

RECEPTION, CRITICISM AND APPROPRIATION OF THE METAPHYSICS IN HEGEL'S SCIENCE OF LOGIC*

[RECEPÇÃO, CRITICISMO E APROPRIAÇÃO DA METAFÍSICA NA “CIÊNCIA DA LÓGICA” DE
HEGEL]

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ABSTRACT: The present analysis defends the thesis that Hegel elaborates an original transformation of the concept of metaphysics, assuming its presuppositions as they were developed in the philosophic tradition, that metaphysics is a doctrine of the first principles, a theory of Being, a theodicy and even, as for Kant, a theory of knowledge

KEYWORDS: Criticism; Metaphysics; Logic.

RESUMO: Este artigo defende a tese de que Hegel apresenta uma transformação original do conceito de metafísica, assumindo os pressupostos tal qual foram desenvolvidos na tradição filosófica, de que a metafísica é uma doutrina dos primeiros princípios, uma teoria do Ser, uma teodiceia, e, como também para Kant, uma teoria do conhecimento.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: criticismo; metafísica; lógica.

The assumption that the book *Science of Logic*, from now on cited as *SL*, in Hegel's concept occupies the place which according to philosophic tradition belongs to *Metaphysics* is a commonplace in *Hegelforschung*. To this follows the postulate made by Hegel himself, already in some of his sketches from Jena, of working out a Logic as Metaphysics.¹

The programmatic perspective contained in this statement of a *logic as metaphysics*, in general terms, was pursued by Hegel until the conclusion of his fundamental work the *Science of Logic* [*Wissenschaft der Logik*].

In this way, the *SL* would be the heart and nucleus of power of the whole system, which in some way would always refer to it. However, in the fortunes which befell the reception, appropriation and comprehension of the *SL* and its relationship with metaphysics, such an assumption, according to the perspective adopted in the present paper, gave rise to the possibility of two interpretations: (i) a first way of reading would allow the conclusion of the end of metaphysics and an opening for post-metaphysical contexts. Such a reading can be found in authors as different as Heidegger and Xavier Zubiri, for whom, with Hegel and through the proposal of the *SL*, the

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philosophy understood as metaphysics has reached its end.

In this first way of reading, which from now on will be called *externalist*, occidental metaphysics found its exhaustion in the idea of the *System*, as in authors like Richard Kroner, Gerard Lebrun, Klaus Hartmann, Robert Pippin und Robert Brandom, each with his own specialities and interests, who promote and elaborate an in a certain sense post-metaphysical way of reading of the *SL*.

A second group (ii), in an *inversion*, promotes a metaphysical reading of the *SL*, denying the *SL*'s rupture with metaphysical tradition and pointing out its strings of continuities, especially in Hegel's understanding that the *SL* presents in the idea the self-explicitness of *substance as subject*. This perspective is adopted by authors like Bernard Lakebrink, Bernard Bourgeois, Bernard Mabilie, André Doz, among others. This second way of reading will in the following be called *internalist*.

We are going to develop as central thesis, which binds together and answers to the problem of the *reception, critics and appropriation of metaphysics in the SL* the point of view of a *transformation of metaphysics* in Hegel's *SL*.

To reach this aim, the argumentation in favor of making this thesis explicit will, in the present text, develop through four vectors and moments: (i) exhibition of the general lines of the interpretations mentioned above of *externalists* and *internalists*, presenting their presuppositions and positive and negative points; after that, there will be presented (ii) a preliminary concept of metaphysics, calling into mind the different uses of the term metaphysics in the *SL* and the shifts in the traditional concepts of metaphysics promoted by Hegel after the *SL*. Then (iii), with the help of the *SL*, will be presented the limits of the *internalist* and *externalist* ways of reading, to at last (iv) present and explain the *transformation of metaphysics* through an interpretation of the *SL* as a *metaphysics of its own*.

(I) EXPOSITION OF THE GENERAL LINES OF READING BY EXTERNALISTS AND INTERNALISTS MENTIONED ABOVE

The present research adopts the point of view that such ways of reading as thematize the negation or continuation of metaphysics in Hegel's project of *The Science of Logics* divide, on the one hand, in *externalists*, for those who profess the *SL* a post-metaphysical project, exactly for adopting definitions and starting points foreign to Hegel's thinking in general and the *SL* in particular.

Those interpretations, on the other hand, who situate the *SL* as pure metaphysics and elaborate an exegesis extremely endogen to the *SL* and totally or nearly totally outside the particular sciences in general and non-Hegelian philosophy itself in particular, are called *internalists*.

The *externalist* interpretation can also be called relativistic, because in general it assumes only a part or a passage of the *SL*, in a real *pars pro toto*. The *internalist* can be called dogmatic, because it carries out the inverse procedure of *toto pro pars*, neglecting the necessary dialogue of the whole with its parts and of philosophic talk with the historical specifics of its own presentation.

The externalists can yet be divided into two groups. The first group of externalists follows Kant's way of thinking and includes Hegel in the transcendental project of transforming and substituting metaphysics with epistemology², while another group, of strictly pragmatic orientation, admits the dissolution of metaphysics in epistemology which anchors it, and promotes a second dissolution, this time of epistemology itself. It emerges from her in the frames of a theory of inferential

meaning, guide into some kind of categorical semantics of the first order³.

The present analysis defends the thesis that Hegel elaborates an original transformation of the concept of metaphysics, assuming its presuppositions as they were developed in the philosophic tradition, that metaphysics is a doctrine of the first principles, a theory of Being, a theodicy and even, as for Kant, a theory of knowledge. Not satisfied with these proposals, Hegel re-elaborates them in the light of his time and of the scientific exigencies of his era. He presents *The Science of Logic* as an answer to this new exigency on the metaphysical discourse. To understand this *transformation*, a preliminary understanding of the object *metaphysics* is necessary.

(II) PRESENTATION OF A PRELIMINARY CONCEPT OF METAPHYSICS

Hegel begins his *SL*, as soon as in the preface of the first edition, with an imperious affirmation that metaphysics were pulled out at its roots⁴ and that it would lose its relationship with the individual sciences, turning into an empty discourse dislocated from reality. He further points out that this dislocation of metaphysics were accompanied by a strange paradox: while philosophy had reached its highest grade of self-awareness during the period known as *German Classic Philosophy*, there did not exist at the same time any kind of progress in the studies about logic.

In proclaiming this exhaustion of metaphysics and the non-up-to-dateness of logic in his time, Hegel elaborates his program of rescuing metaphysics as logic. He points out the centrality of logic within philosophical discourse because of its necessary relationship with reality and its conceptual translation⁵.

It is known that the exhaustion of metaphysics Hegel refers to had already been denounced by Kant in his well known text about *The Progress of Metaphysics from Leibniz to Wolff*⁶, and that the hypothesis of metaphysics in the context of Hegel's reflections has to take into account two types of relationship.

A first circle of relationships links the comprehension of metaphysics to the self-production of the logical in reality or to the logical as self-determiner of the concrete sciences, admitting to a point a certain totalizing tone of the elements internal to philosophic discourse in the face of its connections expressive of the externals of the world.

A second circle of relationships assumes a point of view which separates the logical from reality, claiming an incapacity of logic in its totalitarian pretensions when it is put into contact with the expressive capacity of the world.

The relationship between metaphysics and logic determines the understanding of metaphysics itself in Hegel, and such a connection *if P then Q*, appears since his youth. In Jena, Hegel advertizes his courses about *Logic and Metaphysics*, and he follows this course into the structure of his system in its definite form, as it is presented in three versions of the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophic Sciences*.

Hegel's hyperboles about the capacity of Logic as a system and kingdom of pure reason to be capable of reproducing itself in itself and the surrounding reality are more than well-known. In his own words:

Die Logik ist sonach als das System der reinen Vernunft, als das Reich des reinen Gedankens zu fassen. Dieses Reich ist die Wahrheit, wie sie ohne Hülle an und für sich selbst ist. Man kann sich deswegen ausdrücken, daß dieser Inhalt die Darstellung Gottes ist, wie er in seinem ewigen Wesen vor der Erschaffung der Natur und eines endlichen Geistes ist.⁷

Throughout Hegel's project and in all its versions there can be admitted a

conditioning factor in the relationship between logic and metaphysics. In the terms proposed by Franco Chiereghin, it divides in (a) *a concept of negative dialectics structured in terms of a logic as science of finite determinations that have to be criticized and resolved*, and (b) another concept of speculative logic as science of ideas, in a dialectic positive and negative at the same time, constructivist⁸.

And it is this condition inherent to the development of Hegel's own thinking about the structuring relationship of the connection between logic and metaphysics which is at the basis of his reception of the concept of traditional metaphysics, of his criticism and of the transformation which this paper proposes as central in Hegel's project.

(III) THE LIMITS OF THE INTERNALIST AND EXTERNALIST INTERPRETATIONS OF LOGIC AS METAPHYSICS

In the *Logic* of the *Enzyklopädie* in its § 24⁹, Hegel enunciates the unity and concurrence of Logic and Metaphysics, and in the *Science of Logic* he affirms that Objective Logic has taken the place which traditionally belonged to the old metaphysics.¹⁰

In the terms of what has been said before, it can be affirmed with security that Hegel himself makes new proposals and structures the conditions for the existing tension between the internalist interpretation, which advocates the self-sufficiency of the Logic, and that of the externalists, for whom Logic suffers from a crisis of principle for being divided between the Objective and the Subjective¹¹, and that because of this there exists a crisis in logic itself, which reveals it to be incapable to become effective in reality.

In an original way, which in general terms and because of the conclusion it reaches about Hegel's metaphysical project can be counted among the externalists, Michael Theunissen in his monumental *Sein und Schein* affirms that the supremacy that Subjective Logic proposes to have over the Objective one, in the project of *The Science of Logic* as criticism of ontology assumes the structure of a kind of schizophrenic link which is ontologically inconceivable¹².

The internalist ways of reading possess, all in all, the following insufficiencies: they do not recognize experience as an important structuring and forming dimension of concepts, put themselves into the imminence of a circular argumentation proposing some kind of logical-metaphysical on an unconditioned basis, are excessively immanent and build their discourse completely *a priori*.

There can also be added the criticism that the internalist interpretations do not take Kant's advice seriously that concepts without intuition are empty, in other words, a strictly immanent reading loses its objective reference.

The externalist perspectives in their two versions find their limits put down by Hegel himself, when he affirms that *critical philosophy has also transformed metaphysics into logic*. They go wrong when they affirm that logic determinations are essentially subjective¹³.

Putting in mind the continuing of Kant's project in Hegel, the externalists structure a framework of reality on the basis of a contingent conceptuality or, saying it in Kant's terms, in the blindness of *intuitions without concepts*.

We declare, therefore, that there is a *methodological error* in the understanding of the reception, criticism and appropriation of the metaphysics in Hegel's *SL*, as it is generally realized by the *Hegelforschung*.

To illustrate this error, we use Fichte, who, during the discussion about the *status* and the *meaning* of his *Doctrine of Science*, called the attention of his compatriots to the fact that "[...] all philosophic writing demands with reason of its reader that he follow the strings of argument and does not forget anything that came before when he arrives at what comes after"¹⁴.

Fichte demanded that *in philosophizing*, understood as thinking about what has been thought, you cannot dislocate *parts* of the philosophic discourse as a way of explicating the *spirit*, or hold on to the literalness of the discourse about what was thought, the *letter*, as the only *source* of your pretention to truth. Fichte demanded a union between the immanence of the discourse and the transcendence of the spirit inside the global context of the exhibition, so that *justice* could be done to any philosophical discourse.

It seems to us that this could not be different with Hegel's *The Science of Logic*.

(IV) THE TRANSFORMATION OF METAPHYSICS INTO A METAPHYSICS OF ITS OWN IN THE SL

Hegel divided the *Science of Logic* in three parts, which were distributed in two books. The first two parts refer to *Being* and *Essence* and thematize the topics which traditionally belong to the *ontological* [old metaphysics] and *transcendental* [metaphysics of subjectivity] metaphysical traditions, which are: (i) the understanding of metaphysics as *Ontology* or doctrine of categories: *quality, quantity, measure, substance etc*; (ii) the metaphysical reflection of the limits of a *transcendental metaphysics*, in which categorical thinking deducts its underlying epistemology from the movement of the criticism of thinking. From this Hegel promoted the first phase of the reception, criticism and appropriation of metaphysics, that in which the relationship between logic and metaphysics is structured according to the molds of a dialectic metaphysics on negative bases.

In the book *Of Subjective Logic*, Hegel consumes the logical-metaphysical themes of the first section for an elevation [*Erhebung*]. He re-structures the logical patterns of reality's metaphysical self-explanation and neither limits himself to an internalist perspective of thinking, which professes its relationship only with its own intrinsic determinations, nor does he admit only the externalist perspective, which disqualifies global discourse of metaphysics and focuses only on the splits and antinomies of the reflective activity.

In this new way of thinking which is inaugurated in *The Doctrine of Concept*, philosophic reflection opens up to a new configuration of the understanding of logic as metaphysics parting from the subjectivity of the idea, which is not merely subjective, because the logical is itself the subject, not in psychological or transcendental terms, but in the subjective unity of identity and non-identity.

Under the viewpoint of the transformation of metaphysics as *metaphysics itself*, Hegel's logic structures the formal conditions of contextualization of the set of his systematic reflection without therewith pre-determining them. In this new philosophic perspective of the role of logic, its contents will be determined parting from the formal structures, without being already determined in the form of these same structures, in a kind of *logical-metaphysical metaconfiguration*.

This character of a metaconfiguration implies that the transformation of metaphysics contains the conditions that are necessary for logical thinking to be also metaphysical meditation in a double sense: be it in its constructive bias, be it under the

perspective of dissolution.

As synthesis, it can be affirmed that metaphysics itself is the science of the integrality of the logical discourse as metaphysics of the Idea.

26 REFERENCE

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- 1 Thinking here especially in the texts compiled by Georg Lasson under the title of *Jenenser Logik, Metaphysik und Naturphilosophie* published by Felix Meiner.
- 2 Klaus Hartmann, Longuenesse, Pippin etc. generally follow this theory.
- 3 We are thinking here of Sellars, Robert Brandom, Terry Pinkard and J. McDowell.
- 4 Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, (translation indicated p. 7 [B.5, p. 16]) „Die völlige Umänderung, welche die philosophische Denkweise seit etwa fünfundzwanzig Jahren unter uns erlitten, der höhere Standpunkt, den das Selbstbewußtsein des Geistes in dieser Zeitperiode über sich erreicht hat, hat bisher noch wenig Einfluß auf die Gestalt der Logik gehabt. Dasjenige, was vor diesem Zeitraum Metaphysik hieß, ist sozusagen mit Stumpf und Stiel ausgerottet worden und aus der Reihe der Wissenschaften verschwunden.“
- 5 The analysis developed in this section lean on Emmanuel Renaut’s incendiary text, *La métaphysique entre Logique et Sciences Particulières*, in *Logique et Sciences Concrètes*, Paris: L’Harmattan, pp. 13-32.
- 6 To understand the context of the forming of this debate and of the philosophical and categorical determinations of the central proposition of this work, the book “La metafísica de Kant” by Mario Caimi, published at EUDEBA in 1998, continues insuperable.
- 7 Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, (Translation indicated, p. 29 [B.5 - p.43]). In the translation of George di Giovanni “*This realm is truth unveiled, truth as it is in and for itself*. It can therefore be said that this content is the *exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and of a finite spirit*”.
- 8 Franco Chiereghin, *Possibilité de réalisation de la Logique et logicité du Réel : problèmes et apories*, in *Logique et Sciences Concrètes*, Paris: L’Harmattan, p. 129 and following.
- 9 Hegel, *Enz*, § 24, [B.8 - p.80]) „Die Logik fällt daher mit der Metaphysik zusammen, der Wissenschaft der Dinge in Gedanken gefaßt, welche dafür galten, die Wesenheiten der Dinge auszudrücken“.
- 10 Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, (Engl. Transl. p. 42 [B.5 - p. 83]). Die objektive Logik tritt damit vielmehr an die Stelle der vormaligen Metaphysik, als welche das wissenschaftliche Gebäude über die Welt war, das nur durch Gedanken aufgeführt sein sollte.
- 11 See especially Michael Theunissen.
- 12 Michael Theunissen. *Sein und Schein*. p. 392. “*Das bedeutet es konkret, dass die <subjective> Logik die in der <objectiven> kritisch dargestellte Ontologie aufhebt, indem sie deren Wahrheit als eine solche enthüllt, die ontologisch unfassbar bleibt*”.
- 13 Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, (Engl. Transl. p. 30 [B.5 - p.44]). „Die kritische Philosophie machte zwar bereits die Metaphysik zur Logik, aber sie wie der spätere Idealismus gab, wie vorhin erinnert worden, aus Angst vor dem Objekt den logischen Bestimmungen eine wesentliche subjektive Bedeutung: dadurch blieben sie zugleich mit dem Objekte, das sie flohen, behaftet, und ein Ding-an-sich, ein unendlicher Anstoß, blieb als ein Jenseits an ihnen übrig.“
- 14 Fichte, *The Doctrine of Science of 1794*. Portuguese translation Rubens Rodrigues, p. 88.