrying out an end. Even in the most conscientious activity, prospectively, we never have complete knowledge of the circumstances and conditions surrounding any particular act.[26] This lack of complete knowledge of the totality of conditions is simply a part of our self-consciousness regarding the necessity of contingency in the progression of conditions into effects. Behind this thought is a familiar Hegelian theme, namely, that the totality of conditions can only be recollected retrospectively, that the actual is truly determined and grasped as rational only after the fact. Here, on the cusp of the transition to freedom (p. 282) or the Concept, Hegel reminds us that self-actualization must be grasped not only from a forward-looking perspective, with conditions marching ever onward into their results. Rather, self-actualization must also be grasped, and in fact, can only be fully grasped, from a retrospective, backward-looking perspective, one that carefully gathers up a dispersed actuality and determines it as the rational result of purposive, free activity.

12.4. The Absolute Relation: Reciprocity

The problem of the third and final chapter, titled "The Absolute Relation," is how to make the transition from a notion of activity where purpose is implicit (absolute necessity) to a notion of activity where purpose is explicitly self-determined and constitutes a relation-to-self. Establishing the latter completes the final stage of the genesis of the Concept; in fact, Hegel suggests that a self-determining, purposive self-relation simply *is* the Concept. Initially, Hegel's strategy in this chapter can appear somewhat artificial: he returns first to the problem of substance (the absolutely necessary), taking up the relation between substance and accidents; next, he takes up the relation of causality, in particular, the causal relations characteristic of mechanism; finally, Hegel concludes the Objective Logic with the category of reciprocity or reciprocal action (*Wechselwirkung*), a reciprocal

relation between causes and effects posited as a self-relation, determining purposive activity as the relation that is absolute.

Despite a certain artificiality in Hegel's progression here, the final chapter of the Doctrine of Essence in fact takes up all three of Kant's categories of relation and can be read as an attempt at rewriting the analogies of experience found in the first *Critique*.[27] There, Kant claimed that "[t]he general principle of the three analogies rests on the necessary *unity* of apperception,"[28] and Hegel too, is suggesting that the determination of actuality outlined thus far rests upon the self-relation of the Concept. However, there is also a decidedly un-Kantian moment in Hegel's final step of the genesis or deduction of the Concept. Hegel claims that with reciprocity, the relation of finite or external causality called mechanism "is sublated" (SL 11.407/569).[29] The determination of the Concept (p. 283) hinges on the demonstration of a purposive self-relation that can be said to be the *cause and effect of itself*. There are two points of reference here that are important to note concerning the idea of self-cause. First, despite the latter being Spinoza's definition of substance, Hegel is suggesting again that the self-relation of being the cause and effect of oneself presupposes and requires the determination of subjectivity as coextensive with substance.[30] The absolute must be determined not only as substance, but equally as subject because the notion of *causa sui* is unintelligible without some conception of the self. Commenting on Spinoza's philosophy, Hegel writes, "Absolute substance is the truth, but it is not the whole truth; it must also be thought of as in itself *active and living* [*in sich tätig, lebendig*], and by that very means it must determine itself as mind [*Geist*]" (LHP 20.166/3.257). The connection between *active* and *living* is key: only living activity suffices for determining the purposiveness characteristic of subjectivity. The second point of reference is in some ways even more important, and has been rarely pointed out by scholars and is less well understood. In the third *Critique*, Kant defines a natural purpose (*Naturzweck*)—a living organism—as "both cause and effect of itself."[31] However, according to Kant, the self-organizing causal connections involved in the determination of natural purposes cannot be fully captured by the causality operating according to mechanism, and troublingly, require us to attribute *intrinsic purposiveness* to such beings. For Kant, ultimately, the attribution of this kind of purposiveness remains a regulative principle for judgment rather than constitutive of actual objects, a claim that Hegel must reject. It is this nexus of problems that frames Hegel's consideration of reciprocity as the absolute relation that will bring us to the Concept: in order to determine the notion of subjectivity adequate to absolute substance, the causality characteristic of living beings must first be determined as the first actuality of freedom, forming the basis for any possible determination of selfhood.

Although this may seem like a tall order, Hegel's argument here is continuous with the development of the concept of actuality we have been tracking thus far. Returning to the question of actualizing conditions into their effects, Hegel introduces the shortcomings of mechanistic causal determination by highlighting the limits of this framework for our understanding:

> [A]bove all, we must note the *inadmissible application* of the relation of [mechanistic] causality to *relations of physico-organic* and *spiritual life*. Here, what is called cause certainly reveals itself as having a different content from the effect; *but the reason is that* that which acts on a living being is independently determined, changed, and transmuted by it, *because the living thing does not let the cause come to its effect*, that is, it sublates it as cause. Thus it is inadmissible to say that food is the *cause* of blood, or certain dishes or chill and damp are the *causes* of fever, and so on; it is equally (p. 284) inadmissible to assign the ionic climate as the *cause* of Homer's works, or Caesar's ambition as the *cause* of the downfall of the republican constitution of Rome. In *history* generally, spiritual masses and individuals are in play and reciprocal determination [*Wechselbestimmung*] with one another; but it is rather the nature of spirit, in a much higher sense than it is the character of the living thing in general, not *to receive into itself another originating thing*, or not to let a cause continue itself into it but to break it off and to transmute it [*sondern sie abzubrechen und zu verwandeln*].
>
> (SL 11.400–401/562)

Hegel speaks here of the inadmissibility of mechanism for the determination of both organic and spiritual life, an inadmissibility that hinges on how causes and effects are to be understood in the process of actualization. Living things, especially self-conscious living things, are not only passive substances along a causal chain (think: billiard balls), but rather, such beings break off and transform their conditions according to self-determined ends. In the flow of causes and effects determined according to mechanism, however, we remain at the level of blind contingency: conditions are dispersed, external, and indifferent to one another, expressing no internal coherence. Consider another example offered by Hegel in this context: Suppose a man developed a talent for music—how do we understand the causes of his talent? (SL 11.400/561–562). The talent was developed as a result of the man losing his father, so his father's death was the cause of his talent. But his father was shot while at war, so the shot, and then the war, were the causes. This kind of reasoning is potentially endless, and can include all sorts of other contingencies, such as the gun was made with steel, so steel caused the man's talent; his father was shot on a foggy day, so fog was the cause of his talent; an overzealous monarch caused the war, and so he in fact caused the man's talent. Hegel contends that what we are speaking of here "is not a cause at all but only a single *moment* which belonged to the *circumstances of the possibility*" (SL 11.400/562). When actuality is understood exclusively according to the causal connections of mechanism, the totality of conditions that constitute a given actuality are forever under- and overdetermined in such a way that actuality cannot be determined as something that "can act," as something that can display its power to produce effects. Mechanism underdetermines because there is an infinite regress of causes, so the set of conditions is never complete; mechanism overdetermines because there are too many causes and provides no criteria with which to

distinguish genuine, essential causes from accidental, non-essential ones. In the preceding example, what mechanism cannot grasp is the development of musical talent as, irreducibly, a matter of self-determination, even while it takes place in the midst of a plurality of circumstances and events that provide a context of action.

Hegel refers to the external determinations of mechanism as a form of violence: "Violence is the *appearance of power*, or *power as external*" (SL 11.405/567). Although this might sound like Hegelian dramatic flair, external power appears as violence because it does not allow actuality to be determined as something that *can act*, destroying the determination of actuality as something with the power to determine itself. In the mechanistic determination of causes and effects, actuality is determined as (p. 285) something acted upon by a variety of indifferent causes, a passive substance that "suffers *violence*" from causes acting as external powers. Insofar as it suffers violence, what is presupposed is a cause that can be an "*act* of violence … an *act* of power."[32] It appears that even according to mechanism's own determinations, an external cause must be determined as a cause with the *power* to act upon some effect, the effect has to *suffer* some alteration, otherwise neither cause nor effect would be what they are along the descending mechanistic chain of causes to their effects.[33] In cause, a power to act is presupposed that is only realized or posited in the effect; in the alteration suffered in the effect, what is again presupposed is a power to act again as cause. Substance is thus determined as both active and passive, as actuality that can be both an act of power and vulnerable to acts of power. Notice here how Hegel is already demonstrating a reciprocity at work between cause and effect, agent and patient, within the paradigm of mechanism itself: a cause would not be able to act as cause without at the same time having the 'capacity' to passively suffer some alteration by another cause; an effect cannot be an effect unless the alteration it suffers is again a power to act as some new cause. At first, the power of passive substance to act again as cause is determined as a *reaction*: as reaction, passive substance is divided as both the effect of a previous cause, and displays itself as its own power of causality. It is both passive substance and reactive substance at once. Now the difference between reaction and self-determined action, like the transition from real to absolute necessity, is not only subtle, but in fact, "the hardest" (EL §159).[34] In reciprocity, causality is "*bent round* and becomes an action that returns into itself" (SL 11.407/569). In bending around and turning back, passivity is taken up as a product of self-activity, and the entire series of conditions acting upon passive substance are broken off and transmuted into the active becoming of substance itself. Substance as reciprocity is

> both passive and active… . is mediated *by itself*, is produced by its own activity, and is thus the *passivity posited by its own activity*. Causality is conditioned and (p. 286) conditioning … cause not only *has* an effect, but in the effect it stands, *as cause* in relation to itself. Causality has hereby returned to its *absolute Concept*, and at the same time has attained to the Concept itself… . In reciprocity,

> originative causality displays itself as an *arising* from its negation, from passivity, and as a *passing away* into the same, as a *becoming*.
>
> (SL 11.407–408/569–570)

Two things are happening at once in the logic of reciprocity, the logic of bending around and turning back: the first is the explicit determination of *purpose* in the reciprocity of active and passive substance; the second is the determination of the self-conscious Concept insofar as it turns back on the first relation and thereby determines its own reciprocity—its freedom—as both substance *and* subject. How is it that the determination of reciprocity realizes both relations at once?

12.5. Life and Concept

The transition from reciprocity to freedom can appear hasty, but we can turn to two other places in Hegel's work in order to better understand what is taking place. Both in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and in the "Phenomenology" section of the *Philosophy of Mind* that forms the third part of the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel suggests that there is a necessary connection between the self-relation characteristic of living things and the self-relation characteristic of self-consciousness. In the phenomenological context, Hegel suggests that self-consciousness is "ignited" in its contemplation of the living: it is in grasping the purposive form of the organism that self-consciousness comes to determine its own self-relation as an 'I'.[35] Bracketing here the similarities and differences between these two accounts, and acknowledging that many details of Hegel's suggestions in those contexts are both complicated and obscure (and cannot be explored in more detail here), I want to claim nonetheless that Hegel's overall argument is both important and instructive. First, at a very general level, Hegel is suggesting that there is what he calls a "speculative identity"—namely, an irreducible identity and difference—between how we understand the self-relating activity of the living thing and the self-relating activity of self-consciousness. The identity and difference at stake here is not merely trivial or accidental, but essential to the way we determine our activity as free. On the side of identity, Hegel is suggesting that the self-relation of the merely living being and the self-conscious living being have the same formal structure: both are forms of purposiveness that we grasp as causes and effects of themselves; both are forms of activity that, as self-caused, can be determined as a relation of self-constituting subjectivity. On the side of difference, what separates the living being from the self-conscious living being (p. 287) is self-conscious mediation: the activity of the living thing is immediate, unconscious, and blind in contrast with our own self-conscious, intellectually and conceptually mediated activity. This identity and difference allows Hegel to determine self-consciousness as an *actualization* of natural life without in any way reducing self-consciousness to its merely natural existence. Although the specific determinations of this identity and difference take many different forms, bringing both satisfaction and dissatisfaction for self-

consciousness, the overarching Hegelian claim is that self-conscious self-actualization takes place in the development of this identity and difference.

Second, and now returning to the specific context of the transition from reciprocity to freedom or the Concept in the *Logic*, I want to suggest that Hegel is leveraging this same identity and difference between living and self-conscious reciprocity, and arguing further for the reciprocity (an absolute relation) between these two modes. Now in the *Logic*, of course, what is at stake is not the "ignition" or phenomenological determination of self-conscious experience. Rather, what Hegel aims to provide here is first, the *logical form* of the Concept as self-determination, and second, the *basic categories* of that logical form from which the categories of the Subjective Logic will be developed. Now the logical form of self-causation identified by Hegel is the reciprocity of causes and effects posited as a self-relation. Once reciprocity is grasped *as* reciprocity, or, once reciprocity is self-consciously comprehended (*begriffen*), posited *as* a determination of thought, then we have already attained the standpoint of self-conscious subjectivity, or the self-conscious Concept.[36] In terms of providing the basic categories entailed by the actuality of reciprocity, Hegel will suggest that the Concept determines itself as the self-relation of *universality, particularity*, and *individuality* (or singularity, *Einzelheit*), replacing the Spinozist metaphysics of substance, accidents, and modes. Far from pulling these determinations out of thin air, these three categories are necessarily produced through the self-actualizing activity of subjects in the broad sense, covering both non-spiritual and spiritual *selves*. As causes and effects of themselves, subjects reproduce themselves as universal, or in reference to a species or genus (*Gattung*). Through their ongoing activity, they further determine themselves as a particular, or as one member among many others within a species. As particulars, they share many essential features common to their species, relate to the whole as a part, as well as maintain a part/whole relation within themselves that is reciprocally determined by the members of the species. Finally, the self-relating activity of subjects produces them as singular, distinguishable individuals distinct from both the universal and other particulars.[37] Although much more can be said about these three determinations (Hegel begins the Subjective Logic by developing these categories), what is important here for understanding Hegel's aim is that the three categories are necessary for grasping any form of self-determining activity as something *actual*. Coming full circle, we can say that determining something as actual, rather than as merely possible or contingent, means that we grasp it in its **(p. 288)** Concept—in its self-relation as universal, particular, and individual at once. What can appear as an equivocation in Hegel's use of terminology—for example, in referring to the universal as *genus*, and employing it to refer to concrete and conceptual generalities—is in fact a claim about the ground of these categories: universality, particularity, and individuality are the objective categories of self-actualizing form, which are determined *immediately* in the activity of living beings, and self-consciously mediated in the activity of self-conscious living beings. In a passage that may be one of the most important for understanding the transition to the Subjective Logic, as well as Hegel's philosophy as a whole, the determination of the Concept is summed up as follows:

> [T]he Concept is to be regarded not as the act of the self-conscious understanding [*Verstandes*], not as the *subjective understanding*, but as the Concept in and for itself which constitutes a *stage* of *nature* as well as of *spirit*. Life, or organic nature, is the stage of nature at which the Concept emerges, but as blind, as unaware of itself and unthinking; the Concept that is self-conscious and thinks pertains solely to spirit.
>
> (SL 12.20/586)

12.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that actuality in the context of Hegel's *Logic* should be understood as the immanent deduction of the Concept, one that also serves the function of determining the form of freedom. I suggested that for Hegel, the main issue revolved around developing a notion of activity that could be characterized as self-relating and self-caused—in short, Hegel's aim was to develop a notion of self-determining activity adequate to subjectivity. One advantage of emphasizing the importance of purposiveness and the activity of living beings in Hegel's account is that it allows us to see the ongoing influence of both Kant and Aristotle for Hegel's thinking, as well as his innovative appropriation of their ideas, without overemphasizing one strand at the expense of the other.[38] In aligning his concept of the Concept with Kant's notion of self-consciousness, Hegel also aimed to determine the activity and freedom of self-consciousness as an *actualization* of the self-producing activity of living beings—an activity that provides the basis for understanding the necessary and internal relationship between the inner and outer, form and matter. A further advantage of this interpretation is that it anticipates and provides a framework for understanding the culminating and concluding moment of *The Science of Logic* in the determination of the Idea. Hegel arrives at the Idea as the immediate result of his treatment of the categories of mechanism, chemism, and teleology, ultimately presenting (p. 289) the first determination of the Idea as life, followed by the Idea as self-consciousness or cognition. Although it is beyond the aims of this chapter to elaborate on these further developments in the *Logic*, I hope that the interpretation of actuality presented here, in addition to helping us understand the transition to the Subjective Logic, also provides us with some resources for that endeavor.

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Notes:

([1]) "*Objective logic* therefore, which treats of *being* and *essence* constitutes properly the *genetic exposition of the Concept*… . the Concept has substance for its immediate presupposition… . Thus the *dialectical movement* of *substance* through causality and reciprocity is the immediate *genesis* of the *Concept*, the exposition of the process of its *becoming*" (SL 12.11/577).

([2]) See SL 12.17–18/584. For the classic interpretation of Hegel that takes this passage as definitive, see Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism*.

([3]) See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*: "The explanation of the manner in which concepts can thus relate a priori to objects I entitle their transcendental deduction" (A85/B117).

([4]) "[S]ince substance has *necessity* for its particular relational mode, freedom reveals itself as the *truth of necessity* and as the *relational mode of the Concept* [*die* Verhältnisweise des Begriffs]" (SL 12.12/577–578).

([5]) On the idea of intrinsic purposiveness, see Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, §§63, 66. Hegel refers to the notion of inner purposiveness as "Kant's great service to philosophy." See SL 12.157/737. In *Freedom and Reflection*, Yeomans offers a detailed account of how the categories of Hegel's *Logic*, and in particular, the treatment of modality, mechanism, and teleology are essential for understanding the notions of agency and the free will that are generally viewed exclusively as elements of his practical philosophy. Although Yeomans is not primarily concerned with interpreting what Hegel means by the Concept, his

arguments clearly demonstrate the significance of these categories of the *Logic* for understanding the Hegelian conception of free activity and are highly instructive in addressing questions in the philosophy of action.

([6]) Hegel first refers to the activity of form as well as absolute form in the *Logic* in the chapter titled "Ground." See SL 11.296, 298–300/449, 452–454. Activity of form will come up again at a crucial moment in Hegel's discussion of the hypothetical syllogism (SL 12.123/700), one that mirrors in important ways his analysis of actuality. See also E §§150, 151, 212. In *Hegel's Critique of Metaphysics*, Longuenesse also argues that the outcome of Hegel's discussion of actuality is a concept of activity (*Tätigkeit*) (see 151–162).

([7]) "Whenever inner and outer, cause and effect, end and means, subjectivity and objectivity, etc., are one and the same, there is life" (E §337A).

([8]) Pippin, *Hegel's Practical Philosophy*, 41.

([9]) For readings that present Hegel's practical philosophy as a social theory, see Neuhouser, *Foundations of Hegel's Social Theory*; Honneth, *The Pathologies of Individual Freedom* and *Freedom's Right*.

([10]) See E §142A; and Longuenesse, *Hegel's Critique*, 113.

([11]) On some of the different uses of the term 'absolute' as an adjective, see Nuzzo, "The Truth of *Absolutes Wissen*."

([12]) The *modus* of the absolute will ultimately lead Hegel to conclude the *Logic* with an absolute *method*. See SL 12.237/825ff.

([13]) SL 11.31/61–62.

([14]) Pippin argues that the Doctrine of Being presents an argument against classical metaphysical realism, whereas the Doctrine of Essence argues against notions of 'reflected being' while beginning to present Hegel's own idealism by attempting to reconcile traditional dualisms between essence and existence. See his *Hegel's Idealism*, 181.

([15]) See also PS 9.21–22/¶24.

([16]) See for ex. PS 9.18/¶17.

([17]) It is beyond the aims of this chapter to assess Hegel's critique of Spinoza, which, like his critique of Kant, is a matter of much debate. One of the central issues in the debate between Hegel and Spinoza is whether or not Spinoza is guilty of 'acosmism'—the denial of the existence of finite individuals and the belief that only God is real. See Hegel's treatment of Spinoza in LHP 20.157–198/3.252–290; see also Schmusli, "Hegel's Interpretation of Spinoza's Concept of Substance"; Parkinson, 'Hegel, Pantheism, and

Spinoza'; Melamed, "Acosmism or Weak Individuals?"; Machery, *Hegel or Spinoza*; Ravven, "Hegel's Epistemic Turn—or Spinoza's?"; and Newlands, "Hegel's Idealist Reading of Spinoza."

([18]) See, for example, E §§6, 142A, SL 11.380–381/541–542. Hegel writes, "In common life people may happen to call every brainwave, error, evil and suchlike 'actual', as well as very existence, however wilted and transient it may be. But even for our ordinary feeling, a contingent existence does not deserve to be called something-actual in the emphatic sense of the word; what contingently exists has no greater value than that which something-*possible* has; it is an existence which (although it is) can just as well *not be*" (E §6A).

([19]) Hegel writes of Kant's categories of modality, "Possibility should come second; in abstract thought, however, the empty conception comes first" (LHP 20.345/3.439).

([20]) Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1051a30. See also *Metaphysics* 1049b25–30: "For it is always by a thing in *actuality* that another thing becomes *actualized* from what it was potentially; for example, a man by a man and the musical by the musical… . We have stated in our discussion of substance that everything which is being generated is being generated from something and by something, and the later is in the same species as that which will be generated."

([21]) Spinoza's substance/God is not only absolutely necessary, but also absolute actuality: "God's omnipotence has been actual from eternity and will remain in the same actuality to eternity" (*Ethics* 1p17s1).

([22]) Longuenesse notes that the three moments of actuality (formal, real, absolute) mirror the three moments of determinate ground. See *Hegel's Critique*, 121; and SL 11.302–314/456–469.

([23]) Hegel's idea of the necessity of contingency is a topic of much debate. See, for example, Henrich, "Hegels Theorie über Zufall"; Houlgate, "Necessity and Contingency in Hegel's *Science of Logic*"; di Giovanni, "The Category of Contingency in the Hegelian Logic"; Lampert, "Hegel on Contingency, or, Fluidity and Multiplicity"; and Burbidge, *Hegel's Systematic Contingency*.

([24]) See SL 11.279–290/431–443. Hegel writes, "Finite things, therefore, in their indifferent multiplicity are simply this, to be contradictory and *disrupted within themselves and to return into their ground*" (SL 11.289/443).

([25]) The notion of activity is even more explicitly highlighted in the *Encylopedia Logic* account of modality. See esp. E §§147–151.

([26]) Hegel writes in the *Phenomenology*, "This actuality is a plurality of circumstances which breaks up and spreads out endlessly in all directions, backwards into their conditions, sideways into their connections, forwards in their consequences. The

conscientious mind is aware of this nature of the thing and of its relation to it" (PS 9.346/¶642).

([27]) See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B106 and A176/B218–A218/B265. A helpful reconstruction of this chapter that also discusses Hegel's rewriting of Kant's analogies can be found in Houlgate, "Substance, Causality, and the Question of Method." See also Iber, "Übergang zum Begriff."

([28]) Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B220.

([29]) "In der Wechselwirkung ist nun dieser Mechanismus aufgehoben" (SL 11.407/569). It is certainly not the case that the third analogy sublates the second analogy; Kant takes them to be compatible and complementary, and reciprocity is by no means an overcoming of mechanism. On the connection between the second and third analogy, see Watkins, *Kant and the Metaphysics of Causality*, ch. 3 and 4. As Watkins notes, "mutual interaction [occurs] in light of Newton's law of the equality of action and reaction, the action of the repulsive force of the one corresponds to the reaction of the repulsive force of the other" (137). See also ibid., 249–250, and the section on mechanics in Kant, *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, 84–92.

([30]) "The only possible refutation of Spinozism must therefore consist, in the first place, in recognition its standpoint as essential and necessary and then going on to raise that standpoint to the higher one through its own immanent dialectic. The relationship of substance considered simply and solely in its own intrinsic nature leads on to its opposite, to the Concept" (SL 12.15/581).

([31]) Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, §§64, 65.

([32]) My emphasis.

([33]) In stating that in causality we presuppose a power (*Macht*) to act, there is an important argument that Hegel is assuming here from earlier sections of the Doctrine of Essence, namely, that the positing of laws and forces within the mechanistic paradigm do not help to explain or determine the matter at hand with necessity, or as a matter of *essence* (see the chapter "Appearance," SL 11.341–352/499–511; and the section on force and its expression and its resolution in the unity of inner and outer, SL 11.359–368/518–528). This argument is also famous from the "Force and Understanding" chapter in the *Phenomenology*. Laws and forces belong to a previous shape of essence called 'appearance'; they were posited as two different shapes of essence that belonged to a view in which existence was determined merely as appearance, with forces and laws standing behind appearances as their truth. They do not belong to the sphere of actuality because in actuality, we have already achieved the standpoint of the unity of inner and outer as expression and manifestation, meaning that laws and forces that stand behind appearances are no longer valid as explanatory for actuality. The unity of inner and outer is what allows Hegel to suppose that a power to act is presupposed in the expression of a cause. The problem of laws and forces is extremely complex—one of the most difficult in

all of Hegel—and I cannot do justice to the relevant arguments here. For a clear and insightful account of the issues at stake, see Kreines, "Hegel's Critique of Pure Mechanism," 46–50.

([34]) "The passage from necessity to freedom, or from the actual into the Concept, is the hardest one."

([35]) See E §§418A, §423; see also E 9.107/¶¶172–173. For an excellent account of this transition in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* that analyzes the structural homology and difference between life and spirit, see Khurana, "Die Geistige Struktur von Leben und das Leben des Geistes." See also Ng, "Life, Self-Consciousness, Negativity: Understanding Hegel's Speculative Identity Thesis."

([36]) See E §156A.

([37]) These three determinations can also be found in Kant's explication of the natural purpose. See Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, §64.

([38]) I would argue that interpreters such as Pippin and Longuenesse (cited earlier) overemphasize Kantian influences in their reading of actuality, whereas Ferrarin overemphasizes the Aristotelian influence. See Ferrarin, "Hegel on Aristotle's *Ènérgeia*."

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