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INTRODUCCIÓN A *SYSTEM AND COMPLEXITY IN CLASSICAL GERMAN PHILOSOPHY*, VOL. 2

EDITADO POR PABLO PULGAR MOYA & FERNANDA MEDINA

El presente volumen de *Cogency. Journal of Reasoning and Argumentation* se consagra al análisis de la complejidad y la noción de sistema en el marco de la filosofía clásica alemana, con especial atención a los aportes de Schelling, Hegel y Marx. El eje central del volumen es la problemática filosófica de la complejidad, abordada como una cuestión inherente a la relación sistémica entre la totalidad y sus partes, complementando el abordaje del primer volumen, el cual sea concentrado en las filosofías de Kant, Fichte y Hegel. La cuestión de la unidad del sistema y la relación compleja del sistema entre diversos pensadores constituye uno de los dilemas fundamentales de la tradición filosófica tematizada en este volumen. El pensamiento filosófico concebido como sistema unitario caracteriza a buena parte de los autores canónicos del idealismo alemán, quienes, sin embargo, divergen metafísicamente en el criterio de unidad que lo sustenta. Así, la complejidad en las relaciones e interrelaciones sistémicas no solo constituye un objeto de reflexión, sino que también configura el hilo conductor de los debates filosóficos que atraviesan esta tradición. En este sentido, la complejidad como categoría filosófica es el tema que articula y estructura los aportes reunidos en este segundo número del volumen.

El ensayo “The Logic of Primal Willing in Schelling’s *Freedom Essay*” de Gregory S. Moss tiene como propósito la profundización en la complejidad filosófica que comporta el *Freedom Essay* de Schelling, con ello resalta la transformación del concepto de lo absoluto, en tanto que está indisolublemente ligado a las nociones de libertad, razón y la dialéctica de la finitud y la infinitud. La hipótesis central de Moss afirma que, en el pensamiento schellingiano, lo absoluto no puede concebirse meramente como un principio estático, sino como una instancia dinámica de autogeneración y autoafirmación racional, cuya comprensión decanta en la necesidad de comprender el carácter sistemático y racional de su propia teoría de la libertad. El autor desarrolla de modo detallado la idea de que Schelling transita de una concepción de lo absoluto como una entidad constitutivamente indeterminada y sin oposición, a una formulación en la que la libertad aparece como una manifestación de esta misma indeterminación. Para el autor, la clave de esta transición se encuentra en la reinterpretación schellingiana de la razón y en la valoración de la capacidad de autoconsti-

tución de lo absoluto a través de un proceso dialéctico que lleva a la ruptura y la creación de determinaciones opuestas. En este respecto, la hipótesis subyacente al texto sostiene que la libertad solo puede comprenderse como un acto de autoaprendizaje dialéctico de la propia totalidad, donde lo absoluto se compromete en un proceso de autorreconocimiento y autolimitación. Hemos de concebir que en Schelling la libertad no es un mero acto contingente, sino la expresión racional de la necesidad lógica que surge de la estructura misma de lo absoluto, manifestado en la oposición como condición de la libertad absoluta. Siguiendo a Schelling, la propia autoconstitución de la libertad implica que la racionalidad de lo absoluto se despliega netamente en la historia y en la naturaleza, no como un juicio externo, sino como una autocomprensión que, en la medida en que se realiza, se revela como una autoafirmación racional y libre. Moss sugiere que el *Freedom Essay* de Schelling puede ser entendido como el gozne de una visión en la que lo absoluto, en su condición de ser racional, se realiza a sí mismo en un movimiento dialéctico de autolimitación y autoreconocimiento. La hipótesis principal afirma que la verdadera libertad, en la filosofía schellingiana, está en la capacidad del absoluto de autogenerarse en y a través de la diferencia, sin abandonar ni su totalidad, ni la racionalidad que la constituye.

Christopher Satoor en su artículo “Identity-Monism or the Dark Night of the Absolute? Schelling’s System of Identity in the 1801 *Darstellung*” nos comunica que la filosofía de Schelling, particularmente en su *Sistema de Identidad* de 1801, ha sido interpretado y reducido a una figura intermedia, una suerte de gozne entre Kant y Hegel, lo que ha llevado a la constante subestimación de su pensamiento. El escrito denota que su sistema de identidad no se entiende meramente como una forma de monismo oscuro o parmenideo, sino como una propuesta osada y compleja, que ofrece una visión original sobre nociones clásicas de la historia de la filosofía como la pregunta por el ser, por lo absoluto y por la relación sujeto-objeto. El autor indica que la influencia de Spinoza en el pensamiento de Schelling es crucial para entender la idea de la sustancia única y eterna interna en la filosofía schellingiana, la cual manifiesta la identidad como un proceso en el cual todo se unifica en un principio unitario. Esto evita la distinción entre diferentes criterios ontológicos o diferentes niveles de realidad. La influencia de Spinoza es de especial importancia en este artículo, donde se intenta demostrar que el intento de Schelling por construir su sistema a la base de una lógica axiomatizante y rigurosa, en la cual las proposiciones y definiciones se deduzcan de las precedentes, dando forma con ello a un sistema cerrado y coherente. El “método geométrico” spinozista forja la base filosófica de suyo del pensamiento de Schelling en torno a su propia estructura sistemática, en donde lo absoluto se concibe como totalidad total y que en este absoluto todo se encuentra implicado en una única sustancia. Este “monismo” carente de dualidades ni opuestos radicales propuesto interpretativamente por Satoor dialoga directamente con el artículo de Moss, lo que dota al presente volumen de un doble análisis sobre marco de unidad y de autenticidad fundamental de Schelling. La filosofía de Schelling en 1801 como un monismo de identidad y de inmanencia, siguiendo a

Satoor, manifiesta un proceso en el que lo absoluto se autodespliega y autoconstituye. Es en 1801 donde podemos encontrar las primeras trazas de su filosofía absoluta de la identidad, de su idea de sistema en tanto estructura lógica y ontológica que da paso a repensar bajo una nueva mirada la realidad, la totalidad y la relación entre lo finito y lo infinito en la tradición metafísica occidental.

En “Hegel’s Philosophy of Nature and Its Systematic Value”, Silvia Locatelli se concentra en dar cuenta de la relación problemática entre la *Filosofía de la Naturaleza* hegeliana y el resto de su sistema filosófico, así como las diversas interpretaciones y críticas surgidas en el último tiempo sobre esta relación, lo que conlleva a diversos desafíos hermenéuticos y filosóficos que su abordaje conlleva. El lugar de la *Filosofía de la Naturaleza* en el sistema de las ciencias hegeliano constituye un momento necesario que articula dialécticamente lógica, naturaleza y espíritu. Sin concebir esta dimensión filosófica como una esfera empírica separada o como epílogo ontológico, Hegel integra a la naturaleza como expresión concreta de categorías racionales. Esto mismo implica que el concepto de naturaleza da cuenta de la exteriorización del espíritu en su expresión más materializada, como mediación entre lógica pura y realización del espíritu absoluto. De esta manera, podemos concebir que la naturaleza no es simplemente un objeto de estudio empírico, sino una manifestación especulativa del despliegue racional de la totalidad sistémica, y por ello su comprensión debe inscribirse en la estructura sistemática. Locatelli nos indica que esta aseveración no está libre de tensiones, pues en Hegel es posible advertir un carácter dual del concepto de naturaleza: (i) como expresión racional de las categorías, y (ii), empíricamente, como ámbito contingente y mutable. El debate contemporáneo en torno al concepto de naturaleza ha surgido a raíz de esta ambivalencia, lo que es ilustrado en el artículo por la autora. La interpretación que defiende Silvia Locatelli enfatiza que Hegel no absolutiza la propia contingencia de la naturaleza, pero sí le exige a la ciencia natural el ser comprendido bajo sus propios límites racionales, sin con ello ser un simple reflejo de principios racionales. Nos enteramos de que Hegel propone una correspondencia ni causal ni deductiva, sino una correspondencia mediada dialécticamente en donde las leyes naturales no devienen de la lógica por simple deducción, sino que son resultado, en su materialidad y concretitud, de determinaciones racionales del pensar. La filosofía de la naturaleza hegeliana, según la autora, debe integrar contingencia del progreso científico sin renunciar a su función sistémica, entendiendo con ello que las leyes naturales representan momentos especulativos dentro del despliegue racional del espíritu. De esta manera, la *Filosofía de la Naturaleza* en Hegel no se entiende como residuo empirista ni como obsoleta construcción lógica cerrada, sino como componente esencialmente especulativo del sistema que articula y media entre lógica y ciencia empírica.

Finalmente, en el texto “Crítica y sistema complejo del Marx tardío en su confrontación con Hegel” de Pablo Pulgar Moya la temática se concentra en la relación entre Hegel y Marx en torno a las determinaciones complejas. Se enfatiza en el artículo que, con la consolidación del paradigma contemporáneo de la *Neue Marx-Lektüre* en los ‘70, surgió una

nueva forma de leer la obra tardía de Marx que establece distinciones determinadas entre los niveles de abstracción de las categorías marxianas a la luz de elementos epistémicamente densos de la lógica-metafísica hegeliana. La reconstrucción formal-estructural de conceptos clave como valor, dinero y capital se comprenden como partes conceptuales de un sistema interconectado de determinaciones negativas. Para el autor Marx presenta *El capital* como un sistema autorreferencial y donde el desarrollo sigue una lógica interna que revela la estructura del capital. La forma valor, en específico, se erige como el puntapié inicial metodológico que guía la exposición de la totalidad del sistema de la economía política. Pulgar Moya destaca que la influencia de la *Lógica* de Hegel es clave, pero Marx adopta de él la forma metafísico-sistemática de exposición, no las propias determinaciones de esta metafísica especulativa, dando cuenta de una relación estructural en el cómo se denotan expositivamente las contradicciones internas del propio sistema, haciendo de la crítica el principio mismo de su organización y despliegue categorial. El texto sostiene como hipótesis que el método crítico de Marx se configura en torno a una exposición sistemática que reconstruye la sociedad burguesa como totalidad sistémica y estructurada, a partir de las formas sociales complejas que toman como punto de partida la noción de valor. La conclusión del autor apunta a que la crítica de Marx debe entenderse como una forma de exposición sistemática que, en lugar de describir simplemente la naturaleza del capital, lo descompone conceptualmente en un sistema complejo, revelando la lógica interna de su reproducción. Así, el sistema no es solo el objeto del análisis, sino también el modo mismo de exposición: una totalidad estructurada que, al desarrollarse, expone sus contradicciones internas.

Esta batería de textos que compone este segundo volumen se complementa con aquellos publicados en el primer volumen, enfocado en las filosofías sistemáticas de Kant, Fichte y de Hegel con artículos de Zdravko Kobe (Liubliana), Jimena Solé (Buenos Aires), Sandra Palermo (Pavia), Wagner de Avila Quevedo (Río de Janeiro), Anton Fr. Koch (Heidelberg) y Bruna Picas i Prats (Warwick/Barcelona), además de una breve introducción por parte de los editores de ambos volúmenes, Pablo Pulgar Moya (Santiago de Chile) y Fernanda Medina (Santiago de Chile).

“LA IDEA ABSOLUTA” DE LA CIENCIA DE LA LÓGICA. RECURSOS METODOLÓGICOS PARA EL CUMPLIMIENTO DEL DESTINO DE LA IDEA

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Resumen: *El capítulo de “La idea absoluta” da cierre a la Ciencia de la lógica de Hegel presentando el método propio del pensar puro. En el presente trabajo, nos proponemos defender la tesis de que el método absoluto allí presentado viene a cumplimentar una de las tareas centrales de la idea absoluta, a saber, la reunión de los polos subjetivo y objetivo de la idea. Esto se exhibirá mostrando que el desarrollo del método revela dos dimensiones, una primera dimensión metodológica, una segunda dimensión operacional. En otras palabras, en primer lugar, el método se revelará como la dinámica metodológica o procedimental de la Lógica; en segundo lugar, el método se revelará como las operaciones y naturaleza misma del pensar, que, a fin de cuentas, termina por coincidir con la dinámica interna de todo objeto. Ahora bien, para que esta articulación sea exitosa, se deberá rendir cuenta respecto de la articulación entre el método absoluto (es decir, la idea absoluta) y el curso lógico precedente que desemboca en la deducción de la idea absoluta. El fracaso en este último punto establecería –entre otros problemas– una nueva escisión entre el desarrollo del objeto del pensar puro y la estructura de este pensar puro.*

Palabras clave: *Hegel – Método – Idea absoluta – Lógica – Objeto*

Abstract: *The Chapter “The Absolute Idea” concludes Hegel’s Science of Logic by presenting the method of pure thinking. In this paper, I aim to defend the thesis that the absolute method introduced therein fulfills one of the central tasks of the absolute idea: the reconciliation of the subjective and objective poles of the idea. This reconciliation will be demonstrated by showing that the development of the method reveals two distinct dimensions: a methodological dimension and an operational dimension. In other words, the method will first be revealed as the methodological or procedural dynamics of the Logic. Second, the method will be shown as the operations and very nature of thinking, which ultimately coincides with the internal dynamics of every object. However, for this articulation to be successful, it is essential to account for the connection between*

the absolute method (that is, the absolute idea) and the preceding logical course that leads to the deduction of the absolute idea. Failure in this regard would result in several problematic issues, most notably establishing a new division between the development of the object of pure thinking and the structure of this pure thinking itself.

Keywords: *Hegel – Method – Absolute idea – Logic – Object*

I- Introducción

La idea absoluta de la *Ciencia de la lógica* es un capítulo destacable por su riqueza conceptual. Allí, Hegel nos ofrece revelaciones metodológicas fundamentales sobre el funcionamiento de la *Lógica* como un todo, lo que nos permite releer esta obra desde una nueva perspectiva. En el presente trabajo, nos proponemos evaluar de qué manera la faceta metodológica de la idea absoluta hace un aporte al cumplimiento de la tarea fundamental de la idea. En este sentido, sostendremos como tesis principal que la tarea de la idea es la reunión de los polos subjetivo y objetivo y que esto se cumplimenta finalmente a través de la consideración metodológica que encontramos en la idea absoluta. En pocas palabras, creemos que la idea absoluta presenta una articulación entre sujeto, objeto y método, y que sólo con la integración del método se da la adecuada articulación entre los extremos mencionados. Por su parte, la debida articulación entre sujeto y objeto debe darse, también, con una debida articulación entre idea absoluta (como método) y el proceso lógico precedente.

Para demostrar esto, me propongo comenzar por una breve explicación del lugar de la idea absoluta en relación con el texto precedente. Esto permitirá comprender de qué manera se ha ido desarrollando la tarea fundamental de la idea en los capítulos precedentes y, por tanto, qué debe esperarse de la idea absoluta. Luego, me ocuparé de discutir la interpretación de Angelica Nuzzo. Esto nos permitirá mostrar por qué debe entenderse que el método coadyuba a la articulación entre sujeto y objeto y, en consecuencia, a la cumplimentación de la tarea de la idea.

II- La idea absoluta en su contexto

Para entender qué función tiene el tratamiento del método en la idea absoluta es necesario retroceder un poco y echar una mirada sobre la sección “La idea”. Aquí me propongo ofrecer una breve explicación de cómo se desarrolla “La idea” y hacia dónde se dirige este desarrollo. Aquí no podré dar razones detalladas de todo lo que discuto; el lector debe pensar esta sección como un encuadramiento teórico que ofrece una línea de lectura sobre “La idea absoluta”.

En este orden de cosas, entendemos que el objetivo y tema de “La idea” es el concepto adecuado (Hegel, GW 12, 173). En otras palabras, se trata de la correspondencia de los polos que componen a la idea, a saber, el polo subjetivo y el polo objetivo (GW 12, 174). Esta temática u objetivo se encuentra desarrollado de distintas maneras en las respectivas subsecciones de “La idea”.¹ Lo encontraremos en “La vida”, “La idea del conocer” y “La idea absoluta”.

1 Para Schäfer [2002, 244], el lugar sistemático y metodológico de la idea en el contexto de la doctrina del concepto radica en su ser la unidad de objeto y sujeto. La sección “subjetividad” es, para Schäfer, la estructura de la productividad noética del concepto y la sección “objetividad” presenta el producto noemático del concepto. La doctrina de la idea tematiza la unidad de estos dos extremos. Esta unidad no es, según Schäfer [2002, 245-6], estática, sino que requiere un autoperfeccionamiento que se da en distintos niveles de realización. Esta unidad se da en una dinámica de autoconocimiento en

Ahora bien, debería llamar la atención del lector el que la correspondencia entre estos dos polos tenga que ser desarrollada en tantas subsecciones. Lo que sucede es que tal correspondencia requiere una serie de complejas articulaciones que resultan parcialmente inadecuadas o incompletas. Por ejemplo, en el capítulo que da comienzo a “La idea”, es decir, “La vida”, se revela una primera articulación parcialmente exitosa entre polo subjetivo y objetivo. ¿Qué encontramos allí? Encontramos la materialidad insuflada por el alma.² La vida es, precisamente, la presencia de la subjetividad en la objetividad o, en términos de la tradición metafísica, la presencia del alma en el cuerpo. No se trata de otra cosa que la vinculación entre sujeto y objeto. Y tal vinculación se da imponiendo la subjetividad cierta articulación conceptual sobre la materia (GW 12, 180). En otras palabras, si la subjetividad es el concepto concebido en los términos planteados por Hegel en “La subjetividad”, es decir, con la respectiva articulación lógica de los momentos universal, particular y singular y las dinámicas lógicas también allí explicadas, entonces el objeto deberá estar articulado en su misma inmanencia de manera correspondiente. De esta manera, el objeto, la materia, se convierte en un ser vivo con género, especie e individuo; se instaura el movimiento de la vida, reproducción, alimentación, muerte, etc. Esta es la dinámica conceptual plasmada en la materialidad misma.³

Pero esta plasmación de lo subjetivo en lo objetivo es insuficiente. En esta insuflación o hundimiento del alma en la materia perdura cierta inmediatez que debe ser subsanada. Esta inmediatez la advertimos en que la animalidad no reflexiona sobre su subjetividad y sobre el vínculo entre los polos mencionados. La realización plena de la vinculación entre sujeto y objeto o, en otras palabras, la realización plena del concepto adecuado (que no es otra cosa que la correspondencia plena entre concepto y objeto), requiere no sólo que el objeto sea

el que la subjetividad absoluta pone a la objetividad y se conoce a sí misma en ella. Por su parte, ni la objetividad ni la subjetividad son tampoco instancias estáticas y concluidas, sino que se gestan en la idea y se articulan y vinculan a través de su movimiento. Esta compleja dinámica –que a fin de cuentas es la dialéctica– es lo que está a la base de la teoría de la verdad de Hegel como correspondencia. Esta correspondencia se revela a fin de cuentas como una auto-correspondencia de la subjetividad absoluta (247). De manera similar, Pippin (2019) entiende la dinámica lógico-conceptual hegeliana como una reelaboración del yo trascendental kantiano y de yo y no-yo fichteano. En la *Lógica*, según Pippin, se trata del pensar que se piensa a sí mismo, poniéndose a sí mismo como objetividad. Así, la tarea de la *Lógica* es establecer los requisitos a priori de *pensabilidad*. Para de Vos (1983, 14), en la idea, el concepto alcanza su verdadera objetividad (que es la vida), puesta en unidad con los momentos de la subjetividad (idea del conocer).

2 Sobre esta insuflación o hundimiento del alma en la materia véase Herszenbaun (2023, nota 3, pp. 68-9).

3 Véase Pippin (2019), cap. 8. Assalone (en prensa) hace hincapié en que la vida es adecuada al concepto como su objeto en tanto es, como él, autofundante. El autor defiende la conexión entre el sentido lógico de la vida y el desarrollo de la vida en la *Realphilosophie* de Hegel, además de considerar que la forma del juicio ocupa un lugar preponderante en la vida lógica, en la articulación vital entre sujeto y objeto y, finalmente, en la comprensión de la asimilación como un elemento central del desarrollo de lo vivo. Schäfer (2002, 249) explica la unidad inmediata de subjetividad y objetividad en la idea de vida entendiendo que en cada ser vivo está la vida universal como un todo. Sin embargo, esta es la manera inicial de esta unidad inmediata. Schäfer advierte que la vida incurre en un proceso de división y especificación interna y, finalmente, el cuerpo viviente será lo que vincule al alma como singularidad subjetiva con la vida universal y natural.

idéntico al concepto/sujeto; se requiere además que el sujeto sepa de sí y de esta identidad. En la vida, lo que encontramos es una identidad inmediata. El objeto se corresponde con la estructura del concepto. Pero no sabe de tal conceptualidad, de tal subjetividad ni de su correspondencia. Por eso, debe introducirse una operación espiritual, el conocimiento.

Así llegamos a “La idea del conocer”, el segundo capítulo de “La idea”. El conocer del que aquí se trata es caracterizado por Hegel como un conocer finito que busca (Hegel GW 12, 198-9).⁴ Debe entenderse entonces que se trata de un conocer vinculado a la finitud y al orden del entendimiento.⁵ El conocer es caracterizado también como un impulso, una tendencia. Así, el conocer se presenta como un intento de la subjetividad de alcanzar la objetividad. Si se conoce, es decir, si la subjetividad se extiende hasta la objetividad y la alcanza, en efecto se da la vinculación entre los polos subjetivo y objetivo. Y aquí esto se daría de una nueva manera, ya no como la mera presencia inmediata del concepto en la materia, como ocurría en “La vida”. Aquí se da una nueva vinculación, que podríamos entender de carácter espiritual. Es decir, mientras la vida brinda una vinculación inmediata en el plano mismo de la materialidad o, en otras palabras, en el polo mismo de la objetividad, el conocer brinda una unión en el polo de la subjetividad. El conocer une a sujeto (o concepto) y objeto en el sujeto mismo.

Ahora bien, los términos en los que el propio Hegel plantea la cuestión nos dan indicio de su insuficiencia. Sabemos que aquello que sea signado como finito o intelectual en el pensamiento de Hegel ha de ser entendido como insuficiente. ¿En qué consiste esta insuficiencia? Aquí no podemos dar una descripción completa de todas las insuficiencias que maculan a la idea del conocer.⁶ Bastará con decir que el conocer aquí considerado permanece con un carácter formal y subjetivo. Ya sea que se trate del conocer analítico o sintético, en ambos casos hay una incapacidad de alcanzar plenamente al objeto. En

4 En congruencia con esto, en “La idea absoluta” Hegel describe al conocer finito intelectual, en contraposición al conocer absoluto (GW 12, 241-2). La descripción que Hegel hace de este conocer finito concuerda con lo que encontramos en “La idea del conocer”. También en “La idea absoluta” (GW 12, 248) se caracteriza a la idea del conocer como *conocer que busca*.

5 En este sentido, Marrades Millet (1985, 404-6) y Rinaldi (2012, 65) sostienen que “La idea del conocer” pertenece al terreno del conocer finito, vinculado al trabajo de las ciencias empíricas. Por su parte, Bowman entiende que en “La idea del conocer”, particularmente, en “El conocer sintético”, se presenta el modo más elevado del conocer finito. Para Bowman (2013, 163-4, 167-169, 171) Hegel se hace eco de la crítica de Jacobi al método axiomático de la metafísica, pero rechaza la solución jacobina. Así, si acepta la crítica de Jacobi al holismo y relacionalismo del método axiomático del conocer finito, no acepta la solución jacobina de recurrir a la inmediatez, proponiendo en cambio un relacionalismo y holismo que –según Hegel cree– no desembocarían en el nihilismo, ateísmo y determinismo. En el pasaje de “La idea del conocer” a “La idea absoluta” tendríamos una comprensión especulativa de la forma más elevada del conocer finito (el sistema axiomático). Así, los elementos de esta forma de conocer finito son recuperados y reelaborados, según Bowman, en el conocer especulativo. Esto no obsta a que el planteo de Bowman sugiera un hiato entre las categorías de la finitud (parcialmente distorsivas de la realidad) y el nivel del conocer especulativo –un hiato que el propio autor intenta salvar—. Para una discusión de la tesis de Bowman, véase Herszenbaun (2023, 58-9). Sobre la limitación del conocer sintético y, en particular, de la geometría, véase Hegel (GW 12, 226-7).

6 Para un estudio más detallado, remitimos a Herszenbaun (2022) y Herszenbaun (2024).

el conocer analítico, concluimos con una representación subjetiva del objeto que deja un resto incognoscible, la cosa en sí, no asido por la subjetividad. Además, el conocer analítico muestra allí su falta de síntesis, su incapacidad para producir lo diferente. En el conocer sintético, se estudia los límites del método geométrico. El problema allí es nuevamente la formalidad y vacuidad del pensar. El conocer sintético no es capaz de producir plenamente al objeto en su singularidad y debe proceder por medio de inferencias meramente formales, confiando en la legitimidad epistémica de la forma judicativa, y procediendo con inferencias formales unidireccionales.⁷

En otras palabras, la idea del conocer pone a lo real en el polo de la objetividad y piensa a la subjetividad de un modo tal que termina por resultarle imposible alcanzar plenamente a su objeto. Así, mientras la vida presentaba una unión inmediata entre concepto y objeto en el plano de la objetividad, el conocer presenta un intento de unión en el plano de la subjetividad. Pero fracasa por carecer de una concepción dialéctica-especulativa del pensar, lo que es otra forma de decir, por tener una concepción realista del objeto y no reconocer el carácter verdaderamente sintético del pensar (es decir, su carácter productor de su objeto).

Finalmente, la idea del bien (la idea práctica) revela también su insuficiencia, toda vez que invierte la ubicación de lo real. Si la idea del conocer (la idea teórica) ponía lo real en el polo objetivo haciéndolo inalcanzable para el sujeto, la idea del bien pone a lo real al interior de la subjetividad. Se trata de la doctrina ética kantiana, donde lo real, lo absoluto, se da por el mandato de la razón práctica, que para Hegel hace total abstracción de la realidad material y objetiva. Frente a la idea de bien, la materialidad misma se ve marcada como lo nulo, lo malo o lo indiferente. De esta manera, el intento de reunir objetividad y subjetividad se da también al interior de la subjetividad misma, pero de manera práctica, es decir, definiendo a lo real como algo distinto de la realidad material misma. Esto, por supuesto, conduce a una nueva insuficiencia, pues impide la vinculación de los extremos deseados.⁸

7 Según Schäfer [2002, 250-251], las ideas están articuladas silogísticamente; en el caso de la idea del conocer, se vinculan los extremos subjetividad y objetividad a través del conocer como término medio. Sin embargo, el problema radica en que en la idea del conocer permanecemos en la formalidad, universalidad, particularidad y en la presuposición de un objeto trascendente. En el caso del conocer analítico, se trata de la conversión de lo encontrado en una nota universal, dejando como resto inasible a la cosa en sí y permaneciendo en una dependencia respecto del contenido singular. En el conocer sintético, a través del método axiomático se intenta una conceptualización y unificación de la multiplicidad y diversidad del mundo objetivo. Pero este intento no llega a alcanzar la concreción de la singularidad, manteniéndose así también en la universalidad y particularidad.

8 Sobre la idea de bien, véase Pippin [2019], cap. 9. Para Manchisi [2024, 33], la idea de bien en la *Lógica* de Hegel es un análisis filosófico de la relación entre racionalidad práctica y la realidad. El autor entiende que la idea absoluta es la realidad en sí misma racional que se conoce y se descubre racional. Esto se logra a través de la actividad del concepto. Por tanto, la idea de bien o idea práctica agrega a la ecuación la relación práctica del concepto con el objeto. El autor entiende que la idea de bien permite concebir a la realidad como orientada teleológicamente hacia la realización de la razón y, en consecuencia, evaluar esta realización. Esto, entonces, permite a Hegel atribuir al ser y al conocer un carácter teleológico-evaluativo [p. 41].

Siguiendo este recorrido, Hegel presenta a la idea absoluta como la superación y reunión de la idea teórica y práctica. También señala que aquí ya no nos encontramos simplemente en el terreno del conocer finito que busca, sino que estamos en el terreno del conocer absoluto, que estará marcado por el carácter dialéctico-especulativo. Entonces, siguiendo el hilo conductor de “La idea”, debemos analizar cómo se da la reunión de los polos subjetivo y objetivo en la idea absoluta. El destino de la idea es, precisamente, alcanzar una vinculación absoluta de estos polos y tal cosa debería darse en “La idea absoluta”. En la sección siguiente, trabajaremos sobre la idea absoluta. Allí presentaremos una clave de lectura alternativa a la de Angelica Nuzzo, con el fin de hacer notar que la introducción del método en tal capítulo (o, en otras palabras, la deducción del método a partir del curso lógico precedente) responde a la tarea primordial de la idea, i.e., el método coadyuba a la ya mencionada reunión de los polos de la idea.

III - Ciencia, necesidad y reunión: método

En “The End of Hegel’s Logic: Absolute Idea as Absolute Method” (Nuzzo 2005), Angelica Nuzzo presenta su interpretación del capítulo final de la *Ciencia de la lógica*, “La idea absoluta”. Allí, Nuzzo sostiene que el objetivo de “La idea absoluta” es mostrar la necesidad de la conversión de la idea absoluta en método. Esta conversión es requerida para exhibir el carácter necesario del fin de la lógica, la necesidad que rige al proceso lógico deductivo precedente a este capítulo y para la conversión de la lógica en ciencia, sistema y fundamento del sistema filosófico. En pocas palabras, Angelica Nuzzo justifica su interpretación de la siguiente manera: el proceso lógico que seguimos a lo largo de la *Lógica* lleva a la deducción inmanente de la idea absoluta. Sin embargo, la *absolutez* de la idea absoluta requiere que ella sea un requisito sin el cual todo el proceso lógico precedente a partir del cual ella ha sido deducida se vuelva “error”, “opinión”, “arbitrariedad”. En su interpretación, la autora va a dar un lugar central al siguiente pasaje de la *Lógica*:

La idea absoluta, tal como ha resultado, es la identidad de la idea teórica y de la práctica, cada una de las cuales, de por sí todavía unilateral. tiene dentro de sí la idea misma solamente como un más allá buscado y como una meta inalcanzada; por eso es cada una de ellas una *síntesis de tendencias*: lo mismo tiene dentro de sí la idea que n o la tiene; pasa de un pensamiento al otro, pero no los conjunta, sino que se queda estancada dentro de la contradicción de ambos. La idea absoluta, en cuanto concepto racional que, dentro de su realidad, sólo consigo mismo coincide, es por mor de esta inmediatez de la identidad objetiva, por un lado, el retorno a la *vida*; pero ella ha asumido precisamente en el mismo sentido esta forma de su inmediatez, así como la suprema oposición dentro de sí. El concepto no es solamente *alma*, sino concepto subjetivo, libre, que es para sí y tiene, por eso, *personalidad*: el concepto práctico, determinado en y para sí, objetivo, que, en cuanto persona, es subjetividad impenetrable, átoma; el cual, precisamente en el

mismo sentido, no es empero singularidad excluyente, sino que es de por sí *universalidad* y conocer, y que tiene dentro de su otro su *propia* objetividad por objeto. Todo el resto es error, turbiedad, opinión, tendencia, arbitrio y caducidad; sólo la idea absoluta es *ser*, *vida imperecedera*, *verdad que se sabe a sí misma*, y es *toda verdad*. (Hegel, GW 12, 236).

Este pasaje con el que comienza “La idea absoluta” puede ser entendido de la siguiente manera: en línea con lo que hemos explicado en la sección precedente, la idea absoluta es aquí presentada como una superación de los momentos previos de la idea (vida, conocer, idea teórica/idea práctica). En este complejo pasaje se recorre rápidamente estas instancias anteriores, se indica sus respectivas deficiencias y cómo tales instancias vuelven a aparecer en la idea absoluta, cómo son recuperadas en la idea absoluta de una nueva manera que supera dichas insuficiencias. Así, la idea absoluta es vida, pero no es vida en su mera inmediatez; la idea es alma, pero no sólo alma, sino concepto que es para sí; la idea es concepto práctico, pero no es mera individualidad, sino universalidad y tiene por objeto la objetividad de sí en su otro y no en su mera interioridad subjetiva. Una vez resumido este recorrido y el posicionamiento de todo lo precedente al interior de la idea absoluta, Hegel agrega una frase a la que Nuzzo le dará un lugar fundamental: “Todo el resto es error, turbiedad, opinión, tendencia, arbitrio y caducidad; sólo la idea absoluta es *ser*, *vida imperecedera*, *verdad que se sabe a sí misma*, y es *toda verdad*”.

Según Nuzzo, aquí Hegel indica una contraposición entre idea absoluta y todo el curso lógico precedente que deriva en ella. Todo lo que no es idea absoluta es marcado con el carácter del error, la opinión y la arbitrariedad. Así, contrapuesto a la idea absoluta, todo el proceso lógico precedente es, de momento, error y mera opinión arbitraria. El carácter absoluto de la idea absoluta está dado porque es ella la responsable de superar el carácter arbitrario del proceso lógico precedente. Ella es la responsable de brindarle necesidad. Si no fuera así, entiende Nuzzo, si no dependiera de la idea absoluta el darle esta legitimidad epistémica a todo el curso lógico precedente, la idea absoluta no sería propiamente *absoluta*.

Entonces, una primera cuestión que debe señalarse es que, para alcanzar la *absolutesz* de la idea absoluta, esta debe contraponerse al proceso lógico precedente. Esto quiere decir que es requerido que la idea absoluta no se confunda sin más con el curso lógico precedente y que sea comprendida como un resultado diferenciado de dicho proceso. En otras palabras, debemos pensar un hiato que separa a la idea absoluta del proceso lógico y que, como resultado de él, lo convalida retroactivamente (cuestión sobre la que ya volveremos).

Una segunda cuestión que debemos considerar es, precisamente, el efecto retroactivo que posee la idea absoluta sobre el proceso lógico precedente. La tarea que, en este sentido, le será propia, según Nuzzo, tiene que ver con obturar lecturas metodológicas alternativas sobre la *Lógica* que impedirían el carácter absoluto de la indagación llevada a cabo.

En otras palabras, Nuzzo plantea la posibilidad de la amenaza de que la reflexión externa o conocer finito “secuestre” el proceso lógico. Es decir, cabe la posibilidad de que el

pensar finito intente releer retrospectivamente el proceso lógico precedente desde su propia concepción metodológica y epistemológica. Esto implicaría que el pensar finito imponga exteriormente un método exógeno a la *Lógica*, con un instrumento formal preconcebido, identificando arbitrariamente a cualquier forma lógica precedente como lo absoluto, adoptando un inicio arbitrario, desconociendo el fin necesario de la lógica y, en consecuencia, cayendo en el progreso infinito. Esto implicaría incurrir en todos los defectos propios del entendimiento finito denunciados por Hegel a lo largo de la *Lógica*.

Ambas cuestiones se vinculan. Si la idea absoluta no logra demostrar la necesidad del curso lógico precedente, este curso deviene mera opinión, arbitrariedad y error. Para salvar la necesidad y científicidad del curso lógico precedente, la idea absoluta debe reinterpretar de manera retrospectiva al curso lógico precedente del que ella misma es deducida. Esto debe hacerse, ahora, con las categorías adecuadas del pensar dialéctico-especulativo y esto se hace, precisamente, con las categorías metodológicas de la idea absoluta. En otras palabras, las categorías metodológicas de la idea absoluta expresan la dinámica del pensar especulativo y permiten releer el proceso lógico precedente y determinar su necesidad y científicidad. Si no se alcanzaran las categorías metodológicas que permiten esta tarea, la reflexión externa y el pensar intelectual finito podrían imponer una metodología ulterior con los defectos mencionados (adoptando un elemento finito como lo absoluto y como clave de lectura, utilizando un instrumental metodológico exógeno y formal, optando por un comienzo arbitrario y no comprendiendo la necesidad del final de la *Lógica* y, por tanto, continuando *ad infinitum* la deducción inmanente).

Para desbaratar esta amenaza, la idea absoluta debe obturar la posibilidad de la intromisión de un método exterior y convertirse ella misma en método.⁹ Volverse método significa llevar a cabo una relectura retrospectiva de todo el proceso lógico precedente y así reordenarlo de manera especulativa. Así, se deduce el método, que es este conocimiento retrospectivo, que permite comprender la dinámica especulativa detrás del proceso lógico, fundamentar su necesidad. Lo que hace el método es determinar el proceso lógico con sus determinaciones formales metodológicas (repensar el proceso según lo que Nuzzo llama el silogismo del método), y así entenderlo en términos de inicio (*Anfang*), avance (*Fortgang*) y fin (*Ende*). Es decir, advertir que distintos pasos del desarrollo lógico pueden ser entendidos bajo estas categorías de *inicio* y *avance*. Esta relectura retrospectiva de la *Lógica* establece la necesidad y absolutez del final alcanzado; y convierte a la *Lógica* en ciencia y sistema, que ha de ser el fundamento para el sistema filosófico integral.¹⁰

9 Cabría preguntarse si esta amenaza que presenta Nuzzo no habría sido ya desbaratada en otras instancias de la *Lógica*. No podemos explorar esta hipótesis aquí.

10 Interpreto que Nuzzo (2005, 195) considera que para que el proceso sea el desarrollo de la idea y sus determinaciones, tiene que haber una recursividad que permita atribuir todo lo anterior a la idea. Esto lo logra el método al volver sobre lo anterior y entenderlo como desarrollado según la forma de la idea, e impulsado por la fuerza de la idea. Además, esta recur-

Hasta aquí, entonces, la interpretación de Nuzzo. Veamos qué podemos aceptar y qué no. Debe aclararse que mi intención no es hacer un estudio integral (o una refutación) de la obra de Nuzzo, sino valerme de dicha obra como un interlocutor para pensar mi propia lectura de la idea absoluta. En congruencia, convendría brindar un breve resumen de los puntos que aceptaremos de la posición de Nuzzo y aquellos que no, para luego pasar a un desarrollo en el que explicaremos nuestra posición en diálogo con Nuzzo.

Creo que podemos intentar resumir la cuestión de la siguiente manera. Se concede a Nuzzo: (1) Que la idea absoluta es lo que da, en última instancia, cientificidad y sistematicidad a la *Lógica*. (2) Que la idea absoluta no puede quedar hundida en la inmediatez del curso precedente. La idea absoluta no es, sin más, la totalidad del curso precedente. Necesitamos la derivación del método. Esta derivación del método hace a la cientificidad y sistematicidad. Sin embargo, sobre el significado de esta derivación del método tendremos que hacer más especificaciones. Por otra parte, nuestras discrepancias con Nuzzo: (3) No se necesita a la idea absoluta para demostrar la *necesidad* del curso lógico precedente. (4) Con lo cual, su lectura del pasaje citado (GW 12, 236) puede ser impugnada y presentarse una lectura alternativa. En nuestra opinión, este pasaje se refiere a la arbitrariedad de todo lo que se presente contrapuesto al concepto y no se refiere *per se* al curso lógico precedente. (5) Por último, la posición de Nuzzo es ambivalente en lo que se refiere a la función que cumple el método. Nosotros entendemos que la diferenciación de la idea absoluta respecto del curso precedente se necesita para articular debidamente los polos objetivo y subjetivo de la idea. Esto se debe a (6) que la derivación del método es tanto una derivación de los procedimientos lógicos como de las operaciones fundamentales del pensar, esto es, Hegel conjuga dos niveles, uno metodológico y otro operacional; la caracterización del método es una caracterización final del pensar puro. Nuzzo es, en mi opinión, ambigua con respecto a los puntos 5 y 6 mencionados.

Intentemos, entonces, presentar nuestra posición siguiendo estos puntos como hilo conductor. Cabe repetir que nuestra intención no es, en última instancia, refutar a Nuzzo, sino utilizar su interpretación como un interlocutor que nos permita pensar a la idea absoluta y exponer con más claridad nuestra propia lectura.

Comencemos, entonces, por uno de los puntos que concedemos a Nuzzo. En efecto, la idea absoluta no puede ser confundida sin más con el proceso lógico precedente. Debe haber una suerte de hiato entre el proceso del cual se deriva la idea absoluta y la idea misma. Si la idea absoluta quedara hundida sin más en aquello de lo que resulta, confundida con el proceso lógico precedente, el concepto no alcanzaría la conciencia del método. En otras palabras, el método estaría confundido, entremezclado con aquello de lo que es método y no se alcanzaría la conciencia del método (la falta de conciencia del método equivale a una

sividad permite que la idea se diferencie del proceso precedente. De lo contrario, la idea sería sin más idéntica al proceso precedente que quedaría permeable a una forma o método exterior y al "secuestro" del pensar finito/reflexión externa.

falta de conciencia o de explicitación de la dinámica basal del proceso lógico). No habría una deducción propiamente dicha del método y, como sostendremos aquí, el método es la dinámica fundamental del pensar puro, las operaciones basales. Sin la conciencia y comprensión del método por parte del concepto, éste carece de una comprensión final de sí mismo y esto obturaría su reunión consigo mismo y con su objeto (reuniones que, como veremos, vienen a darse conjuntamente).

Esto nos lleva a un segundo punto. En efecto, Nuzzo acierta al decir que la deducción de la idea absoluta y el método hacen a la *cientificidad* y *sistematicidad* de la *Lógica* (y, por tanto, nuevamente, la idea absoluta no puede permanecer hundida en la inmediatez del proceso lógico que la precede), pero se equivoca al afirmar que esto sea un requerimiento para la *necesidad* del proceso lógico precedente. Consideremos esto. La idea absoluta y su método pueden exhibir la sistematicidad del proceso lógico precedente. Incluso, esta sistematicidad sumada a la dinámica lógico-metodológica descubierta al final de la *Lógica* pueden hacer a la *cientificidad* de la *Lógica* misma y, en congruencia con esto, hacerla el basamento del sistema filosófico mismo. Esto puede explicarse si aceptamos que el descubrimiento del método es el descubrimiento de la dinámica más profunda del pensar puro. En congruencia con esto, el sistema filosófico sólo puede sostenerse sobre este método y estas operaciones.¹¹ Como veremos más adelante, el pensar debe reconocerse y encontrarse a sí mismo en todo objeto; esto se da, precisamente, con el método: el pensar debe encontrar en todo objeto pensado la dinámica y las operaciones que le son propias (debe encontrar al objeto articulado internamente en concordancia con estas dinámicas y operaciones). Esto

11 Para de Vos (1983, 5-6), la lógica hegeliana será una lógica del concepto y de la forma pura que sigue en parte el camino de la lógica trascendental kantiana. Pero tal formalidad no significa que carezca de contenido. De Vos parece entender que las categorías son el *contenido* de la forma (la idea absoluta). Así, la idea absoluta sería la forma pura y las categorías, formas del pensar o conceptos, son o devienen su contenido. Esto es una descripción de la manera en la que de Vos entiende la articulación entre idea absoluta y toda la lógica: la idea absoluta expresa la forma de su contenido (que no es otra cosa que las determinaciones formales del pensar puro). Así, la idea absoluta es la reflexión retrospectiva sobre todo el proceso lógico, brindando la forma del movimiento del proceso lógico. Pero esta forma es también el fundamento del contenido desarrollado. Ahora bien, la lógica es para de Vos, a fin de cuentas, el terreno en el que y a partir del que la idea se capta a sí misma. Esta idea es principio de principios. Ella es el principio de los principios que conforman a la lógica en sus distintos niveles (ser, esencia, concepto), y también principio de todo terreno ulterior que contenga verdad y sea objeto de comprensión filosófica. Así, la lógica establece el fundamento de verdad y forma de la filosofía real. La idea es también subjetividad que, a diferencia del yo trascendental kantiano, no pone a lo otro de sí fuera de sí misma. Esta subjetividad sólo se expresa en lo otro de sí. Así, la idea sólo se expresa en su desarrollo lógico precedente y en su desarrollo en la filosofía real (es decir, en sus distintos principios por ella principiados). Por otra parte, de Vos explica que lo absoluto no es inicio ni resultado; lo absoluto es concomitante a cada momento de su desarrollo. De esta manera, la subjetividad o lo absoluto se expresa concomitantemente en cada momento de su desarrollo. Por eso ha de entenderse que la idea se capta a sí misma en su desarrollo. Nuzzo (2005, 193) entiende que el método es forma *absoluta* sólo si el proceso lógico precedente es externo a él y falso sin él. Entendemos que de Vos discreparía con Nuzzo en lo que respecta a la *externalidad* del proceso lógico precedente. Por otra parte, Nuzzo entiende que el desarrollo de la idea absoluto debe ser leído, primero, como un desarrollo según las determinaciones formales de la idea y, luego, como un desarrollo según el contenido. De Vos entiende que el contenido es el proceso lógico precedente (i.e., las formas o categorías previamente desarrolladas).

podremos apreciarlo en breve al considerar los pasajes GW 12, 236-7. Todo esto deja ver por qué la *Lógica* sería el fundamento del sistema filosófico.

Pero antes de desarrollar esta cuestión, debemos explicar el problema de la necesidad. Para la interpretación de Nuzzo es una cuestión central sostener que el proceso lógico precedente a la idea absoluta carece de necesidad sin la idea absoluta misma y el método que ella revela. En congruencia con esto, ella interpretaba el pasaje de Hegel en GW 12, 236 como si éste indicara que el proceso lógico precedente a la deducción de la idea absoluta fuera mera opinión, error, arbitrariedad. El grave problema que encontramos en esta interpretación es que, si el proceso lógico precedente careciera de necesidad en sí mismo, entonces la deducción misma de la idea absoluta resultaría arbitraria y, en consecuencia, ella perdería toda autoridad y legitimidad para justificar la necesidad de dicho proceso precedente, y la científicidad y sistematicidad de la *Lógica*.¹² En otras palabras, calificar al proceso lógico precedente de *arbitrario* es desautorizar la dinámica por medio de la cual la *Lógica* misma se desarrolla, aquello que Hegel llama la deducción inmanente. Si la deducción inmanente es arbitraria, entonces no se ve cómo se puede llegar a la idea absoluta de una manera segura y fundada. Por tanto, ella pierde toda autoridad para cualquier tarea epistemológica o metafísica que se pretenda asignársele.

Ahora bien, cabe admitir que la objeción que formulamos contra Nuzzo conlleva, por su parte, sus propios problemas. Como, por ejemplo, si el desarrollo de la *Lógica* según el curso de su deducción inmanente ya posee necesidad, cabe preguntarse por qué la *Lógica* no sería ya *ciencia* desde un principio y necesitaría a la idea absoluta para volverse tal. Esto es, sin duda, una pregunta legítima. La posición de Nuzzo tiene la ventaja de atribuir *necesidad* y *cientificidad* a toda la *Lógica* únicamente desde el final y no tener, entonces, esta suerte de desfasaje entre estos términos. Pero creo que esto puede ser explicado (aunque no podemos ofrecer un estudio detallado sobre la noción de ciencia en Hegel). En mi opinión, cabe pensar que es una idea propiamente hegeliana la de la *manifestación* o *aparición* de la ciencia. La encontramos explícitamente presentada en la *Fenomenología del espíritu* y puede que no sea exclusiva de esta obra.¹³ En pocas palabras, podemos decir que la ciencia ha de desarrollarse propulsada por una necesidad interna. Pero ella no se encuentra íntegramente dada en su inicio. La ciencia requerirá cierto desarrollo, un crecimiento que se impulsará por una necesidad inmanente, siguiendo una cierta dinámica y por medio de la cual se

12 A esta objeción se podría responder que la dinámica conceptual de la *Lógica* admite determinaciones pluridireccionales, incluso retrospectivas. Esto quiere decir lo siguiente: en trabajos precedentes (Herszenbaun, 2024), he argumentado que Hegel defiende en la *Lógica* la existencia de relaciones de condicionamiento pluridireccional (no hay un elemento que determine a otros de manera unilateral y unidireccional). En otras palabras, cabría que lo final determine ulteriormente y de manera retrospectiva a lo precedente (por ejemplo, demostrando su necesidad). Sin embargo, esto no obsta a la objeción planteada: la necesidad del curso genético (es decir, de la deducción inmanente que va de *principio a fin*) debe ser complementada por la necesidad de la mirada *retrospectiva* (que relee desde el fin) y no reemplazada por esta.

13 Hegel GW 9, 55.

expondrá a sí misma. Así, su exposición es también su desarrollo y crecimiento. Sólo al final tendremos a la ciencia plenamente manifestada. Con lo cual, necesidad y parcial a-cientificidad no son incompatibles. La *ciencia* puede estar en vías de desarrollo y tal desarrollo puede ser, al mismo tiempo, necesario. De esta manera, se explica por qué el desarrollo de la *Lógica* puede ser en sí mismo necesario (y así rescatar la autoridad del proceso lógico precedente que conduce a la idea absoluta) y al mismo tiempo admitir que el carácter científico definitivo sólo puede atribuírsele en el final y desde éste.¹⁴

De esta manera, la idea absoluta es necesaria para determinar la cientificidad y sistematicidad de la *Lógica*, pero no para establecer la necesidad de la deducción inmanente. A su vez, es necesaria para imponer el fin mismo de la *Lógica* y la necesidad de él, cosa que se logra precisamente gracias a la articulación metodológica que ella impone al proceso lógico.

Ahora bien, debemos ocuparnos de un aspecto central que hemos ido adelantando y que nos permitirá discutir la lectura que Nuzzo hace del pasaje GW 12 236, a saber, qué se descubre con el descubrimiento del método y qué efectos provoca (o qué tarea tiene a cargo). Para esto, conviene comenzar por reinterpretar el pasaje GW 12, 236 a la luz de los pasajes que le son subsiguientes. Recordemos al lector qué se ha dicho en el pasaje 236: allí Hegel presenta sucintamente el recorrido de “la idea”, ahora desde la perspectiva de la idea absoluta, y señala que todo lo que se contraponga a la idea absoluta es error, opinión, arbitrariedad. Sólo la idea absoluta es verdad. Nuzzo entendía este pasaje como si indicara que el proceso lógico precedente a la idea absoluta fuera, por tanto, error, opinión, arbitrariedad y, en consecuencia, que sólo la idea absoluta da necesidad al proceso lógico previo. Como hemos visto, esta interpretación tiene el problema grave de desautorizar al proceso lógico en cuestión.

En nuestra opinión, el pasaje inmediatamente subsiguiente a GW 12 236 aclara a qué se debe atribuir “error, opinión, arbitrariedad”. Vamos a citar el pasaje en cuestión, dividiéndolo en tres partes e insertando entre ellas alguna breve explicación. Veamos, entonces, el texto hegeliano:

[1]¹⁵ Ella [la idea absoluta] es el único objeto y contenido de la filosofía. En cuanto que contiene dentro de sí *toda determinidad*, y que su esencia es esto: regresar a sí a través de su autodeterminación o particularización, tiene entonces diversas configuraciones, y el quehacer de la filosofía consiste en reconocerla dentro de éstas. La naturaleza y el espíritu son, en general, maneras diferentes de exponer *su estar*; arte y religión son sus diferentes maneras de comprenderse y de darse un estar ahí adecuado; la filosofía tiene el mismo contenido y el mismo fin que arte y religión, pero ella es la manera suprema

14 La idea de *cientificidad* está asociadas tanto en Hegel como en Kant a la de sistematicidad [asociada, a su vez, a la de organismo, véase “Arquitectónica de la razón pura” de la *KrV*]. Por esta razón, puede suponerse que la ciencia puede desarrollarse y llegar a ser a través de un proceso, por su parte, necesario.

15 Los números introducidos entre corchetes son nuestros, a fin de hacer indicaciones puntuales al texto hegeliano.

de comprender la idea absoluta, porque su manera es la suprema: el concepto. Ella capta, por consiguiente, dentro de sí esas configuraciones de la finitud real e ideal, así como de la infinitud y santidad, y las concibe a ellas y a sí misma. (GW 12, 236)

Luego de indicar que la idea absoluta es toda la verdad y todo lo demás es mero error, opinión y arbitrariedad, Hegel explica que la idea absoluta es el único objeto del pensar; la tarea de la filosofía es reconocerla en todas aquellas configuraciones diversas y particulares. Por tanto, la tarea de la filosofía es reconocerla y reconocerse en los objetos de las otras ciencias filosóficas (y en las instancias lógicas precedentes).

[2] Ahora bien, la deducción y conocimiento de estas maneras particulares es asunto ulterior de las ciencias filosóficas particulares. Lo *lógico* de la idea absoluta puede, también, ser denominado una *manera* de ésta; pero mientras que la *manera* designa una especie *particular*, [...] [2a] lo lógico es, por contra, la manera universal, dentro de la cual todas las particulares están asumidas y entrañadas. [2b] La idea lógica está ella misma dentro de su esencia pura como encerrada dentro de una identidad simple y se da dentro de su concepto, sin haber entrado aún en el *parecer* dentro de una determinación-de-forma. De ahí que [2c] la lógica se limite a exponer el automovimiento de la idea absoluta [...]; ella [la idea] se da dentro del *puro pensamiento*, en donde la diferencia no es aún ningún ser otro, sino que es y permanece perfectamente transparente a sí. [2d] La idea lógica se tiene, con esto, a sí por contenido suyo, en cuanto *forma infinita*: la *forma*, que constituye la oposición con respecto al *contenido* [...]; el contenido tiene la figura de otro y de algo dado frente a la forma [...]. Con más precisión, la idea absoluta misma tiene por contenido solamente esto: que la determinación-de-forma es su propia totalidad acabada, el concepto puro. [2e] La *determinidad* de la idea y el entero decurso de esta determinidad ha constituido, ahora, el objeto de la ciencia lógica; a partir de ese decurso es cómo la idea absoluta misma ha brotado *para sí* a la luz; para sí, empero, se ha mostrado como esto: que la determinidad no tiene la figura de un *contenido*, sino que está sencillamente como *forma*; que la idea está aquí, según esto, como la *idea* sencillamente *universal*. Lo que viene aquí, pues, todavía a consideración no es, con esto, un contenido en cuanto tal, sino lo universal de su forma: esto es, el *método*. (GW 12, 236-7)

Lo lógico (es decir, a fin de cuentas, como veremos, la idea absoluta –autocomprendida en su terreno propio–) es la manera universal (2a). En otras palabras, si las ciencias filosóficas parecen tener un contenido propio y pueden tener *maneras* particulares de desarrollarse, lo lógico es la manera de todas las maneras, es la vía de desarrollo a la base de todo otro desarrollo filosófico-científico. Ahora bien, (2b) la idea sólo está en su propio ámbito en el terreno lógico. Sólo en la *Lógica* es considerada la idea absoluta, el pensar puro o lo lógico, en su ter-

reno puramente propio. Por esta razón, (2c) la *Lógica* expone el automovimiento de la idea, lo que no quiere decir otra cosa que la *Lógica* expone el automovimiento del pensar puro. El movimiento de la lógica, el movimiento de la idea y el movimiento del pensar son todo lo mismo. En consecuencia, la idea absoluta es la forma última en la que el pensar o lo lógico se piensa a sí mismo. Expone el movimiento del pensar puro. La idea se da en el terreno del puro pensamiento, donde la diferencia no es ningún ser otro todavía. Esto quiere decir que la idea supone una diferenciación interna, del pensar respecto de sí mismo, donde el pensar pone al objeto, se diferencia de sí poniendo a tal objeto, sólo para luego reconocerse a sí mismo en el objeto. Esto es evidentemente una reelaboración del yo trascendental kantiano. Pero todo esto ocurre sólo en el terreno lógico todavía (en el terreno natural y espiritual, esto se hará reconociéndose el pensar en las particularidades naturales y espirituales, lo que también exige un reconocimiento del método allí). En consecuencia, (2d) la idea se tiene a sí misma como objeto, como contenido, pero en la determinación de la forma. Es decir, ella es su propio objeto, pero bajo la manera de la forma, ella se piensa como una forma. El contenido, entendido ahora como estrictamente contrapuesto a la forma, podrá venir de ulteriores fuentes. Esto es irrelevante, porque ella se impone a todo contenido ulterior como forma universal. Finalmente, (2e) el objeto de la lógica ha sido la determinidad propia de la idea (del pensar puro) y su decurso, su desarrollo (es decir, las categorías desarrolladas son atribuidas a la idea). A la vez, la idea absoluta brota por medio de este desarrollo. Pero brota ante sí misma, como forma. Es idea universal, es decir, es la forma de todo contenido, de todo objeto (y es, también, la forma del desarrollo de las categorías precedentes). En otras palabras, en la idea absoluta el pensar brota ante sí mismo como forma absoluta a la que ha de someterse todo objeto. Y si esto no nos ha convencido todavía, veamos el último pasaje:

[3] Por lo pronto, el *método* puede aparecer como el mero *modo* y *manera* del conocer [...]. Pero, en cuanto método, el modo y manera no es solamente una modalidad del *ser*, *determinada en y para sí*, sino que, en cuanto modalidad del conocer, está puesta como determinada por el *concepto*, y también como la forma, en la medida en que es el alma de toda objetividad; y todo contenido –determinado en otra parte– tiene su verdad únicamente dentro de la forma. (GW 12, 237)

La idea absoluta o el pensar puro, revelados ahora como método, como tal forma universal del pensar puro, son el alma de toda objetividad. Todo contenido tiene su verdad únicamente dentro de la forma, es decir, del método. Esto demuestra precisamente nuestro punto: el ya citado pasaje del “error, opinión, arbitrariedad” no se refiere preferencialmente a descalificar al proceso lógico precedente. El proceso lógico que concluye en la idea absoluta es caracterizado como el desarrollo del pensar puro en su propio terreno. Lo que queda marcado como carente de verdad es el objeto que se resiste al pensar, el objeto que se presentara como independiente del pensar. Lo que revela este extenso pasaje es que la idea absoluta

expresa la dinámica ulterior y plena del pensar puro, que dicha dinámica es la dinámica de todo el proceso precedente, es decir, del objeto propio del pensar puro y, en última instancia, es la dinámica de todo objeto (es la forma a la que se han de ajustar las ulteriores ciencias filosóficas particulares y sus respectivos objetos, so pena de carecer de verdad).

En resumen, el argumento podría condensarse en tres pasos: [1] el pensar puro (la filosofía) tiene su manera o vía universal de desarrollo y la encuentra reflejada en toda otra ciencia filosófica. [2] La *Lógica* presenta esta manera en su terreno propio; se presenta como forma universal, que se impone sobre todo contenido ulterior. [3] Esto, que no es otra cosa que el método, es el alma y la verdad de todo objeto. Todo objeto es verdadero en tanto está sujeto a este método.¹⁶

La cuestión que se está desarrollando aquí es que, básicamente, al llegar a la idea absoluta, el pensar puro logra su plena tematización. El pensar puro puede pensarse aquí plenamente. Y como base y fundamento de todo pensar ulterior, debe poder reconocerse en él. Reconocerse exige, previamente, haberse tematizado, es decir, expresado o explicitado su dinámica misma, sus operaciones fundamentales. Esto es la deducción del método. Todo esto significa conocerse a sí mismo, (re)conocerse a sí mismo en el objeto y, por tanto, poder superar el hiato entre sujeto y objeto (que era, después de todo, la tarea de “la idea”). Pero todo este recorrido se ha hecho partiendo del objeto intelectual, del objeto que el pensar puro tematizaba como su polo objetivo. Esto quiere decir que el desarrollo que hemos visto en la *Lógica* es también un desarrollo del objeto, es una exposición de la dinámica del objeto y una exposición de la dinámica de la autodiferenciación del sujeto (porque el objeto emerge como resultado de un acto de diferenciación interna del pensar; de lo contrario, si este no fuera su origen, no cabría el retorno último del objeto al sujeto –en esto radica la falencia de la idea del conocer: como el objeto es, en esencia, exógeno, como el pensar no lo puede gestar, siempre permanece una ruptura entre el conocer y su objeto).

16 Si acaso quedara duda sobre esta lectura, cabe considerar el siguiente pasaje con el que comienza “La idea”: “[...] la idea es la unidad del concepto y de la objetividad, o sea lo verdadero, no hay que considerarla entonces sólo como una *meta* a la que acercarse, pero que seguiría estando siempre como una especie de *más allá*, sino que todo lo efectivamente real solamente es en la medida en que tenga dentro de sí la idea, y la exprese. El objeto, el mundo objetivo y el subjetivo, no *deben* ser meramente *congruentes* con la idea, sino que ellos mismos son la congruencia del concepto y de la realidad; la realidad que no corresponde al concepto es mera *aparición* [*Erscheinung*], lo subjetivo, contingente, arbitrario, lo que no es la verdad. Cuando se dice que no se encuentra dentro de la experiencia ningún objeto que sea perfectamente congruente con la *idea*, viene enfrentada ésta, como vara subjetiva de medida, a lo efectivamente real; pero lo que una cosa efectivamente real deba *ser* de verdad si su concepto no es dentro de ella adecuado, y su objetividad no se adecua siquiera a este concepto, no es algo que quepa decir; pues, en ese caso, sería la nada” (Gw 12, 174).

Aquí vemos claramente que Hegel señala que (1) la idea es unidad de los polos subjetivo y objetivo; (2) el objeto es en donde se da la congruencia misma entre concepto y realidad; (3) la realidad que no responde al concepto es aquello contingente, arbitrario, o *Erscheinung* (fenómeno). Es decir, lo que se califica como contingente, arbitrario, no es el proceso lógico, sino cualquier objeto que no se corresponda a su concepto, cualquier objeto en el que no se exprese la idea; tal objeto es la no verdad, nada. (4) Sólo es aquello que contenga en sí a la idea, aquello que la exprese.

Todo esto muestra que el pasaje del “error, opinión, arbitrariedad” puede ser interpretado como una respuesta al realismo (o dogmatismo). En otras palabras, lo que es errado y arbitrario no es el proceso lógico precedente, sino el objeto que se presente como autónomo al concepto.¹⁷

Esto se introduce al mismo tiempo en que se revela que la idea absoluta expresa la dinámica final del pensar puro. Las categorías metodológicas no son otra cosa que la dinámica última del pensar puro. El pensar descubre en la idea absoluta su dinámica última y descubre en todo objeto suyo su propia dinámica. Esto hace que el objeto tenga verdad; todo objeto que se presente como ajeno a esta dinámica, como resistiendo esta fuerza del pensar, carecerá entonces de verdad. Toda verdad está en la dinámica misma del pensar (porque la verdad es la correspondencia entre objeto y concepto). Por tanto, no se trata de que el proceso lógico precedente carezca de verdad, sino de señalar que el pensar tiene que poder reconocerse en última instancia en todo lo que sea su objeto, ya sea que se trate de las instancias previas del desarrollo de la lógica, ya sea que se trate de una entidad presuntamente autónoma al pensar.

Interpretar el pasaje GW 12, 236-7 de la manera ahora propuesta no significa dejar de admitir que la idea absoluta debe poder escindirse y diferenciarse del proceso lógico precedente y que ella es necesaria para la cientificidad y sistematicidad de la lógica y su conversión en fundamento del sistema. Al contrario, todo esto es por completo compatible con la interpretación propuesta. Porque, precisamente, al descubrir que el método es la dinámica última del pensar puro y fundamento de toda verdad, no cabe otra opción que pensar que el resto del sistema filosófico ha de estar sostenido sobre este método, porque no es otra cosa que la dinámica misma del pensar. Todo objeto del pensar debe poder ajustarse a la dinámica misma del pensar. Debe poder ser concebido y gestado según esta dinámica. Por su parte, con esta comprensión profunda y última de la dinámica del pensar se posibilita una mirada retrospectiva que encuentra esta dinámica misma en el propio desarrollo lógico previo del pensar.

17 Siguiendo nuestra explicación de la no-verdad del objeto presuntamente independiente, podría entenderse que Hegel se enfrenta a toda posición *realista*. Esto es correcto, pero puede irse más lejos y decir que Hegel se enfrenta a toda forma de dogmatismo (entre los cuales se encuentran los realistas). Entendemos por dogmatismo toda posición que ponga por fundamento un elemento distinto a la subjetividad, entendiéndose por *subjetividad* una estructura dinámica, sistemática y reflexiva. Es decir, realistas o dogmáticos son aquellos que suponen una estructura ontológica no reflexiva y carente de negación.

De Vos (1983, 40-41) entiende el pasaje en el que Hegel caracteriza al “resto” como error, opinión, arbitrariedad como no refiriéndose únicamente a las determinaciones lógicas precedentes, sino también a la naturaleza y el espíritu: la completa esfera de desarrollo conceptual en la naturaleza y el espíritu muestra no-verdad. La idea, por el contrario, es toda verdad; toda verdad y todo ámbito en el que la verdad se expresa toman su forma de ésta. La idea es también unidad de sus momentos. Esta unidad es correspondencia de subjetividad y objetividad. Es el plan o diseño definitivo de cada momento, cuyo fundamento ella es. Esto indicaría que el pasaje puede entenderse no como indicando falta de necesidad en el desarrollo lógico precedente, sino como indicando que toda objetividad tiene verdad en tanto reconocemos su adecuación a la forma de la idea; en congruencia, los objetos que se presentan como independientes –aunque sea de manera parcial– respecto de la idea carecen de verdad.

Pero esto último no es otra cosa más que el pensar se comprenda a sí mismo y se identifique finalmente de manera íntegra con su objeto, su tema de pensamiento (o consigo mismo). En el caso de la lógica, hemos comenzado por el polo objetivo del pensar, es decir, el objeto intelectual (el *ser*, etc.); y eventualmente hemos descubierto que el objeto del pensar era el pensar mismo. Pero para que se dé esta plena concordancia, el pensar tiene que descubrir su dinámica última, sus operaciones fundamentales, y debe verlas expresadas en todo objeto, incluso en el desarrollo de su objeto intelectual: debe verla expresada en el *ser*, etc., y en última instancia en el pensamiento en que se piensa al *pensar*. Esto es, precisamente, lo que está diciendo Hegel en los pasajes citados.

Por todo esto es que el método resulta un intermediario necesario en la articulación definitiva entre sujeto y objeto. El pensamiento o explicitación del método es la explicitación de las operaciones fundamentales del pensar. El método es el núcleo del sujeto y el alma del objeto. La reunión de los dos polos (la tarea de “la idea”) exige, entonces, que la dinámica del pensar sea igual a la dinámica del objeto, que la primera sepa de sí misma explícitamente y se reconozca a sí misma efectivamente en la segunda. Pero todo esto se logra sólo si derivamos el método, es decir, las categorías metodológicas. La conciencia y explicitación del método es lo que logra entonces la reunión de estos polos. Todo esto hace necesario que el objeto presuntamente independiente al pensar sea *no verdadero*.

Ahora bien, debemos volver sobre la posición de Nuzzo, en particular, en lo referente a los anteriormente mencionados puntos 5 y 6, a saber, la articulación de los polos de la idea a través del método y si la derivación del método es una derivación de procedimientos metodológicos u operaciones. En este respecto, Nuzzo es ambigua y debemos hacer algunas indicaciones.

En “The End of Hegel’s Logic: Absolute Idea as Absolute Method”, Nuzzo prácticamente no menciona como función del método la articulación final de los polos contrapuestos de la idea. Sin embargo, en “The Idea of Method in Hegel’s Science of Logic – a Method for Finite Thinking and Absolute Reason” (Nuzzo 1999), Nuzzo sí menciona que el método garantiza finalmente la vinculación entre concepto y realidad y esto se logra en tanto el método tiene una dimensión ontológica y otra dimensión epistemológica (Nuzzo, 1999, 5-6). En otras palabras, esto se logra en tanto la dinámica que se presenta en el método es tanto una dinámica del pensar como del objeto. En este punto, nuestro trabajo concuerda con la tesis defendida por Nuzzo.

Sin embargo, encontramos que la tesis de Nuzzo es problemática cuando atendemos a *cómo* piensa la filósofa la articulación entre método absoluto y el proceso lógico precedente. No sólo dice Nuzzo que el proceso lógico precedente carece de necesidad. Esta idea es expresada de una manera más extrema en su texto de 1999. Allí Nuzzo hace algunas afirmaciones sobre la articulación entre el método absoluto/idea absoluta y el proceso lógico precedente que debemos considerar, a saber, el método no se aplica retrospectivamente y el proceso lógico precedente no es necesario, ni automático ni teleológico. Esto es, el avance

en el proceso lógico es una elección de la razón; la razón podría no avanzar. En este avance, la razón no recurre a una serie de procedimientos preestablecidos, ni el método explica o convalida desde el final los procedimientos aplicados, sino que el proceso lógico sólo cuenta con una prescripción, a saber, encontrar el próximo nivel en el desarrollo lógico e instaurar los medios para alcanzarlo. Guiada por esta prescripción sumamente general, la razón dispone libremente los medios para llevar a cabo su avance lógico o, en otras palabras, la razón determina ad-hoc los procedimientos para avanzar (Nuzzo 1999, 8-9).

Ahora bien, si concedemos todo esto a Nuzzo, nos encontramos con un problema grave, a saber, el hiato que se establece entre método absoluto y proceso lógico. Ya no se trata solamente de que no sabemos qué validez tiene el método absoluto si cuestionamos la *necesidad* lógica del proceso precedente que desemboca en él. Es un problema más radical: Intentando establecer la no confusión entre idea absoluta (o método absoluto) y proceso lógico precedente y procurando preservar la libertad de la razón en el terreno lógico, Nuzzo termina por desconectar al método de los procedimientos efectivamente articulados en la *Lógica*. Con lo cual, se termina por no comprender qué vincula estos dos extremos y qué viene a explicar y a traer a la conciencia la idea absoluta. Se supone que la idea absoluta trae a la conciencia del pensar su naturaleza más profunda, sus operaciones, su método, su dinámica de despliegue. En última instancia, este conocimiento autoconsciente debe permitir una mirada retrospectiva sobre la *Lógica*. El problema de la posición de Nuzzo es hasta qué punto su interpretación admite esta mirada retrospectiva. Aunque en “The End of Hegel’s Logic: Absolute Idea as Absolute Method”, se supone que la idea absoluta permite releer la *Lógica* con las categorías del método absoluto, esta relectura es problemática si se supone –como ella hace en su texto de 1999– que los procedimientos aplicados en el proceso lógico precedente son por completo libres. Es esta libertad, precisamente, la que da sentido a su temor de que la reflexión externa “secuestre” al proceso lógico precedente.

Pareciera que tenemos que buscar un sano equilibrio entre dos posiciones extremas y erradas. El proceso lógico precedente no puede ser simplemente una mera aplicación mecánica y esquemática del método absoluto. Esto queda claro en la obra de Houlgate (2006, 34-35). Allí explica Houlgate que claramente Hegel no puede tener el método con anterioridad al desarrollo de la *Lógica* y por tanto no se trata de aplicar sin más el método a cada momento lógico para así hacer el avance. Sostener lo contrario sería incurrir en un claro error. Tampoco puede tratarse, como parece sugerir Nuzzo, que cada momento lógico puede recurrir a las operaciones y procedimientos metodológicos que libremente la razón determine. Entre estos dos extremos, debe encontrarse un sano punto medio. Los procedimientos y operaciones que se describen en la idea absoluto *deben* ser encontrados en última instancia en el proceso lógico precedente, debe encontrárselos como fundamento del desarrollo del pensar y del objeto (sin que esto implique presuponerlos). De lo contrario, si la dinámica más profunda del pensar no vuelve a ser encontrada retrospectivamente en el proceso lógico precedente, debe concluirse que ese pensar transcurrido no

se identifica con el pensar absoluto final, estableciéndose una ruptura entre idea absoluta y proceso lógico precedente.¹⁸ Junto con esto debería concluirse también que el pensar no concuerda a fin de cuentas con el objeto de la *Lógica* (pues, no concuerda su desarrollo efectivo y la naturaleza/estructura definitiva del pensar), fracasándose así la identificación entre los polos subjetivo y objetivo de la idea.

Por otra parte, la idea absoluta da una descripción algo más precisa de lo que admite Nuzzo (al menos en 1999) de cuáles son las prescripciones que debe seguir el desarrollo lógico: sin entrar en detalles, sabemos que el desarrollo dialéctico especulativo exige que los pensamientos contrapuestos se mantengan unidos, que se establezca relaciones de “negación” en la cual lo universal sea determinado, etc. En su texto de 1999, Nuzzo presenta la prescripción que establecería el método absoluto de una manera demasiado general: debe buscarse el avance al próximo nivel. ¿Pero qué indicaría que el próximo nivel *es* tal *próximo* nivel? Nuzzo no especifica esto. Lo que indica que efectivamente se asciende o avanza al próximo nivel es la posibilidad de superar antinomias, contraposiciones irreductibles. Pero esto lo sabemos por dos motivos: uno, lo sabemos porque el proceso lógico, al caer en una antinomia, se encierra en una dinámica inconducente de repeticiones, en un ir y venir que evidencia su fracaso. Dos, lo sabemos –ahora desde la perspectiva del método absoluto– porque el método absoluto nos indica el procedimiento para superar estas antinomias y nos indica el deber de superarlas, el deber de conjuntar pensamientos contrapuestos y resolver esta contraposición.

La posición de Nuzzo es ambigua en este punto: en “The End of Hegel’s Logic: Absolute Idea as Absolute Method”, parecería admitir con más contundencia que los procedimientos del método absoluto explican el proceso lógico precedente y aparecen en él; se trata de categorías propiamente dialéctico-especulativas que explican el proceso lógico. Pero interpretando este texto a la luz de “The Idea of Method in Hegel’s Science of Logic – a Method for Finite Thinking and Absolute Reason”, debemos entender que ella cree que el proceso lógico precedente es verdaderamente libre en sus procedimientos. En tanto entiende la libertad como una verdadera elección, esto establece el hiato mencionado entre método absoluto y proceso lógico precedente. Pareciera ser que las categorías del método no son los procedimientos lógicos efectivamente ejecutados, sino una suerte de compren-

18 Nuzzo (1999, 12-13) intenta subsanar esta ruptura argumentando que el desarrollo de la *Lógica* es un ascenso del pensar finito al método absoluto. El pensar finito se absolutiza al adoptar el método absoluto e identificarse con la idea absoluta, dado que la finitud o absolutez no son caracteres que dependan de un rasgo ontológico de aquello que está pensando. En correspondencia, el pensar absoluto adopta la existencia al modo de la finitud, del pensar finito, como si se tratara de una instanciación o encarnación del *nous* divino aristotélico. Sumado esto a la interpretación que ella hace de la libertad en la *Lógica*, cabe pensar que se propone una suerte de *antropomorfización* del pensar lógico.

Por su parte, Bowman (2013, 27, 34 y ss.) plantea que hay en Hegel una dinámica lógico-conceptual fundamental que establece una estructura de relaciones y que esto ha de encontrarse en el desarrollo de las categorías. Bowman no plantea esto en términos de un método preestablecido.

sión ulterior de estos. Esto, como hemos explicado, conduciría al fracaso de la articulación entre los polos de la idea absoluta. Por esta razón, entendemos que, aunque Nuzzo identifica en parte que la tarea del método es tal articulación, su lectura parece hacerla inviable. En congruencia con esta errada idea, entiende la autora que la *Lógica* debe ser resguardada (por la idea absoluta) de un potencial peligro de “secuestro” por parte de la reflexión externa.

En mi opinión, la *Lógica* como un todo es un largo argumento de desautorización de enfoques metafísicos y epistemológicos alternativos. Por esta razón, el peligro de “secuestro” es desactivado progresivamente a lo largo de toda la *Lógica*, no sólo al final. La lectura de Nuzzo no ve la necesidad del curso lógico y por tanto podemos preguntarnos si acaso advierte la constante y progresiva refutación inmanente de esquemas epistemológicos alternativos. Por otra parte, al no ver tal necesidad, establece un hiato difícil de salvar entre la idea absoluta y el curso lógico precedente. Este hiato restaura una ruptura entre el pensar y su objeto. Por estas razones, debemos pensar que la arbitrariedad que se menciona en la *Lógica* se refiere al objeto independiente del pensar y no al curso lógico. La necesidad del curso lógico vincula a este con el método; y esto permite la vinculación de método, operación y objeto, subsanando el hiato entre los polos de la idea.

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THE LOGIC OF PRIMAL WILLING IN SCHELLING'S *FREEDOM ESSAY*

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Abstract: *Schelling's famous Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom is regularly presented as an enigmatic work that transcends reason and thereby eschews any systematic comprehension. However, Schelling's Freedom Essay neither endorses irrationalism, nor does it call us to abandon systematic thinking. While it is true that the Absolute exceeds the powers of the understanding, Schelling boldly endorses the view that the Absolute is inherently rational and can be successfully known by means of reason. Because Schelling identifies reason as that power in virtue of which we know the absolute, he infers that "Reason is not activity but rather indifference" and "the general place of truth." Since the Absolute is indifference, and indifference is what constitutes reason, the Absolute is reason itself. Far from denying that the Absolute is rational, the truths that Schelling uncovers in the Freedom Essay only appear within the domain of reason. Schelling himself insists upon this, for the "renunciation of reason and science" is "self-castration" that is constituted by a "bleak and wild enthusiasm." I begin by reconstructing the metaphysics of Schelling's logic of "primal willing" from which I demonstrate that the logic of freedom transcends the understanding but cannot transcend reason. Without acknowledging the fundamental difference between the understanding and reason in Schelling's Freedom Essay, we overlook its significance for systematic thinking, and maim his commitment to absolute knowledge.*

Keywords: *Philosophy, Schelling, Freedom, Reason, The Absolute*

Resumen: *Las célebres Investigaciones filosóficas sobre la esencia de la libertad humana de Schelling suelen presentarse como una obra enigmática que trasciende la razón y, por lo tanto, elude toda comprensión sistemática. Sin embargo, el Ensayo sobre la libertad de Schelling no respalda el irracionalismo ni nos llama a abandonar el pensamiento sistemático. Si bien es cierto que el Absoluto excede las capacidades del entendimiento, Schelling defiende audazmente la idea de que el Absoluto es intrínsecamente racional y puede ser conocido exitosamente por medio de la razón. Dado que Schelling identifica la razón como aquella facultad gracias a la cual conocemos*

el Absoluto, infiere que “la razón no es actividad, sino más bien indiferencia” y “el lugar general de la verdad.” Puesto que el Absoluto es indiferencia, y la indiferencia es lo que constituye la razón, el Absoluto es la razón misma. Lejos de negar que el Absoluto sea racional, las verdades que Schelling revela en el Ensayo sobre la libertad solo aparecen dentro del dominio de la razón. El propio Schelling insiste en esto, ya que la “renuncia a la razón y la ciencia” es una “autocastración” constituida por un “entusiasmo sombrío y salvaje.” Comienzo reconstruyendo la metafísica de la lógica del “querer primordial” en Schelling, a partir de la cual demuestro que la lógica de la libertad trasciende el entendimiento, pero no puede trascender la razón. Si no reconocemos la diferencia fundamental entre entendimiento y razón en el Ensayo sobre la libertad de Schelling, pasamos por alto su importancia para el pensamiento sistemático y socavamos su compromiso con el conocimiento absoluto.

Palabras clave: *Filosofía, Schelling, Libertad, Razón, El Absoluto*

Introduction

Schelling's famous *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*¹ is regularly presented as an enigmatic work that transcends reason, and thereby eschews any systematic comprehension.² However, Schelling's *Freedom Essay* neither endorses irrationalism, nor does it call us to abandon systematic thinking. While it is true that the Absolute exceeds the powers of the understanding, Schelling boldly endorses the view that the Absolute is inherently rational and can be successfully known by means of reason. We can better appreciate the rationalism of Schelling's *Freedom Essay* by focusing on the place of reason in that essay, and its relation to the Absolute.

By withdrawing in thought from everything relative, thought can fix its mind on what transcends all opposition—the Absolute. By withdrawing from every distinct being—from 'this' and 'that,' one can think what all beings have in common—being as such, what Schelling calls "primal being." The original being [*Ursein*] does not differentiate any being from another. Indeed, "is" does not differentiate this being from that being. Primal being is the unconditioned universal, for there is no being that does not instantiate it. Original being is the "one being [*Wesen*] for all oppositions, an absolute identity." It is "before all duality" and "precedes all opposites" (Schelling, *Freedom Essay*, 68). Because the opposition-less being applies equally to all without distinction, the beginning is pure "indifference" [*Gleichgültigkeit*], which is "the only possible concept of the Absolute" (Schelling, *Freedom Essay*, 73). Following the tradition, Schelling describes the primal being as God, for in Exodus God reveals himself to Moses as "I am that I am," a being defined by pure being itself (*Exodus* 3:14).

Since the original being—the Absolute—does not differentiate any beings, it does not differentiate between the knowing and the known. Thus, the knowing of the Absolute truth must take place within the Absolute truth itself. As Schelling states: "That which is true can only be recognized in truth; that which is evident, in evidence. But truth and evidence are clear in themselves and must therefore be absolute and of the essence of God" (Schelling 2010: 34). Since the Absolute itself is pure indifference, and as such it introduces no difference, knowing of the Absolute must also be constituted by pure indifference. Because Schelling identifies reason as that power in virtue of which we know the absolute, he infers that "Reason is not activity but rather indifference" and "the general place of truth" (Schelling, *Freedom Essay*, 76). Since the Absolute is indifference, and indifference is what constitutes reason, *the Absolute is reason itself*. Far from denying that the Absolute is rational, the truths that Schelling uncovers in the *Freedom Essay* only appear within the domain of reason. Schelling himself insists upon this, for the "renunciation of reason and science"

1 Henceforth, *Freedom Essay*.

2 For instance, Dale Snow claims that "the argument of Human Freedom has reached a point where, far from the real being the rational, the most real is the least rational." (Snow 1996: 174).

is “self-castration” that is constituted by a “bleak and wild enthusiasm” (Schelling, *Freedom Essay*, 26). The Absolute reveals itself to us in the form of reason because it is rational.

The *Freedom Essay* is an investigation into the Absolute, the truth of which is revealed by means of reason. Since the Absolute is without opposition, and nothing exceeds it, it cannot be determined by anything except itself. For this reason, insofar as the Absolute does not remain merely indeterminate, and possesses determination, it must be *self-determining* of free.³ Thus, the *Freedom Essay* aims to reveal the rational form (or logic) of absolute freedom. In part two, I reconstruct the metaphysics of Schelling’s logic of self-determination, or what he calls “primal willing.”

After reconstructing the metaphysical form of Schelling’s logic of primal willing, and various concepts central to it, in part three I consider the *epistemological* side of the logic of primal willing. More specifically, I demonstrate that the logic of self-determination transcends the understanding but cannot transcend reason. For the logic of self-determination is revealed by the absolute, which is nothing less than reason itself. Here I defend Mark Thomas’ position that in the *Freedom Essay* Schelling is “not rejecting rationalism”⁴ by demonstrating how Schelling’s “indivisible remainder” is no objection to his rationalism or systematic ambitions, but instead functions as a testament to his position that *nothing exceeds the system of absolute reason*. Without acknowledging the fundamental difference between the understanding and reason in Schelling’s *Freedom Essay*, we overlook its significance for systematic thinking, and maim his commitment to absolute knowledge.

2. The Logic of Primal Willing

“Willing is primal being to which alone all predicates of Being apply; groundlessness, eternity, independence from time, self-affirmation” (Schelling, *Freedom Essay*, 21).⁵ Why is the will the essence of primal being? If the Absolute were determined by anything beyond it, it would not be conditioned upon and relative to that determining principle, and would no longer be absolute. Thus, the Absolute must *determine itself*—it must be absolutely free. Since the will is nothing less than the power of self-determination, the will is the primal being.

As Mark Thomas has pointed out, the term ‘ground’ has a variety of meanings in Schelling’s *Freedom Essay*. It can signify the *condition of possibility*, a principle that *determines* something else, or that which *begets* something.⁶ Since the will has no conditions upon which it relies, and there is nothing beyond it to determine or beget it, the will is absolutely *groundless* in every sense of the term.

3 Schelling’s concept of freedom qua self-determination is deeply indebted to Kant. See Kant (1998: 484–489) .

4 See Thomas (2023: 30).

5 Since the original German is “Wollen” I have amended the English translation from “will” to “willing.”

6 See Thomas (2023: 21).

For readers of the late Schelling, it may come as a surprise to learn that in the *Freedom Essay*, this absolute freedom is “equidistant from contingency and compulsion” (Schelling, *Freedom Essay*, 49).⁷ Indeed, the Absolute is groundless exactly because it is not compelled by outside forces. But its groundlessness is not contingent either. To the contrary, it is the very essence of the Absolute to determine itself. Because it is the very essence of the Absolute to determine itself, freedom is not contingently related to the Absolute. Absolute freedom operates “only in accord with its own inner nature” (Schelling, *Freedom Essay*, 50). Freedom is necessary to the Absolute itself such that “free is what acts only in accord with the laws of its own being and is determined by nothing else either in or outside itself” (Schelling, *Freedom Essay*, 50). For this reason, Schelling identifies “absolute necessity” with “absolute freedom” (Schelling, *Freedom Essay*, 50).⁸

Because the negation of something must be *other* to it, and there is nothing other to the Absolute, the self-determining character of the Absolute is *not* governed by the principle *determinatio est negatio*. If it were determined by its negation, it would not be self-determining, but *other-determined*. According to Schelling, “since the latter [Absolute freedom]⁹ is itself one with the position and the concept of its being, therefore it really is the essence in its being” (Schelling, *Freedom Essay*, 50). Because the affirmation of its being does not depend upon its negation, the primal being is “self-affirming.”¹⁰

Since it has no conditions whatsoever, it is not conditioned upon any temporal processes, and must be independent of time. Finally, since the Absolute is essentially self-determining, it is not determining itself at some times and not others—it is eternally determining itself. At no time is the Absolute not determining itself. At no time is it other to self-determination. In sum, the Absolute is constituted by the will, the eternal power of self-determination, a power that affirms itself and operates independently of time.

7 It acts according to an “inner” and a “higher necessity.” In these reflections, I apply Schelling’s reflections on formal freedom to God and the Absolute. Although Schelling may be specifically focusing on human freedom in these sections, without applying these reflections on formal freedom to God, we cannot understand *why* the primal will has the predicates which Schelling ascribes to it. What is more, one cannot make sense of the God-human relation without assuming that the structure of self-determination is similar in both cases.

8 Compare Schelling’s view with Spinoza’s definition of freedom in the *Ethics*: “That thing is called free, which exists solely by the necessity of its own nature.” Spinoza, *Ethics*, Pt. I, Definition 7.

9 Author’s insertion.

10 Note the difference with Hegel’s concept of determinate negation. While Hegel applies the principle of determinate negation to the Absolute, *Schelling restricts its application to relative being alone*. Determinate negation is one of the categories of the *Science of Logic*, each of which is a definition of the absolute. See Hegel (2010: 83-88). For Hegel’s employment of the principle in the self-development of absolute knowing, see Hegel (2018:54).

2.1 God and Nature

Schelling emphasizes that the absolute is *essentially* self-determining. This means that it does not *become* self-determining. Schelling argues that there is “no transition from the absolutely undetermined to the determined” (Schelling, *Freedom Essay*, 49). If the Absolute were initially indeterminate, and *determined itself* to be self-determined, then it would *always already be* self-determining. For this reason, the Absolute cannot determine itself to be self-determining. In Schelling’s words: “in order to be able to determine itself it would already have to be determined in itself, rather it would have to be its determination itself as its essence” (Schelling 2006: 49).¹¹

Because the Absolute is self-determining, it must determine itself. Since the primal will is not responsible for its absolute determination, it can only determine itself by positing itself as a *relative* determination. In other words, since the Absolute must determine itself, but it cannot be responsible for its absolute being, the Absolute must and can only be responsible for its determination *qua relative being*.

Schelling describes the activity of the primal will in Fichte’s terms as an activity of self-positing: “this being [...] it is real self-positing, it is a primal and fundamental willing, which makes itself into something, and is the ground of all ways of being (Schelling, *Freedom Essay*, 50-51). In order to make itself into something, it must contrast itself with an other. As Schelling notes, God is a “self-revealing being” who can only reveal his relative determination via *opposition*: “For every essence can only reveal itself in its opposite, love only in hate, unity in conflict” (Schelling, *Freedom Essay*, 41). For relative beings, determination is constituted by negation. In order to have some relative determinacy as *this*, it cannot be *that*, and without this contrast and mutual exclusion, *this* cannot be revealed as *this*. Thus, primal willing can only determine itself to be relatively determined, and reveal itself as such, by positing another independent being to which its being is opposed and stands in contrast. By positing (or *creating*¹²) an independent being against which it stands in contrast, the Absolute *is not* that independent being, and thereby determines itself to be something—one relative being in relation to another.¹³ God creates a being independent of himself, and insofar as *created being is identified with nature*, God is the source of nature.

By dividing itself, a further distinction is introduced between the *unconditioned* and the *conditioned* God. On the one hand, God is the Absolute, and is without any opposition. Since there is nothing outside God, nature must exist *within God*. Since the Absolute has

11 Again, here Schelling differentiates himself from Hegel. Hegel argues that the indeterminate determines itself to be determinate and self-determining. See Hegel (2010: 59:83).

12 Consonant with his use of theological language throughout the essay, Schelling uses the traditional language of creation to describe the relation of God to the world. See Schelling, *Freedom Essay*, 18.

13 Although Schelling gives us reasons why the Absolute will must divide itself, for Schelling it remains an ineluctable mystery *how* the finite opposition arises from what is without any opposition whatsoever. As Schelling states in his 1794 *Philosophical Letters*: “Philosophy cannot make a transition from the nonfinite to the finite” [Schelling 1980: 178].

eternal being, God qua opposition-less Absolute does not cease to be with the positing of nature. Insofar as it possesses eternal being, there cannot be a temporal beginning to God's positing or creation of nature—it must be an eternal beginning. On the other hand, God is *something* because he is other to nature. Thus, nature is independent of God and exists outside of him. In this sense, God is *conditioned* by nature. Thus, in virtue of the self-division initiated by the primal willing, God divides himself into conditioned and unconditioned forms. As Schelling himself acknowledges: “The concept of a derived Absoluteness or divinity” is a “central concept of philosophy as a whole” (Schelling 2006: 18).

This distinction maps quite well onto the classical distinction in mystical writings between *Gottheit* and *Gott*: while the former is absolute, the latter is relative to creation.¹⁴ Just like nature, the conditioned God too must exist *within* the unconditioned deity. For this reason, Schelling does not object to pantheism: “Whoever would finally want to name this system pantheism, because all oppositions disappear considered simply in relation to the absolute, may also be granted this indulgence” (Schelling 2006: 71).

To summarize: the Absolute, qua primal willing, divides itself into the dual opposition between God and nature.¹⁵ The primal will “divides itself into two equally eternal beginnings” (Schelling 2006: 70). Each of these beginnings (God and nature) is a kind of *action*: “The one being divides itself in two sorts of being in its two ways of acting” (Schelling 2006: 71). Because the Absolute is eternally determining itself, the divisions themselves must be eternal too. Indeed, they are “two equally eternal beginnings of self-revelation” (Schelling 2006: 59). Each division is also a way of acting, for the primal will is a principle of activity. While the Absolute (*Gottheit*) remains without any opposition, an opposition between God and nature exists within the Absolute itself.¹⁶

2.2. Absolute Mediation

As is well known, this division is constituted by “being insofar as it exists and being insofar as it is merely the ground of existence” (Schelling 2006: 27).¹⁷ Nature is the ground: “It [the ground] is nature—in God, a being indeed inseparable, yet still distinct, from him” (Schelling 2006: 27). Again: “primordial nature” is “the eternal ground of God's existence” (Schelling 2006: 27). Nature is the ground of God, and is contrasted with God “insofar as

14 See Meister Eckhart's “Sermon 52” (Eckhart 1981: 200).

15 Far from simply repudiating his earlier philosophy of identity, Schelling here *dynamizes* it. Rather than deny the existence of finitude, reason as he did in 1801, Schelling argues that the identity must *divide itself* into finite determinations. The dynamizing of absolute identity draws on his earlier insight from 1800 in which Schelling acknowledged the identity of synthesis and analysis in the first principle of transcendental philosophy.

16 This does not preclude understanding ground in a more specific sense, as that which is subordinate qua potency. Nature may be distinctively ground in this sense, but this insight is not in conflict with these broad reflections on the ground in general.

17 Schelling informs us that this distinction has its origin in his *Presentation of My System of Philosophy*.

he exists” (Schelling 2006: 27). Why identify nature as the ground of God? This may seem uncanny, especially in light of the fact that the unconditioned God is the source of the very distinction between God and nature. Because nature is the independent being that is not God, without nature God could not have a *separate* and determinate existence. Thus, nature is the ground or the condition that makes God possible. Nature, as the ground of God, is that which “in God himself is not He Himself” (Schelling 2006: 28). Nature is the ground of God insofar as nature is the condition that makes God possible as a *relative* and determinate being. Nature is *in* the Absolute and unconditioned God [the primal willing], but is external to and a condition of the relative God which it grounds and to which it is opposed. ‘In German, ‘zugrunde gehen’ means not only ‘to go to the ground’ but also ‘to be destroyed.’ When something goes to the ground, it ceases to be. While nature is the ground of God, it is also the negation of God, where God ceases to be God.

As Mark Thomas astutely points out, the term ‘ground’ is not a proper name that only means what it designates. Rather, it is a concept that can apply to more than one particular (Thomas 2023: 33). In Schelling’s words:

In the circle out of which everything becomes, it is no contradiction that that through which the One is generated may itself be in turn begotten by it. Here there is no first and last because all things mutually presuppose each other, no thing is another thing and yet no thing is not without another thing. God has within himself an inner ground of his existence that in this respect precedes him in existence; but precisely in this way, God is again the prius [what is before] of the ground insofar as the ground, even as such, could not exist if God did not exist in actu (Schelling 2006: 28).

Because “all things mutually presuppose each other” nature too must presuppose God. Just as nature is the ground of God, God is also the ground of nature. If God did not exist, then there would be nothing other to nature by which nature would be rendered determinate. Without God, nature cannot exist *as nature*. Thus, God is the condition for the possibility of nature. Just as nature is the ground by which God is God, God is the ground of nature by which nature is nature.¹⁸ In Thomas’ summary: the “two principles are mutually grounding” such that “the two principles in God are mutually dependent and thus reciprocally grounding” (Thomas 2023: 202-204). As is evident, Schelling’s conceives of totality as absolute mediation: God mediates nature, and nature mediates God.

¹⁸ Although Ian Hamilton Grant is on point to emphasize continuity between the Freedom Essay and his earlier philosophy of nature, the concept of ground cannot be reduced to a “geological eruption.” See Grant (2008: 17). Moreover, even if one can trace an influence from Schelling’s concept of nature as the ground of existence back to Kant’s naturalistic concept of ground as he developed it in his geology, this would not be sufficient to circumscribe the concept of ground. For Grant’s discussion of this influence, see Grant (2008: 7). God—who is neither to be identified with nature nor is anything natural—is equally the ground of nature.

Not only do both God and nature exist, but each also exists as a ground of existence. *Each exists and is grounded by a principle that transcends it.*¹⁹

Schelling's concept of absolute mediation is translated into the language of predication. In Schelling's theory of the copula, a proposition of the form "this body is blue" does not state a mere tautology whereby being blue is simply *identical* to being a body. Rather, "this body is blue" states a *dependency relation*, whereby "the individual properties contained within the concept of body" "relate to it as antecedent to consequent" (Schelling 2006: 14).²⁰ Following this reading of the copula, Schelling can affirm both that 'God is nature' and 'nature is God', such that nature is dependent upon God, and God depends upon nature. Since God is absolute freedom, insofar as God is the ground of nature, Schelling not only affirms Fichte's view that nature has freedom as its ground, but the reverse too: "everything real (nature, the world of things) has activity, life, and freedom as its ground, or in Fichte's expression, that not only is I-hood all, but also the reverse, that all is I-hood" (Schelling 2006: 22). In short, in virtue of its free (and necessary) act of self-division, *primal willing determines itself to be constituted by absolute mediation.*

2.3 Human Freedom and Nature

Given the central role of absolute mediation in Schelling's account of the absolute, how does human freedom fit into this theory of absolute mediation? Schelling's treatise investigates the essence of freedom, it is not primarily concerned with divine freedom. Rather, the title of the treatise concerns *human* freedom. Human freedom is not only a capacity for self-determination, but "the real and vital concept of freedom is the capacity for good and evil" (Schelling 2006: 23). This capacity is "real" insofar as it is grounded in nature: "because he emerges from the ground (is creaturely), the human being has in relation to God a relatively independent principle" (Schelling 2006: 32). The human being is a creature, and therefore is a part of nature.

As a *mediating* factor between nature and God, Schelling's *Freedom Essay* represents human freedom as essentially connected to both. While we may be inclined not to think of nature as a domain of freedom or self-determination, Schelling's philosophy of nature certainly does. By Schelling's lights, human beings cannot be free unless nature, which is the basis upon which their freedom exists, is also free. As a result, Schelling propounds a view of nature as an autonomous and self-determining system. Freedom as the capacity to choose between good and evil is itself a product of nature as an autonomous, self-de-

19 The term 'absolute mediation' has its origin in Tanabe Hajime's *Philosophy as Metanoetics*. My own approach to Schelling's concept of Ungrund as absolute mediation has its origin in Tanabe's treatment of the Freedom Essay in *Philosophy as Metanoetics*. For more on how Tanabe develops Schelling's concept of absolute mediation, see Gregory S. Moss and Dennis Prooi's "The Legacy of Schelling in Tanabe's Philosophy as Metanoetics." (Moss and Prooi Forthcoming).

20 Schelling further elaborates on the law of identity governing such propositions as essentially connected to the "law of the ground" such that each is "just as original" as the other (Schelling 2006: 17).

termining system. Within the *Freedom Essay* itself, Schelling briefly recounts the story by which nature becomes conscious of itself in human knowledge, and liberates itself from myth in religious and eventually philosophical consciousness (Schelling 2006: 45). Because the human emerges from the ground of nature, which is relatively independent of God, the human being is relatively independent of God. Just as the case of nature, *the human being is not God, but exists in God*. Indeed, the “root of freedom” must be recognized in the “independent ground of nature” (Schelling 2006: 39).

It is true that Schelling does not give any explicit arguments for the view that nature is free in his *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*. However, the position is implied by his position that will is primal being. Since everything that exists is a creation of the free self-determining will, and everything exists as a division and *form of the self-determining will*, nature too must be a form of the self-determining will. Thus, nature is a form of *conditioned freedom*. It is relatively independent of God, and *instantiates* the form of self-determination constitutive of its origin. By no means is the human capacity for self-determination at odds with nature—rather, it is an extension and further development of nature as an agency—*natura naturans*. Indeed, Schelling recognizes nature as a form of “derived Absoluteness” for “such a divinity befits nature” (Schelling 2006: 18).

Schelling transcends Fichte’s subjective idealism by positing nature too as a free and self-developing agency. In Schelling’s words: “The thought of making freedom the one and all of philosophy has set the human mind free in general” such that “one who has tasted freedom can feel the longing to make everything analogous to it, to spread it throughout the whole universe” (Schelling 2006: 22). Indeed, Schelling’s emphasis on the Absolute nature of freedom is not a new development in 1809, but a further chapter and *development* of his original program. Consider Schelling’s letter to Hegel in February of 1795: “The highest principle of all philosophy is for me the pure, Absolute Self; that is, the self insofar as it is merely a self, insofar as it is unconditioned in any way by objects but is rather posited by *freedom*. The alpha and omega of all philosophy is freedom” (Hegel 1984: 32).

Since he already justified the freedom of nature in his *Introduction to the Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature* (1799) and his *System of Transcendental Philosophy* (1800),²¹ Schelling does not rehearse the proof for the freedom of nature in the *Freedom*

21 In his *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800) Schelling gives a justification for the autonomy of nature. Like Fichte before him, he holds that “all knowledge is founded on the coincidence of a subjective with an objective.” While the subjective is consciousness or the “intelligence,” the objective is the “unconscious” pole which he identifies with nature. (Schelling 2001: 5). Schelling offers a relatively concise argument for his position on nature. For Schelling, truth is the correspondence of the subject with the object. As such, the subject (the intellect) and object (nature) are each elements of truth. Based on this concept of truth, Schelling reasons that the elements of truth must themselves be true. Otherwise, truth would be constituted by elements that are false. Thus, in order for the subject to correspond with the object, the subject alone must be true, and the object alone must be true as well. But if this is the case, then the object, or nature itself, must be constituted by a correspondence between the subject and the object. Since the correspondence of the subject with the object constitutes the whole of truth, nature alone is the whole of truth. As a result, *from nature alone*, one

Essay. Instead, in the *Freedom Essay* Schelling assumes the freedom of nature already developed in the *Outline* even if the *Freedom Essay* diverges from the philosophy of nature in other respects. In his *Outline*, Schelling describes nature as “the cause and effect of itself.” As a *self-cause* it is simultaneously the product and the productivity responsible for the product: “Insofar as we regard the totality of objects not merely as a product, but at the same time necessarily as productive, it becomes *Nature* for us, and this identity of the product and the productivity, and this alone, is implied by the idea of Nature [...] (Schelling 2004: 202). Because nature is the condition that makes human knowledge possible, “It is not, therefore, that we know Nature as a priori, but *Nature is apriori*.” (Schelling 2004: 198). Naturally, though the “root of freedom” is recognized in the “independent ground of nature” nature has a new place in the freedom essay, for nature is now subordinated to the free act of God’s creation.

2.4 Human Freedom and God

Nature, as the ground of God, not only mediates God’s existence as an ontological principle, but also as a *moral agency*. Since human freedom is a further development and realization of the freedom of nature as the ground of God, human will is evil when they will to be a *self-creating ground* whereby they no longer will to exist in any relation of dependency on the God to whom they are indebted for their existence (Schelling 2006: 55). Since God can only reveal himself through *opposition*, God can only reveal himself as *love* if there is a principle of evil against which God can appear, such that God cannot only reveal himself as love except in hatred (Schelling 2006: 41).²² Just as nature mediates the revelation of God as God, human evil, as a product and feature of the ground, can mediate the revelation of God as good.

ought to be able to deduce (and thereby make explicit) subjectivity-consciousness or intelligence. Since nature includes both the conscious and the unconscious elements within itself, and everything (including the whole of experience) is either the conscious, the unconscious, or both, nature itself constitutes the totality. Nature cannot be determined by a subject that transcends it, because subjectivity is contained within it. (In other words, If the subject exceeded nature, then nature would not be the unity of the subjective and the objective.) The same holds good for the object. Thus, nature cannot be determined by anything except itself. Hence, nature must be its own cause, and is a free, self-determining agency—*natura naturans*. In his own words, Schelling argues that “If all knowing has, as it were, two poles, which mutually presuppose and demand one another, they must seek each other in all the sciences; hence there must necessarily be two basic sciences, and it must be impossible to set out from the one pole without being driven toward the other. The necessary tendency of all natural science is thus to move from nature to intelligence. This and nothing else is at the bottom of the urge to bring theory into the phenomena of nature.” (Schelling 2001: 6).

22 Here Schelling’s reasoning follows Boehme: “‘Dear teacher, tell me why must love and suffering, and friend and foe, coexist? Would it not be better to have only love?’ The teacher said, ‘If love were not in suffering, it would have nothing that it could love. However, because love’s being, which is loves, is in suffering and pain, just like the poor soul, love has cause to love its own being, and to rescue it from pain, so that it may be loved again. Further, it cannot be known what love is, if it did not have something that it could love’ (Boehme 2010: 40).

Whether the human being chooses to be good or evil, in each case the human being determines itself. However, Schelling makes the extraordinary claim that acts of human freedom are eternal: ““The act, whereby his life is determined in time, does not itself belong to time but rather to serenity: it also does not temporally precede life [because it’s not temporal at all] but goes through time (unhampered by it) as an act which is eternal by nature” (Schelling 2006: 51).²³

In each act of self-determination, the self that determines and the self that is determined are the same. For this reason, there is *no temporal interval* between the determiner and the determined. As self-determining, the act is *atemporal* or eternal. Thus, although the act occurs *within time*, for Schelling is adamant that each act “goes through time,” the act is *not diachronically* ordered. Each act is eternal *without preceding the act in time*. Each act is “eternal by nature”—“being free and eternal beginning itself” (Schelling 2006: 51).

What is more, because the act of self-determination is not conditioned upon anything outside itself, as self-conditioning it is *totally unconditioned*. Thus, each act of human freedom is not only eternal but absolute. For this reason, Schelling writes that although the human being is “born in time” he is “created into the beginning of the creation.” The human is “created”—they are *natural*. And yet, the human being is also “created into the beginning of creation,” for each act of human freedom is eternal. Here we are not justified in introducing a distinction between the human being as a natural agent, and the freedom of the human being—this would be both artificial and contrary to the spirit and the meaning of the claim. The human being is a *free creature*—a creature with real freedom to choose between good and evil.

Of course, the absolute and unconditioned nature of the freedom of the will does not mean that the human being can realize any possibility that they wish. To the contrary, it only signifies that the form of the free act and every realization of that free act invokes the being of the Absolute. Because human action is such that “as man acts here so he has acted from eternity” (Schelling 2006: 53) *no human action can be free except insofar as it depends upon the free action of God himself*. Put otherwise, only by relying upon the absolute power of God’s unconditioned freedom can human freedom realize itself.

As a form of absolute mediation, the mediating relationship can be formulated *in reverse*: because every act of human freedom realizes itself in virtue of the absolute freedom of God, God too realizes his own capacity for free action through human willing. Human freedom is a form of absolute mediation whereby the human being realizes their own freedom through the power of God, and God realizes his freedom through the human power of self-determination.²⁴ Human freedom is a *locus of the eternal and temporal*; freedom has

23 While there are good reasons to consider Schelling’s view on human freedom to be paradoxical, here I only mean to further indicate the way that self-determination operates not only in God and nature more generally, but in *human freedom per se*.

24 Just as the human being mediates God’s power, so do they mediate God’s knowledge. Schelling argues that “Being becomes aware of itself only in becoming.” ([Schelling 2006: 66]. Only by virtue of becoming human, i.e. in Christ, does

the structure of the *Augenblick*, of which Kierkegaard would later make so much. In short, human freedom is *not only* a further potentialization of nature²⁵, but it frees itself from nature by *participating in the divine and unconditioned freedom* in which all things exist.²⁶ If Schelling is right, it is a significant mistake that so many contemporary works on freedom do not invoke the concept of the absolute in their discourses.

Schelling's pantheism does not threaten human freedom. Instead, "only what is free is in God to the extent that it is free" (Schelling 2006: 18-19). If we conceive of human freedom as a power opposed to divine omnipotence, then human beings cannot be free, for human freedom would limit God's power (Schelling 2006: 11).²⁷ Human freedom cannot exceed God. However, if human freedom itself draws upon the power of God, human freedom is no longer opposed to divine freedom, but constitutes its very realization. Schelling brilliantly overcomes the false dichotomy that God's power precludes human freedom and *vice versa*. In the end, a pantheism of primal willing does not negate human freedom—it makes it possible.

Schelling's *Freedom Essay* is not primarily a text on epistemology, but a treatise about human freedom. However, the question of human freedom is not totally unrelated to the epistemic questions we will consider in the following discussion. In his *Freedom Essay*, Schelling argues for a vision of human freedom as self-determination according to which human freedom is impossible unless it participates in the self-determining power of absolute freedom. In part 3, I argue that while the power of absolute freedom transcends the capacity of human understanding, it does not exceed the absolute power of reason or intellectual intuition, by which the free form of the absolute is revealed to philosophical knowledge. In short, human freedom and human reason are both united in the Absolute, without which neither human freedom nor human reason can exist.

God come to know himself as love and spirit, namely as the unity of God and nature—light and dark—divine and human. Likewise, only by virtue of the becoming of philosophy in time can God *know himself conceptually*—as the unconditioned and groundless being.

25 This is also evident from Schelling's claim that evil is a "higher potency of the ground active in nature." Since human freedom makes that evil real, one cannot separate human freedom from nature qua ground (Schelling 2006: 81).

26 Schelling is adamant that the human being *qua spirit* in which the human being is "raised from the creaturely into what is above the creaturely:" "The principle raised up from the ground of nature whereby man is separated from God is the selfhood in him which, however, through its unity with the ideal principle, becomes spirit. Selfhood as such is spirit; or man is spirit as a selfish [selbstisch], particular being (separated from God)—precisely this connection constitutes personality. Since selfhood is spirit, however, it is at the same time raised from the creaturely into what is above the creaturely; it is will that beholds itself in complete freedom, being no longer an instrument of the productive [schaffenden] universal will in nature, but rather above and outside of all nature" (Schelling 2006: 33). The human is a "bond of living forces" (Schelling 2006: 34).

27 "Absolute causality in One Being leaves only unconditioned passivity to all others."

3. The Dialectics of the Understanding: The Ungrund and the Indivisible Remainder

The most famous passage from the *Freedom Essay* is Schelling's claims that there is an incomprehensible and infinite remainder lying at the bottom of things:

After the eternal act of self-revelation, everything in the world is, as we see it now, rule, order and form; but anarchy still lies in the ground, as if it could break through once again, and nowhere does it appear as if order and form were what is original but rather as if initial anarchy had been brought to order. This is the incomprehensible base of reality in things, the indivisible remainder, that which with the greatest exertion cannot be resolved in understanding but rather remains eternally in the ground. The understanding is born in the genuine sense from that which is without understanding (Schelling 2006: 29).

Here Schelling claims that reality is ultimately incomprehensible. However, in other places he also decries the falsehood of philosophical views that deny the rational being of the world. How can these views be reconciled? After all, Schelling himself must—at the very least—comprehend the ultimate base of reality *as incomprehensible*.

This conflict is a merely illusory one. In the *Freedom Essay*, Schelling never claims that reason is born from what is without reason. To the contrary, he claims that “the understanding is born [...] from that which is without understanding” (Schelling 2006: 29). Like Hegel, Schelling distinguishes understanding [*Verstand*] from reason [*Vernunft*].²⁸ Because reason is the place of truth, the ultimate base of reality does not exceed reason, but it does exceed the understanding. While reason is the principle of indifference, the understanding knows its object via differentiation (Schelling 2006: 76). Schelling appears to mean that *for the understanding* there will always be an “indivisible remainder” lying at the base of reality.²⁹

Why should the understanding always encounter a remainder lying at the base of reality? The unconditioned God—the primal willing—lies at the base of all things, and it

28 Compare with Hegel's distinction between the Understanding and Reason in his *Encyclopedia Logic*. See Hegel (1975 §79-82).

29 Žižek's claims that for Schelling “the true problem for philosophy is how we can accomplish the passage from senseless existence to reason” (Žižek, 1996: 74). Žižek identifies freedom with contingency and asks how reason could arise from that contingent freedom: “For Schelling, then, the primordial, radically contingent fact, a fact which can in no way be accounted for, is freedom itself, a freedom bound by nothing, a freedom which, in a sense, *is* Nothing; and the problem is, rather, how this Nothing of the abyss of primordial freedom becomes entangled in the causal chain of reason” (Žižek 1996: 16). However, this is a problematic reading of the *Freedom Essay*, for in the *Freedom Essay* reason is without origin, and in this text freedom is not contingent but eschews contingency. This confusion about reason in the *Freedom Essay* is shared by others too. For instance, Snow claims that for Schelling “the most real is the least rational.” (Snow 1996: 174). Because the most real only transcends the understanding, but it does not transcend reason (for reason is the place of truth) in the *Freedom Essay* Schelling continues to hold that the most real is rational. For this reason, Schelling does not reject rationalism, and Dale's view on the rationalism of the *Freedom Essay* cannot be accepted. Mark Thomas is on point when he argues that Schelling is “not rejecting rationalism.” See Thomas (2023: 30).

makes possible the distinction between the conditioned God and nature. Sean McGrath represents it well (McGrath 2005: 3). Consider the following diagram:

$$\frac{A \neq B}{X}$$

‘X’ represents the indifference of the primal willing or unconditioned absolute. ‘A’ and ‘B’ stand for God and nature respectively. ‘≠’ represents the fact that each *mutually excludes the other*, a process of reciprocal determination where each, via an act of negation, grounds the determinacy of the other.

As we noted, because the meaning of the term ‘ground’ is not a proper name, its meaning is not exhausted by any one referent. Rather, it is a universal that can be applied to many things. Accordingly, Schelling calls the being that is “before any duality” the “original ground” (Schelling 2006: 68). Thus, we have *three* terms: *one* original ground, and *two* derivative grounds. Since the understanding operates by the principle that determination is negation, the understanding can only grasp the being of the original ground by positing it as *the negation of the derivative grounds*. Insofar as the original ground is the negation of the derivative ground, it constitutes one side of an opposition, such that $X \neq (A \neq B)$ (McGrath 2005:3). Since the original ground is the negation of the derivative ground, the derivative ground now operates as the *ground for the determinacy* for the original ground, and *vice versa*. Since the original ground has its ground outside itself in another, it cannot be the original ground, for the original ground has no opposition. Thus, there must be a *second* original ground that grounds all the other derivative grounds. As McGrath depicts it (McGrath 2005: 4):

$$\frac{X \neq (A \neq B)}{Z}$$

In the process of understanding, ‘Z’ too will be determinately related to ‘ $X \neq (A \neq B)$ ’ such that another original ground ‘Q’ must be posited, *ad infinitum*.³⁰ Thus, *for the understanding*, there must always be an ‘indivisible remainder’ that it fails to comprehend, for it only grasps the being of something in its oppositional relationship to others. Thus, the remainder always remains “eternally in the ground” (Schelling 2006: 29).³¹ Put in other words, the understanding is constituted by a will that is always yearning: “it is a will of the under-

³⁰ Thomas notes that in readings of the Freedom Essay there is a tendency to confuse existence with what exists. See Thomas (2023: 32).

³¹ While McGrath’s diagrams are very helpful, in “The Logic of the Freedom Essay” he claims that “Schelling avoids the regress by insisting that where opposition is not qualitative difference, not difference in kind, the deepest grounding is.”

standing, namely yearning” (Schelling 2006: 29). The *yearning for the Absolute* is always incomplete—always striving without end.

3.1 *The Understanding and Belated Predication*

Markus Gabriel helpfully presents the dialectic of the understanding in terms of “belated” predication. Regarding the relative determinacy of the absolute, Gabriel observes that “the ontological presupposition of determinacy is not itself subject to determinacy but rather can only be brought under any determinate criterion belatedly.” In other words: “The original ground is a presupposition of all grounding relations, but it can only operate this way “post-actum” (Gabriel 2013: 87). Every grounding relation requires an independent thing which is *grounded* by the ground. If one negates the independence of what is grounded, then “the whole concept [of the ground] would abolish itself” (Schelling 2006: 17-18). However, if this is the case, the original ground can only operate as a ground if the grounded already exists. This means that the unconditioned absolute qua unconditioned is not the ground of anything. Rather, it acquires the predicate ‘is a ground’ *only belatedly*—only on the condition of the existence of the independent being that it grounds. Only “*after* the eternal act of self-revelation,” or the creation of the autonomous being of nature, can the unconditioned absolute be that which *is* the ground of nature.

As Gabriel puts it: “that which is beyond being” is not always already beyond being, but only comes to be through self-mediation” (Gabriel 2013: 93).³² By positing nature, the absolute transforms itself into the form of the original ground. As the original ground, however, it is already grounded (for it exists in grounding relations with the derivative ground), and for that reason the predicate ‘original ground’ can only be a result or belatedly predicated—it cannot be an original feature of primal willing. In each instance, the understanding discovers that every concept of the original ground that it posits does not correspond to *the unconditioned absolute*. Indeed, by recognizing that the unconditioned absolute cannot be what it is as long as it operates as the ground of God and nature, following Boehme,³³ Schelling calls the original ground the *Ungrund* (Schelling 2006: 70).³⁴ Every ground exists in relation to *the grounded*. Since the grounded transcends the ground, the grounded is

(McGrath 2005: 4). However, it seems that McGrath’s view should be *significantly qualified*, for the regress must hold for the understanding, even if it cannot hold for reason itself.

32 Gabriel argues that Schelling’s view of belated prediction engenders a view of being in which everything is fundamentally contingent. Although this is the view of the late Schelling, it is not the argument in the *Freedom Essay*, for here “contingency is impossible.” Freedom is “equidistant from contingency and compulsion” (Schelling 2006: 49).

33 For instance, see Jakob Boehme: “And when I further said that whoever finds love finds nothing and everything, this is also true, because that person finds an unground, beyond nature and beyond the senses, that has no place as its abode and finds nothing that is like it. Therefore one can compare it with nothing, because it is deeper than something” (Boehme 2010: 41).

34 Again: “The absolute,” “considered merely in itself” is the non-ground” (Schelling 2006: 70).

independent of the ground, and is *other* to it. However, the unconditioned absolute—primal willing or total freedom—is not opposed or other to anything. Thus, the unconditioned absolute cannot be a ground. Thus, it is the non-ground—the *Ungrund*.

Earlier I noted that in German the ground of something can also be its negation—where it *ceases to be*. Schelling here plays on this sense of the term, for the indifference or the unconditioned absolute is not only what grounds the grounding relationship, but it is *where the ground ceases to be*—it is where the play of determinate opposition ceases to exist. As such, the original ground is also the unground—that which negates the ground. The Ungrund is that “being against which all opposites ruin themselves, that is nothing less than their very not-Being [*Nichtsein*]” (Schelling 2006: 69).

Naturally, for the understanding the unconditioned absolute cannot appear except as a *paradox*. The unconditioned absolute has no other, but the understanding can only grasp its object as a *relative* being that exists in relation to others. As a result, the understanding always *thinks the absolute as non-absolute*. The understanding finds the Ungrund as that which “has no predicate” but simultaneously has the predicate “lacking of a predicate” (Schelling 2006: 68). While the Ungrund transcends all relations of negation, the understanding cannot grasp it except paradoxically, namely as that which is not negatively related to another—that which negates negativity. If the understanding is the only faculty by which to think the absolute, then one simply cannot know the absolute.

3.2 Reason in the Freedom Essay

We will remember that Schelling affirms reason as “the place of truth” and the “peaceful site in which primordial wisdom is received” (Schelling 2006: 76). Since knowledge of the absolute is primordial wisdom, reason is the site where absolute knowledge is received. The “triumph of truth” occurs when thought “emerges victorious from the most extreme division and separation” (Schelling 2006: 76). Indeed, it is reason’s vocation to free us from the extreme separation and *stupefaction of the understanding*.

The dialectic of the understanding demonstrated that in every case God and nature are reciprocally determining each other, and no escape from the reciprocal determination of each appears possible. The dialectic of the understanding always engenders new dualities, each of which reciprocally determines the other. On the one hand, while God is the ground of nature, God is also grounded by nature. On the other hand, nature grounds God, and is grounded by God in turn. Thus, each is constituted by *the same determination*—each is both *ground and grounded*. While God and nature each condition the other, the mutual determination of each—the *activity of reciprocal mediation* itself—is not opposed to anything, for it is equally realized in both divisions of being. Thus, what is absolute is not some third term beyond the duality, for that would only re-invigorate the dialectic of the understanding. No, the mediation of each towards the other is what exists without opposition—the unconditioned being is nothing less than the activity of *absolute mediation* whereby each term

in the relation–God and nature–themselves instantiate the unity of the ground-grounded relation. To give a depiction, we might diagram it as follows:

$$A \rightarrow \leftarrow B$$

Each arrow symbolizes one direction of the grounding relation. Since each grounds the other, each arrow points in both directions.

The Ungrund is “in each in the same way” for each operates as the mediator and the mediated term in the grounding relation. Since each operates as both sides of the mediating process, the Ungrund is “in each the whole, as its own being” (Schelling 2006: 70). Because each is equally the ground as well as the grounded, in the Ungrund there is “the absolute *indifference* of both (Schelling 2006: 68). In other words, insofar as each instantiates the same features, neither is differentiated from the other, and the Ungrund is thereby indifferent to them both.³⁵ God and nature are *not opposed* to absolute mediation, for *each is an equal instantiation of it*. Thus, “nothing hinders that they be predicated of it as non-opposites” (Schelling 2006: 69). Insofar as the Ungrund is not opposed to the duality, but the indifference is constituted by the fact that each is the mediator of the other, the absolute is not an indeterminate emptiness—a night in which all cows are black. To the contrary, the Ungrund or the absolute mediation is *the absolute indifference of the absolute mediation of God and nature*. As a result, absolute indifference is a *plenum of content*; it is the world whole *without remainder*.³⁶

For Schelling absolute mediation is not a contradiction. For each only mediates the other because each is *not* the other. Qua ground of nature, God is not nature, and *vice versa*. In virtue of that mutual exclusion which constitutes their grounding relationship, the whole is revealed: *the mutual exclusion itself is what constitutes the totality*, such that each exists “in disjunction” and each is “for itself” (Schelling 2006: 69). Thus, while duality is preserved, it is preserved in the absolute as the *mutual exclusion of each by the other*. Without the non-ground conceived as the mutual exclusion of principles, “there would be no twoness

35 Schelling’s account of the relation between God and nature in the Freedom Essay parallels the account of the real and the ideal in his earlier transcendental philosophy and philosophy of nature. Because each (God and nature) are determining and determined, each is the whole. Just as nature and spirit are the whole, and one element of the whole united in absolute identity, both God and and nature are the whole and one element in the whole, united in the Ungrund.

36 Schelling describes the relationship of each principle to the other as one of love. Since each principle is the totality of determinations, each is itself independent, yet each is wedded to the other and related to it as its condition. Each is independent, and dependent upon the other. According to Schelling, love “links such things of which either could exist for itself, yet does not and cannot exist without the other.” (Schelling 2006: 70). The description is best apt for agapeic love, for agapeic love is absolute and beyond all relations, but is nonetheless a relation between relata.

of principles” (Schelling 2006: 69).³⁷ Each is an instance of mutual exclusion or mutual grounding, by which each is the first and last. Far from a contradictory experience, in the intuition of reason, the absolute is revealed as that which *holds the diverse principles together as existing apart*, thereby providing the metaphysical grounding for the validity of the principle of noncontradiction. Because the indifference is not beyond the mutual exclusion as a third term, we can present the mutual exclusion itself as the absolute. Modifying McGrath’s diagram, indifference is best represented simply as the ‘≠’ without any further additions:

$$A \neq B$$

While the understanding is tempted to add a third, reason knows itself as constituted by the mutual exclusion itself.

Why is reason able to comprehend this truth while the understanding cannot? “Reason is in man that which, according to the mystics, the *primum passivum* [first passivity] or initial wisdom is in God in which all things are together and yet distinct, identical and yet free each in its own way (Schelling 2006: 76). Via the dialectic of the understanding, the whole is revealed as *absolute mediation*—a form that transcends the understanding, but is accessible to reason. For reason is the form of immediate cognition, or “indifference,” and since both nature and God instantiate absolute mediation, it is indifferent to both. Thus, reason can know the absolute—reason is that faculty whereby the truth of the mutual disjunction (and the Understanding) is revealed—the mutual exclusion of both principles that unifies them in their mutual negativity.³⁸

4. Concluding Remarks

The logic of primal willing at work in the *Freedom Essay* denies Hegel’s principle that all determination is negation. By restricting this principle to relative being and the under-

37 One might worry that if the absolute is in relation with nothing, but the Ungrund is a mediating principle, then it would be in relation to something, and would no longer be absolute. However, if we read the Ungrund as *absolute mediation*, it is not in relation to anything outside itself. To the contrary, absolute mediation contains both grounds (God and nature) without reducing one to the other. It is *the absolute gap that preserves the twoness of principles*. By this reading, there is nothing with which Ungrund as absolute mediation stands in relation. However, as I indicate in my concluding remarks, later in 1842 Schelling would object to this view by arguing that one cannot discursively grasp this truth without opposing the understanding and reason. As a result, in the end the Absolute is always outstanding, and the indivisible remainder must apply not only to the understanding, but also to reason itself.

38 As this explication of the text has demonstrated, (on Schelling’s own terms) there is nothing inherently irrational about the non-ground. For this reason, we cannot agree with Yates that “Echoing his own characterization of ‘spirit’ circa. 1797, he calls the non-ground “the absolute considered merely in itself” (70/408)—that which overrides all the inadequacies of a rational system.” See Yates (2013: 92). The non-ground is inherently rational, for it is the absolute indifference that is characteristic of reason itself. While the non-ground overrides the inadequacies of the Understanding, nowhere does Schelling identify the non-ground as that which “overrides” the rational system of the world.

standing, the absolute and the rational form of knowledge is conceived according to purely affirmative principles. If the absolute were governed by this principle, it would be relative—a contradiction that Hegel endorses but Schelling is loath to avoid.³⁹ Since the first principle is purely affirmative and devoid of negation and difference, in the *Freedom Essay* Schelling never attempts to explain *how* relative being is posited by the absolute.⁴⁰ As Auweele astutely observes, while the many versions of his famous *Ages of the World* would continue to investigate this question, Schelling would ultimately recognize that “Our truth at any point is never the whole truth.”⁴¹

In the *Freedom Essay* he is content to demonstrate *that* the absolute must determine itself, and to elucidate the grounding structure that constitutes the logic of absolute being and knowledge. Although the absolute is purely affirmative, it is not empty, for Schelling holds that the absolute contains all difference and negation without itself being burdened by any external negation that would compromise its oppositionless nature.

While the understanding inevitably falls into paradox whenever it attempts to think the primal willing, by failing to grasp the absolute, and always stumbling upon an indivisible remainder, it realizes that it cannot know the absolute. However, this knowledge that the understanding cannot know the absolute is itself absolute knowledge, and constitutes rational insight. By successfully thinking the Absolute, human reason participates in Absolute freedom and thereby liberates itself from the chains of the understanding—chains that trap philosophy in the unfreedom of determinate negation.

Insight into the indifferent form of the totality—the plenum of primal willing—is achieved in virtue of the recognition of the limits of the understanding and its dialectical process. Indeed, the only reason we know that the understanding fails to know the absolute is because we already have an archetype of absolute knowledge granted to us by reason itself. As Schelling himself acknowledges, reason gives us the “archetype [Urbild]” by which the “understanding should develop. The understanding “shapes things in conjunction with the archetype by which it steers itself” (Schelling 2006: 76).

The *Freedom Essay* stands between the System of Identity and his mature positive philosophy. In the *Presentation of My System of Philosophy* (1801) Schelling denies the very existence of finitude, while in the *Grounding of the Positive Philosophy* (1842) the existence

39 Because Hegel endorses the view that all determinacy is constituted by determinate negation, even absolute determinacy must be constituted by determinate negation. As a result, the absolute can only be absolute if it is not relative. But this means that the absolute must be relative to relativity, and must exist in a state of self-contradiction. Accordingly, Hegel proclaims that every “All things are in themselves contradictory. See Hegel (2010: 381).

40 Schelling long recognized the impossibility of explaining how the finite arises out of the infinite. As he writes in his *Philosophical Letters* from 1794, “No system can fill the gap between the non-finite and the finite.” Schelling (1980: 177).

41 For more on Schelling’s approach to this question in the *Ages of the World*, see Dennis Auweele’s *Exceeding Reason: Freedom and Religion in Schelling and Nietzsche* (Auweele 2020:223).

of finitude is a *contingent fact* that has its origin in a *contingent act* of absolute freedom.⁴² For the Schelling of 1809 there is finitude and difference, but absolute freedom is devoid of contingency.

The Freedom Essay does not represent the apex of Schelling's thought, for he would eventually recognize that philosophy is fundamentally incomplete. Given that reason, qua absolute indifference, is without opposition, but the understanding always exists in opposition, reason and the understanding exist in opposition to each other, such that the absolute knowing of reason must be conditioned by the understanding, and thereby rendered relative and *incomplete*. The principle of determinate negation would revenge itself on the absolute, thereby pitting the oppositional against the oppositionless. Ironically, the very fact that reason is distinguished from the understanding and thereby escapes its limits is exactly what undermines its absolute character. Thus, in the *Grounding of the Positive Philosophy* (1842), Schelling would acknowledge that philosophy can never complete the system of absolute knowledge—the indivisible remainder must remain—even *for reason itself*, such that “reason is set *outside* itself” (Schelling 2007: 162/203). There Schelling will conclude that philosophy never stands in possession of the wisdom that it seeks—it remains a *love of wisdom*.⁴³

The Freedom Essay is one significant stage by which Schelling's concept of the absolute is transformed from a constitutive into a regulative ideal—always present as an *ought-to-be* that continues to light the torch of philosophical inquiry. The rift between the infinite and the finite—a rift Schelling acknowledged early on—would blossom into the full contingency of being—a contingency that would humble the systematic thinker and call him to rest content with the platonic *Eros* that always animated his thinking. Although many objections might be raised against Schelling's *Freedom Essay* from philosophical perspectives in other periods of Schelling's own oeuvre, the text deserves to be read on its own terms, and with an eye to its essential commitment to rationalism and the systematic ambitions characteristic of Classical German Philosophy. Once when we begin to think with the *Freedom Essay* on its own terms, only then can we even begin to address the success or failure of his arguments.⁴⁴

42 Schelling proclaims that “everything that is, insofar as it is, is infinity itself.” See Schelling (2001: 353). Contrast this with the contingent facticity of existence in Schelling (2007: 60/130).

43 See Schelling (2007: 181).

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FRACTAL COMPLEXITY IN THE SYSTEM OF PURE REASON. UNITY, TRUTH AND PERFECTION AS STRUCTURAL MOMENTS OF TRANSCENDENTAL CRITIQUE OF REASON

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Abstract: *The specific manner in which transcendental philosophy deals with the complexity of reality has itself led to both sophisticated and complex systems whose unity are difficult to see. This applies in particular to Kant's philosophy, which not without reason has the reputation that its sub-areas are only loosely and at best externally held together by the Kantian method. I firmly oppose this view. Kant's philosophy is not characterized by the fact that it considers a system of contingent sub-areas of human existence, but rather by the strict development of a single principle. This principle is that of an apperceptive reason, i.e. an ultimate cause that must be grasped as such through itself. It is striking that each of the three critiques of reason pick up the thread of the investigation precisely where the previous one dropped it. In accordance with the synthetic-syllogistic structure of conceptual determination, reason thus passes through three interwoven lines of reasoning in order to be able to expose its own concept as the basis of all knowledge in the course of the third critique. However, Kant's efforts in the Opus Postumum point to the fact that there is still a gap here, as well as to the possibility of closing it.*

Keywords: Philosophy – Reason – Category – Deduction – Logic – Spontaneity

Resumen: *La manera particular en que la filosofía trascendental aborda la complejidad de la realidad ha conducido a concepciones sistemáticas igualmente exigentes y complejas, cuya unidad apenas puede percibirse. Esto se aplica especialmente a la filosofía de Kant, que no sin razón tiene la reputación de que sus diferentes ámbitos solo están débilmente y, en el mejor de los casos, externamente unidos por el método kantiano. En este artículo, realizo una crítica decidida a esta opinión. La filosofía de Kant no se distingue por considerar una sistemática de ámbitos contingentes de la existencia humana, sino por el riguroso desarrollo de un único principio. Este principio es el de una razón aperceptiva, es decir, de un fundamento último que debe ser comprendido como tal por sí mismo. Llama la atención que cada una de las tres críticas de la*

razón retoma el hilo de la investigación exactamente allí donde la anterior lo había dejado. Conforme a la estructura sintético-silogística de la determinación conceptual, la razón recorre así tres trayectorias de fundamentación entrelazadas entre sí, con el fin de poder exponer, en el curso de la tercera crítica, su propio concepto como fundamento de todo conocimiento. Que, sin embargo, aún haya aquí una laguna lo indican tanto los esfuerzos de Kant en el Opus Postumum como la posibilidad misma de cerrarla.

Palabras clave: *Filosofía – Razón – Categoría - Deducción - Lógica - Espontaneidad*

Anyone who has ever studied philosophy knows that the architectural designs of the systems of German Idealism, including Kant's own philosophy, are among the most complex intellectual constructs ever devised by the human mind. Their complexity is simply a consequence of the nature of their object, which is the one whose complexity cannot be surpassed, namely *reality* itself (*Wirklichkeit*). Nevertheless, all the systems of German Idealism have a peculiarity that is capable to irritate today's scientistic thinking. Unlike the latter, transcendental philosophy does not take reality or what is real as given, but attempts to question the possibility of its 'given-ness', commonly known as its objectivity. Now a given is logically impossible without self-givenness, therefore objectivity cannot be conceived without subjectivity, whereby this relationship appears unambiguous at first glance; however, this is deceptive. The 'self' and the 'given' are beings, that both exists in the way beings exist ('seinsmäßig Seiende'), whereby the respective mode of their being is essentially ('wesenshaft') different. Thus, the question of reality seems to arise as a question of being and its essence. This classical metaphysical view of philosophy is by no means wrong, it just cannot be answered with its means. What it fails to recognize is that it makes being and its essence themselves into givens or the indirect relationship between self-givenness (being) and givenness (essence). This higher realism is therefore still characterized by that which already characterized the lower realism from which it emerged, *hypostasis*. Both misjudge the nature of their 'object' by viewing and attempting to discuss it in the manner of a thing. They are both expressions of an ontology of substance characterized by intellectual thinking. The 'brand essence', if you like, of 'German Idealism' now consists in abolishing this very thinking and leaving it behind. It recognizes that the idea of substantiality as a given, which is inherent in the concept of being, must also be dissolved. Substance is essentially relation. However, precisely because of this, it is not a relation of given relata, but the relata themselves are only functions or expressions of that basic function, which is relation. Substance is relation in itself; this is precisely what *determines* substance.

Determination in turn means exclusion, i.e. *difference*. Accordingly, the determination of substance cannot stand on its own, but necessarily evokes the opposition that determines it and the opposition determined by it. In the case of substance, it lies in the externality of the determination itself, i.e. *the ground*. This in turn necessitates a double determination with regard to its relationship to substance, namely to be a material or formal ground. The material ground of substance is substance, the formal ground of substance as the relation of substance to itself as well as to other substances is the law. Together they determine *causality*. It is well known that *substantiality* (substance and accident) and *causality* (cause and effect) are the first two categories of relation. The inter- or syncategorial relationships will only be hinted at here, as they have been sufficiently developed elsewhere.¹ The aim here was merely to outline the idea of constitution, or rather genetization, as a core component of German Idealism in oppo-

¹ Cfr. Bunte (2016).

site to to apophantic thinking about being. However, this is more than a mere repetition of the Heraclitean-Parmenidean opposition. Rather, German Idealism attempts to think constitution and principle in one. Its thinking is absolute, or in other words, it is the attempt to think the absolute out of itself. Only in this sense does German philosophy rightly use the term 'idealism', namely not in the sense of opposition to realism, insofar as the latter is concerned with the basis of opposition to the former, but as 'Idea'-(l)ism, i.e. as a way of thinking in terms of ideas or reason. German idealism is thus a legitimate part of *philosophia perennis*. How Kant's 'idealism' is understood in this way is the subject of this study.

The Idea of the Critique of Pure Reason

To assess the importance of rational thinking for Kant's philosophy, it is enough to look at the title of his main work, 'Critique of Pure Reason'. If you take a closer look at the history of the work, you will see that Kant himself initially defined the title of the first Critique too broadly, or too narrowly, depending on your perspective. In fact, the concept of a 'Critique of Pure Reason' encompasses the whole of Kant's system and not just its theoretical part. What is quite astonishing about Kant's system is that, although its author worked on it until shortly before his death and changed his work plan several times, it is of improbable stringency and coherence. The reason for this is undoubtedly to be found in Kant's thought on reason, or in other words, the critique of reason is itself nothing other than the systematic development of the *idea of reason*. At this point, one could just as well use post-Kantian terminology and speak of the *idea of the absolute*. Objectively, the same thing is meant, namely the attempt to establish the entire system of knowledge as ultimately founded on something that is itself unconditional. Even in the formulation of the title, the pattern according to which reason unfolds is laid out and can be read, as it were, in the form of the ambiguity of the genitive. Kant uses this linguistic device at almost all systematic junctures in order to express the perspectivity of a concept linguistically. Thus, the genitive in the title of the Critique can be interpreted in three ways: Firstly, it can be understood to mean that reason itself is the criticizing instance. In this case, it would be the subject of criticism, and the genitive would accordingly be a *genetivus subiectivus*. On the other hand, reason is the object of criticism. The genitive would therefore be a *genetivus obiectivus*. Most introductory texts to the *critique* take this fact into account, whereby the third meaning is hardly or not at all to be found, namely the presupposed identity of criticizing and criticized reason, which emerges in the concept of critique itself. By criticizing itself, reason 'is' genuinely criticizing reason. It therefore has only one subject, namely itself.² The meaning of the genitive here is that of

2 Cfr. KrV, A 680/B 708.

The critical self-preoccupation of reason is not to be confused with that of rationalist metaphysics, although both rely on the reflexivity of reason. For transcendently reckless metaphysics, the content of reflection secretly becomes a determinable thing. In this bad sense, metaphysics abolishes the difference between understanding and reason.

Cfr. *Proleg.*, AA, IV: 327.

an absolute, hence a *genetivus absolutus*. Only these three readings adequately describe the synthetic quality of reason. The title of the *Critique* thus already captures the subject that transcendental philosophy is concerned with, namely the possibility of a *synthesis a priori*.

Synthesis is the intensional-logical object of analysis, thus the formal self-disclosure of the concept about its epitome as the basis of every real determination. Its foundation or *substrate* is reason itself. Self-criticism of reason therefore means determining from and through reason the condition of the possibility of all concrete knowledge. Now critique, or *determination*, is essentially synthesis. Reason is therefore both the synthetic principle of analysis, which concerns its constitutive side, and the analytical principle of synthesis, which constitutes its reflexive side. In other words, reason as a principle is both reflection and the object of reflection as well as the principle of the unity of reflection and the object of reflection, thus reflexivity as the epitome of reflection. It is therefore a constitutionally reflection or reflection-constitutive or, in short, an *apperceptive principle*.³ This also makes it clear that reason will appear in the form of *threefoldness*.⁴ In one of the few methodologically instructive passages in his work, Kant provides information on the nature of triplicity:

That my divisions in pure philosophy almost always turn out tripartite has aroused suspicion. Yet that is in the nature of the case. If a division is to be made a priori, then it will be either *analytic* or *synthetic*. If it is analytic, then it is governed by the principle of contradiction and hence is always bipartite (*quodlibet ens est aut A aut non A*). If it is synthetic, but is to be made on the basis of a priori *concepts* (rather than, as in mathematics, on the basis of the *intuition* corresponding a priori to the concept), then we must have what is required for a synthetic unity in general, namely, (1) a condition. (2)

3 I share the concept of apperceptive reason with Kurt Walter Zeidler. Since both Zeidler's approach of a 'final justification based on logical reasoning' and my own apperception-logical reconstructive approach start from the idea or the structure of conclusion, the commonality goes far beyond terminological similarities. In particular, there is a commonality in the assessment of the so-called 'Münchhausen trilemma' in its positive significance as a sign of the final justification procedure, which also forms the basis of the presentation of the connection between the three *critiques* presented here. For Zeidler's approach, cf. Zeidler (2016). For a joint discussion of our approaches, cfr. also Zeidler (2017: 301 ff.) and Bunte (2020).

4 The connection between synthesis and analysis also explains the idea of fivefoldness, which is central to the architecture of Ficht's *Wissenschaftslehre*. Since both forms, synthesis and analysis, are heterothetic determinations of unity itself, it follows that every explication of a determination of unity, insofar as it is to be complete, must necessarily be fivefold. The reason for the fivefold is simply due to the fact that every analytical-logical determination is binary according to the 'principle of determinability', and every synthetic-dialectical unity is triadic according to the 'principle of continuous determination' (cf. KrV, A 571/B 599). The analytical-synthetic principle of unity therefore has five moments. Through the combinatorial connection of the analytical moments (matter vs. form) to a total of four and that of the three synthetic moments (condition, conditioned, ground), the logic of fivefoldness immanent in the science of knowledge can be transformed into the well-known Kantian triad and *vice versa*.

something conditioned, (3) the concept that arises from the union of the conditioned with its condition; hence the division must of necessity be a trichotomy.⁵

As the title of the *Critique* already anticipates, reason appears as the condition, the (self-) conditioned and the concept of the unity of the first two moments. If the title of the ‘Critique of Pure Reason’ is taken to mean the unity of the three critiques, then the idea suggests itself that each of the critiques should be understood in such a way that reason is exposed in each case as condition, conditioned and concept, whereby the third self-critique of reason, in the outcome of which its concept stands, constitutes the precondition of the first and second determination - positing and opposition. In fact, the situation is exactly that, although strictly speaking one should not speak of three critiques, but only of three versions or passages of the one critique, each of which has one of the three determinations of reason as its exponent. All three moments of reason can be found at the level of each passage, so that the large structure is reflected in the small one. The complexity of Kantian philosophy is therefore fractal, as it were, and is based on the multiple iteration of a simple principle in three moments. How this happens will be briefly demonstrated below.

I. The first Critique: Reason as condition of unity

The *first Critique* as a *Critique of Speculative Reason* is at the same time the *Critique of Understanding* (‘Kritik des Verstandes’).⁶ In order to understand it, it is therefore essential to understand what constitutes the mind (‘Verstand’) as mind. With Kant, understanding is a formal, i.e. non-content-productive, object-oriented performance of spontaneity. It is therefore the capacity (‘Vermögen’) of *rules* and *concepts*,⁷ or in short of *categoriality*. In terms of terminology, this provision is nevertheless capable of leading astray. By ‘capacity’ we mean neither the *potentia* of a thing nor the *facultas* of a person or an individual subject. The categorical mind is therefore neither a physical or physiological circumstance that can be located neurologically, for example, nor is it a psychological habit of thinking that is based on a semantic substrate; rather, the mind or understanding (‘Verstand’) designates the necessary circumstance of the possibility of categoriality itself. Categoriality is neither empirically found, nor empirically provable, nor is it an invention of reflection. Rather,

5 Kant, Critique of Judgment, 38 (Introduction IX, B LVII; AA V, 97): „Man hat es bedenklich gefunden, daß meine Einteilungen in der reinen Philosophie fast immer dreiteilig ausfallen. Das liegt aber in der Natur der Sache. Soll eine Einteilung a priori geschehen, so wird sie entweder analytisch sein, nach dem Satze des Widerspruchs; und da ist sie jederzeit zweiteilig (quodlibet ens est aut A aut non A). Oder sie ist synthetisch; und, wenn sie in diesem Falle aus Begriffen a priori (nicht, wie in der Mathematik, aus der a priori dem Begriffe korrespondierenden Anschauung) soll geföhlt werden, so muß, nach demjenigen, was zu der synthetischen Einheit überhaupt erforderlich ist, nämlich 1) Bedingung, 2) ein Bedingtes, 3) der Begriff, der aus der Vereinigung des Bedingten mit seiner Bedingung entspringt, die Einteilung notwendig Trichotomie sein.“

6 Cf. KdU, B V; AA V, 168; p. 4.

7 Cf. KrV, A 160/B 199; KrV, A 299/B 356.

reflection is the ground ('Grund') for its discovery ('Fund'). This is precisely what characterizes the understanding, if one understands it as a condition. The only difference between understanding and categoriality lies in this very view on grounding and is thus already categorized. It is therefore pointless to ask whether the understanding categorizes ('kategorifiziert') or the understanding is the reason for categorization. Rather, there is an identity between the two. This is not merely analytical, however, but synthetic, and lies in the unity of reason and form, which is expressed in the categorial and which in turn is expressed in the attunement in the comprehension of the comprehension and the comprehended, that is, the categorized, and thus the understood. The relationship between understanding and what is understood is therefore not an external one. Rather, what is understood is only understood through the understanding. The epistemic elementary relationship is accordingly based on a transcendental one. In this sense, the intellect ('Verstand') is the transcendental ground of understanding and thus categoriality itself.

The distinction between ground and categoriality therefore lies in reflection. In reflection, the moments of the categorial differ in what is categorially affected. What is affected, in the sense that it makes affection possible in the first place, is first and foremost the understanding itself, insofar as it contains the basic distinction of the categorial. Understanding as a principle therefore contains both identity and difference. In other words, categoriality, on the one hand, holds back the possibility of its difference as a difference from the ground through the categorial statement of its identity. In this case we speak of categorial understanding. On the other hand, it sets itself the categorial determination and thus its ground as a task, in which case we speak of the intellectual ground of categorial determination. However, it is always the *same spontaneity* that just expresses itself differently.⁸ How does this manifest itself in concrete terms? On the one hand, in the difference between the categorial and the *category*. The individual category as such only emerges from the categorial, the understanding, through reflection, and thus through the critique of reason. This happens in a very specific way, which constitutes its twelvefold nature. The number of twelve is simply the result of the fact that the categorial can be understood as categorially conditioned, conditioned and as the concept of the differentiated unity of both. This in turn is the precondition of the basic epistemic relationship between subject, object and the cognitive relation between them. This triplicity is extended fourfold, and thus subsequently to twelvefold, in that each moment in turn contains a triplicity, namely the respective correspondence of positing, determination of positing - or determination and positing of determination as determinacy - and the ground of the determined positing or determined determination that mediates them, which in turn has an external, i.e. modal, relationship to the whole. However, the categorial, i.e. synthetic difference to its ground, i.e. to understanding, also occurs at the level of the category. The category as a unity exhibits

8 Cf. KrV, B 162; S. 200.

a self-differentiation that is in turn synthetic and thus triplicitous. Thus the category in its mere relation to the understanding can be understood as purely intellectual-logical. As such, it is a pure function within a differentiated unity, i.e. a primal part. Here understanding appears as a condition, namely as pure, self-perceiving thinking. The categorical is represented here in the so-called judgment table; its ground is pure thinking, or rather the power of judgment. However, the intellect ('Verstand') can also be understood as the categorically conditioned. As a result the mind, which is a ground in itself, i.e. spontaneity, comes into contradiction with itself. This contradiction can only be resolved through a self-differentiating distinction between cases. It is categorically affected and affecting, i.e. simultaneously *reproductive and productive intellect*. This contradiction can only be mediated through time, namely on the one hand by the understanding appearing as a ground in time, and therefore as a source of knowledge, and on the other hand by the understanding being the ground of the appearance outside of time. In this context, Kant therefore also aptly speaks of the world of understanding ('Verstandeswelt').⁹ However, the resolution of the contradiction has the consequence that the phenomenon and its ground diverge as categorially correlative (object) and non-correlative (non-object), i.e. as the phenomenon and the appearance of the phenomenon. At the level of understanding, this tension cannot be eliminated. At the same time, however, it determines the appearance of understanding as a faculty of figurative synthesis, i.e. as *imagination* ('Einbildungskraft'). The categorical, in turn, manifests itself here in time, namely as an image or *schema of time*. Pure form of thought or judgment and mere temporal schema are now inseparably connected in the concept of understanding, i.e. in their relation to their ground. This relation to the ground is at the same time the precondition of their *difference*, namely *modally* according to the *content* and *form* of the categorical, i.e. on the one hand thinking as the content of itself and on the other hand as the form of the thought in correspondence to it. Thus it is found that a purely logical basic-sequential relation has its temporal image in the sequence of mutually determining events. Herein lies the *concept* of the categorical and with it the concept of the individual *category*.

The concept of the category is the concept of a manifestation of a form that manifests itself and yet is always already manifest. In the language of the *second critique*, one could speak of it or of categoriality as a *fact of pure understanding*.¹⁰ The term *factum*, or rather the genitive associated with it, is once again associated with the three-sidedness that was already inherent in the title of the *critique*. The same applies to the concept of *function* as the *unit of action*,¹¹

9 KrV, A 255/ B 311.

10 A closer look reveals a respective doctrine of fact in each of the three *critiques*. In the *first critique*, the factum as consciousness of action, in the *second critique*, the consciousness of validity, and in the *third critique*, the factum of being and its appearance, or the unity of experience, which in the *Opus Postumum* coincides with the factum of perceptible space, i.e. the ether ('Äther').

11 KrV, A 68/B 93.

which is central to the first *Critique*. This is no coincidence, insofar as function and fact have the same systemic meaning in their respective contexts. All three readings of the genitive are also valid in the definition of function: the action is the origin, the affected and, through its concept, the unit itself. The connection to categoriality as a transcendental basic functionality becomes immediately clear if one substitutes the term ‘action’ with that of ‘reasoning’, which constitutes the mind as a whole. The mind ‘acts’ by founding, and it does so *spontaneously*. What it finds is the transcendental basic content of subjectivity and objectivity and the constituent categoriality that mediates them. The question of the valence of theoretical knowledge of the object thus leads to the inescapable standpoint of the unity of ground and basic content. However, it is precisely this ineluctability on the part of theory that becomes a problem, since it exposes its first beginning as necessarily dogmatic and at the same time self-contradictory, precisely through the binding together of ground and basic content, i.e. *spontaneity* and *categoriality*, since both relate to each other like *lawlessness* and *law*.¹² What theoretical reason cannot show is that spontaneity, i.e. freedom, by itself prescribes or identifies lawfulness. The final reasoning of theoretical reason, which ends dogmatically with a supreme principle, thus leads to the initial question of practical reason.

II. The second critique: Reason as a conditioned by truth

Practical reason transcends the framework of possibilities of theoretical reason in that it is a law-giving authority for itself and is itself law.¹³ The fact that it as such does not go beyond the framework of critical philosophy as a whole is solely due to the fact that the scope of its legislature does not extend to that of the understanding. The consequence of this, however, is that the field of possible experience is divided into two areas, the area of the natural order and the area of the order of freedom. Bringing them together will prove difficult. From the standpoint of practical reason alone, the relationship between the two is clearly subaltern. The natural order as the order of appearance reality rests on the order of freedom as the order of the world of law, i.e. the world of reason. They are related to each other as appearance and self. In other words, reason shows itself in the practical as the truth of appearance and as such leaves the realm of appearance behind. This also explains the primacy of practical reason¹⁴ over theoretical reason, since reason in its theoretical use is restricted to the realm of the lawfulness of understanding and thus to the world of appearances. At first glance, it seems strange that the genuine place of the question of truth should be sought in the realm of practical reason. However, this is due solely to the fact that ordinary thinking conceives of freedom only in terms of intellect (‘Verstand’). Instead of conceiving of freedom as the

12 „Natur also und transzendente Freiheit unterscheiden sich wie Gesetzmäßigkeit und Gesetzlosigkeit [...]“ KrV, A 448/ B 476.

13 Cfr. GMS, AA IV, 412.

14 Cfr. KpV, AA V, 120.

basis of the natural order, or thinking of nature in terms of freedom, intellect seeks to secure a place in nature for freedom, if possible, where it is able to act without prejudice to the unconditional validity of the laws of nature. Kant now turns this way of thinking completely on its head by consistently thinking of the world in terms of reason.¹⁵ Kant's practical philosophy is therefore first and foremost "a single reflection on freedom", as Baumanns rightly writes.¹⁶ The structure of this reflection is briefly outlined below. First of all, it must be noted that for Kant 'freedom' does not primarily mean a property of rational beings, but a concept of reason, i.e. a concept of reason itself. Freedom is not something that anyone can dispose of. On the contrary. Freedom disposes of us and it is only through this disposability that we can think of ourselves as free beings. What therefore needs to be clarified through reflection is what it means that reason itself *is* freedom.

The exponent of the reflection is freedom as theoretical reason understands it in its starting point, namely *as pure spontaneity* ('reine Spontaneität'). That this must be the case can already be seen from the meaning of the concept of spontaneity, namely the ability to begin through and from oneself.¹⁷ Spontaneity thus describes the ground of thetic, or categorical, positing. Self-initiation can only be conceived negatively, i.e. in the manner of lawlessness. Kant therefore also speaks of the *negative concept of freedom* ('negativer Begriff der Freiheit').¹⁸ However, this already opens up a distinction and thus a determination, namely to the concept of law. The judgment 'spontaneity is lawlessness' thus proves to be not a negative, but an *infinite judgment* ('Unendliches Urteil') We must now ask what it means that the spontaneity of reason has its definite opposite, and therefore its limit, in the concept of law. The obvious thought here is to understand the opposition of freedom and law as external, as it is commonly understood. However, this idea stems from rational thinking. Reason has no external antithesis, but only itself as its destiny, just as it can only have itself as a definite antithesis of itself. The law in question must therefore also have its origin in reason, or more precisely be a concept of reason itself. In fact, we already have this concept, namely in the form of *truth*. Truth, insofar as it is a truth to be recognized, has the form of an absolute commandment, namely to recognize it as such in cognition. The demand "Be free!", which is made to the finite, rational being, is therefore first and foremost a request to agree with itself, insofar as freedom constitutes the true nature of its being beyond mere appearance. This freedom, however, is not the neutral concept of a *liberum*

15 Since today's discussions about 'compatibilism' and 'incompatibilism' are all conducted from the perspective of understanding ('Verstand'), they fundamentally fail to grasp the point of the reality of freedom that accompanies Kantian thinking of reason.

16 Baumanns (2000: 7)

17 Cf. KrV, A 447/B 475.

18 Bernd Ludwig has rightly pointed out that the terms „negative freedom“ and „positive freedom“ are not used even once by Kant himself, cf. Ludwig (2013: 272). The predicates „negative“ and „positive“ refer to the concept of freedom, not to its object. The predicates are therefore different conceptual definitions of one and the same freedom. The distinction should therefore not be understood as if, according to Kant, there were two types of freedom.

arbitrium or even *arbitrium brutum*, but rather rational freedom and as such moral freedom. Thus, *the identity of freedom and morality is the only morally constitutive instance*.¹⁹ In fact, the term ‘formula’ is more appropriate, since we are not dealing with merely semantically different representations of the same facts, but with their structural determinations, which can be equated in a mathematical sense. The formula structure thus reflects the structure of reason, namely firstly the subjective conditionality, secondly its objective self-conditionality and thirdly reason as the concept of the precondition of both; the latter in turn can be understood from both the subjective and the objective side and is thus twofold. Accordingly, the formulas refer firstly to the ability to set subjective rules, i.e. to the determinations of maxims; secondly to the legal form according to the type of a natural law and thirdly to the interaction of rational beings capable of purpose, which on the one hand prohibits their mere use of means and on the other hand requires their unity in the sense of an intelligible connection. This gives rise to the well-known formulas of the categorical imperative: *maxims, laws of nature, ends and empire*. (‘Maximen-, Naturgesetz-, Zweck- und Reichsformel’) The twelvefold multiplicity of categories as a specification of the categorical is also found with regard to the fact of reason, namely in the form of the categories of freedom. Both, formulas of ought and determinations of freedom, can be precisely mapped onto one another syncategorially.²⁰ Just like the pure undeduced concepts of understanding, the categories of freedom condition the possibility of *imputability*. In contrast to the categories of understanding, however, it is not a question here of the ownness of an idea (‘Vorstellung’), but of the attributability, i.e. imputability of an action. Thus, the categoriality of reason transposes the categories as apperceptive determinations into practical basic determinations of the person or *personality*. The theoretically formal and thus materially indeterminate thus becomes a materially determinate practical principle. In fact, the relationship between indeterminacy and determinacy is precisely the relationship between theoretical and practical reason that constitutes their determinacy. This relationship can be understood abstractly as the *relationship between unity and truth* in the transcendental sense. Both are in turn moments in the ultimate form of the absolute and as such are completely complementary to each other. Thus, the theoretical concept of reason exposes *absolute subjectivity* as the highest point of unity and thereby breaks off the chain of reasoning upwards. The absolute subject, which determines the transcendental form of the empirical proposition ‘I think’, excludes the possibility of its predication: The thinking subject is always subject, even if it tries to think itself as thought, it has necessarily always already thought this as subject. The situation is different with truth or *validity*. To say that ‘the truth is true’ necessarily leads to a regress, because every statement about the truth already claims its truth for itself. The ‘error’ lies in the fact that truth has been made the subject. However, this is impossible, since truth as a determinateness always moves away from the predicate position in the attempt to make it

¹⁹ Cfr. Baumanns (2000: 65).

²⁰ Cfr. Bunte (2018: 123 ff).

the subject of a determination. Accordingly, it is an *absolute predicate*, i.e. pure hypothesis. The problem of regression therefore also emerges at the end of the practical reflection of reason as a faculty of law. It arises directly from the highest determination of practical reason as *autonomy*, which at the same time forms the precondition for the unity of its negative concept of freedom as well as its character as law. The contradiction inherent in the concept of autonomy arises from the presupposed identity of freedom and lawfulness ('Freiheit und Gesetzlichkeit'), which presents itself on the level of practical reason as morality, i.e. as practical reasonableness. Thus, the basic contradiction of understanding is now repeated at the level of reason, albeit in a transformed form. Thus, it must be said of the identity of reason, which is expressed in the concept of its autonomy, that 'it is valid'. However, reason can only say this of itself. Thus, in its practical concept, it encounters an infinite series of self-statements about its own validity. This infinite regress of reflection can only be calmed if reason addresses *itself* in its autonomy as an original 'self' and thus autonomy gains an originally reflexive form. Only with this could the practical contradiction between self-sufficiency and *autonomy* ('Autarkie und Autonomie') be resolved. In fact, this is precisely what happens in the third critique, which begins with reason as *heautonomous subject*.

III. The third Critique: Reason as the concept of perfection

The *third critique* is probably the most enigmatic of all. The reason for this is, on the one hand, that Kant uses it primarily to address the problem of the coherence of his system, which is central to him, but its actual scopus disappears behind the object or objects on the basis of which the question of unity is addressed. In a sense, it is a victim of its own success, insofar as the actual question of the complete concept of reason and its unity were overshadowed in favor of Kant's reflections on aesthetics and teleology. In terms of research history, this is particularly evident in the fact that the question of unity is hardly (seriously) discussed in research today. The second reason is more prosaic, namely that the third critique was simply unable to achieve what it intended. This now needs to be examined more closely. This will be done on the basis of three key questions: (1) What is the third critique about? (2) How are its parts connected? (3) What does the third critique achieve systematically?

Ad (1): The last part of the Critique of Reason is famously entitled 'Critique of Judgment'. This choice of title is indeed strange at first glance, as it breaks with the nomenclature used by Kant up to that point. The historical reason for this lies in the multiple changes to the plan of the work. It can be assumed that Kant considered the *Critique of Pure Reason* to be complete in 1781. Kant thought of its 'practical' part only as an application and accordingly as subaltern.²¹ This was to change in 1784/85 at the latest with the *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* and the idea of a separate 'Critique of Purely Practical Reason'.

21 Cf. KrV, A 15. This has been discussed in research within the framework of the so-called 'canon problem'. To this, cf. Guérault (1963).

In the course of this, Kant retroactively changed the title of the ‘Critique of Pure Reason’ to the ‘Critique of Purely Speculative Reason,’ which would contain a critique of the object of knowledge. In the draft, he countered this with a *critique of the subject*²² in the form of a ‘Critique of *Purely* Practical Reason.’ Kant also distanced himself from this plan, at the latest with the second Critique in 1788, which was simply called *Critique of Practical Reason*. In its preface, there is a justification for this approach, which represents a deviation from the draft presented in the *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*. In it, Kant writes that the program of a ‘critique of pure practical reason,’ i.e. a critique that attempts to show the insight into the condition of the possibility of a practical reason itself, must go beyond the scope of the critique of reason in general. The critique of practical reason must therefore take its starting point from the reality of the practice of freedom, which proves the possibility of freedom.²³ On the one hand, Kant thus takes into account the factual foundational character of (practical) reason, which he already addresses in the *Groundwork*²⁴ and which is reflected in the ‘doctrine of facts’ of the *second critique*. On the other hand, Kant may have encountered the ‘problem of regress,’ which stands at the end of a critique of a purely practical reason, which in turn is shown in the Typology of *purely* [emphasis added] Practical Judgment’ (Typik der rein praktischen Urteilstkraft)²⁵ of the *Critique of Practical Reason*. Kant’s original binary structure - critique of the object and critique of the subject - thus fails. In order to succeed, the disintegrated project of the critique of reason requires a synthesis that can be carried out on the basis of a complete concept of reason; it requires - unsurprisingly in retrospect - a *third* critique. This is accompanied by a reorganization of the work. The shibboleth of this reorganization is the limiting relationship between receptivity and spontaneity. Thus the *first critique* becomes the *critique of understanding* (‘Kritik des Verstandes’), i.e. a critique of limited but constitutive, since object-oriented spontaneity, and the second critique becomes the *critique of reason* (‘Kritik der Vernunft’), which deals with an unlimited, hence absolute spontaneity, which nevertheless has no constitutive function, namely with regard to the faculty of desire, and as such is merely subject-oriented, hence reflexive.²⁶ Receptivity and spontaneity, objectivity and subjectivity, constitutivity and reflexivity, i.e. the relationship between understanding and reason, thus determine the starting position of the *third critique*. *Prima facie*, this is surprising, as it repeats the relationship between *analytic* and *dialectic* already discussed in the *first critique*. What is significant, however, is that this relationship is not symmetrical, but expresses a claim to foundation. The unity of reason is of

22 Cf. GMS, AA IV, 440. To this, cf. Bunte (2022).

23 Cf. KpV, AA V, 4.

24 Cf. GMS, AA IV, 452.

25 KpV, AA V, 67.

26 Cf. KdU, B V, AA V, 168. Kant’s changed nomenclature is the outward sign of his inner self-understanding and increasing factual insight. Accordingly, there is nothing casual about it, contrary to what Reinhard Brandt thinks (Brandt 2007: 591).

a more fundamental nature than the unity of understanding. Already in the *first critique*, the latter was formative for the former. But this too now becomes a problem, insofar as the *matter-form dichotomy* now itself becomes thematic. In the Third Critique, Kant therefore attempts to approach the investigation of the critique of reason anew from the deepest point, and thus the contrast between *fundamentality and legality* ('Grundsätzlichkeit und Gesetzmäßigkeit') that has been negotiated since the First Critique. What is sought is the concept of reason as the concept of its complete epitome, which constitutes the *intelligible substrate*, i.e. the rationally comprehensible ground of phenomenal reality and its laws. This idea is already known from the *first Critique*, namely as that of a perfect concept, i.e. as a transcendental *form*, i.e. 'prototypon transscendentale'²⁷ and its complete epitome, the transcendental *field*.²⁸ Here, too, the fractal, self-similar structure of the investigation becomes apparent. The three *critiques* can each be understood through the concept of reason they each have at their center, i.e. through the idea ('Idee') from which they proceed, which are themselves moments of the one *idea of reason* and thus in turn moments of their *critique*. The *first critique* treats the unity of the phenomenal world on the basis of the unity of consciousness, the second critique its truth from the reality of freedom and the third critique the unity of both from the necessity of the transcendental unity of matter and form of the phenomenal world, i.e. of *field and form*, in the form of reason as a 'supersensible substrate'. This reason would be the one that could be called transcendental in the proper sense. One could therefore justifiably call *the third critique* the *Critique of Transcendental Reason*. The fact that Kant's self-description of his philosophy as transcendental in relation to the ideas became increasingly central can be seen in the reflections of the so-called *Opus postumum* on the title of a 'transcendental philosophy'. In 1790, however, Kant still oriented himself towards the division of faculties, so that the third critique was given the title of a critique of the power of judgment. This is due in particular to the fact that Kant had significantly expanded his concept of judgment. Whereas at the time of the *first Critique*, the power of judgment was only to be defined as a judgment-logical faculty of the intellect, i.e. to be subsumed, Kant expanded it to include its reflexive, i.e. reason- or inference-logical meaning. The *subsuming and reflective power of judgment* can thus be established as an intermediary faculty of understanding and reason. In this construction, it is noticeable that the role of theoretical reason remains strangely underdetermined. Kant only grants it the function of knowledge of the law as an intermediary between understanding and (practical) reason.²⁹ In doing so, he seems to be falling foul of his own semantics of faculty, which makes it difficult to express a disjunctive identity, insofar as, despite the different designations of the faculties, it is a single figure of self-mediation; in short, theorizing reason is active power

27 KrV, A 572/B 600.

28 Cfr. KrV, A 95.

29 Cfr. KdU, B xvii.

of judgment, namely constitutive and reflexive faculty, as reason's idea of itself, as it presents itself to thought or in philosophical reflection. In other words, the *third critique* deals with the theory of a transcendently constituted reason and thus takes up the theme of its spontaneity as comprehensive. The specific opposition of a practice to this theory would no longer be philosophically formulable, simply due to the fact that the concept of such a practice would in turn be absorbed into the theory as a concept, and thus theorized. This does not mean, however, that this concept, in its opposition to reason, plays no role; the opposite is the case, insofar as reason finds its determination in it. It is only necessary to warn against understanding it as merely theoretical. For this concept is simply that of *life* itself.³⁰

Ad (2): How are the parts of the *third critique* connected? Superficially, this thematizes two heterogeneous or even diametrically opposed objects, *art and nature*, which are connected externally through the use of reflective judgement, i.e. merely in terms of faculty theory. In research, their parts are therefore preferably treated separately. Starting from the question of the transcendental meaning of reason, however, their connection is not only much closer, but the parts of the third critique are also necessary as determinations of reason. The '*Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*' forms the first part of the *third critique*. If our reading of the three critiques as a unity is correct, in which each critique begins with the aporetic outcome of the previous one, then the third critique should begin with the indeterminate relationship between autonomy and autarky and the regression problem that follows from it. In fact, this is precisely the case, as already indicated. Kant solves the problem by allowing the actor and addressee of the autonomous action to become one. Autonomy becomes reflexive from the transcendental standpoint of reason, i.e. self-legislation becomes self-legislation for oneself, *autonomy* becomes *heautonomy*.³¹ Reason is *heautonomous* and as such relates solely to itself. This transcendental *heautonomous subject* can, following philosophical tradition, be understood as a monad. In monadically constituted reason, *unity and uniqueness*, thus unity and truth as well as *apperceptivity and appetition* ('*Apperzeptivität und Appetition*') fall into one. However, the monad is not a substantial being or something being ('*Sein oder Seiendes*'), it is a position of reason in which being and relation to being enter into a certain opposition to the uniqueness of the monadic constitution. This opposition is now opposition par excellence, 'true correlate'³² and abolition of all relation. Since the monad is in turn only pure self-relation, i.e. pure thinking, its ultimate opposition consists in the abolition of every relation, i.e. in pure being, or in Kant's terms, *substrate*. The 'supersensible substratum' is both the basis of the unity of thinking and being that is subtracted (subtracted) from thinking, and thus also the non-relational antithesis

30 Troxler made an attempt at transcendental deduction from the idea of life itself in his '*Biosophie*'. Cf. Troxler [1807] and Bunte [2020a].

31 KdU B xxxvii; AA V, 185.

32 Cf. KrV, A 30/B 45.

of relationality itself, and therefore the basis (subtract / 'Grund-Lage') of every particular positing. Monad and substrate relate to each other like fold and unfold. Their relationship is accordingly an *architectural* one, with which the first part of the *third critique*, in which Kant discusses the self-relation of reason on the basis of its appearance in art and the general subjectivity of aesthetic judgment, moves on to the second part.

The second part of the *third critique* deals with the opposite of art, namely, nature. Just as the singular, subjective, but at the same time universally valid experience of beauty is the expression or manifestation of a self-contained reason and its self-referential self-legislation, the second part, entitled '*Critique of Teleological Judgment*', deals with the manifestation of a reason mediated by its opposite. As practical freedom, reason is a purpose-setting instance. At first glance, one would therefore expect Kant to see the purposeful character of reason simply implemented in nature, i.e. to regard nature as purposeful and therefore rationally organized. Kant and Aristotle would thus agree in the importance they accorded to the *causa finalis* as the highest point of scientific-theoretical insight. In fact, the opposite is the case! For Kant, the explanation by the end in nature is only an epistemic-heuristic auxiliary construction and insufficient for a real scientific, i.e. nomological-causal explanation.³³ Causal explanations, however, are explanations of understanding ('Verstandeserklärungen'), so how does the strange reversal come about that the ideal of reason becomes the ideal of understanding? The reason for this lies in the fact that reason itself becomes understanding. What seems strange *prima facie* turns out to be inevitable on closer inspection. Thus, nature *formaliter spectata* is nothing other than the unity of experience, which has its ground in the transcendental unity of apperception. Nature is thus not merely a pre-found being to which the intellect refers *ex post*, but originally rational, lawful experience. However, the relationship between transcendental unity and empirical affinity cannot ultimately be fully resolved at the level of theory. The reason for this lies in the conceptuality of term of theoreticality (see above). Only against the background of a way of thinking that unites theory and practice in their transcendental conditionality through the unconditioned can the problem of empirical affinity and its solution be outlined at all. Thus the unfolding of monadic reason takes place architecturally; it itself thereby becomes the epitome of the objective in general, an *architectural mind* ('architektonischer Verstand').³⁴ It should be noted that this understanding, the architectural mind, is infinitely far removed from what human understanding is, insofar as the latter has *intellectual perception* ('intellektuelle Anschauung'). The difference between concept and perception, between thinking and thing, does not exist for the architectural mind; for it, thinking becomes a thing. The idea that thinking becomes a thing is known from transcendental dialectics, namely as the hypostasis of the pure thought structure of the unity(ies) of reason to the familiar three ideas. This is also a *hypostasis*, i.e.

33 Cf. KdU, B 316; AA V, 388; KdU, B 330 f.; AA V, 396.

34 Cf. KdU, B 317; AA V, 388.

a substantiation of thinking, but of thinking in general. In other words, the world or the cosmos as a whole is a single hypostasis of reason that has become understanding.

Ad (3) Kant's speculative final chord, however, is strangely dissonant and flat. It consists in relying on the architectonic establishment, i.e. the ontological valence of transcendental concepts for reasons of rationality and normality. The outcome of the three critiques is thus the regulative diminutive of the transcendental-speculative concept of reason to a methodological-heuristic one. On top of that, this is logically insufficient. Even the reference to the limit of the knowledge of reason is not sufficient here. If it were left at that, the transcendental endeavor to methodologically resolve the contingency of being and thinking would simply have failed. If one looks at Kant's follow-up efforts in the *Opus postumum*, it becomes obvious that he must have seen it this way as well. What the *third critique* lacks is simply a *third part* that brings the reasoning process of reason as a whole to a conclusion. At this point, we refrain from a detailed description of such a resolution and leave it with a reference to a forthcoming work, but not without giving a hint of the possibility of such a positive resolution of the transcendental project. The solution consists in tying together the beginning and the end of the system of the critique of reason. Thus, monadic reason stands for the only source of the determination of validity on the one hand, and on the other hand as architectural mind, as a form of the quality of validity realized in terms of being. Reason thus takes the form of two absolutes – think of what has been said about the absolute subject or predicate. Now the attempt to think unity as the perfection of both, i.e. to bring it to the concept, actually ends in a outreach into *transcendence*. There is indeed an absolute limit here, which, however, must be defined. This limit is namely that of infinity(ies) itself, or rather, that which is distinguished despite its embedding in infinity, i.e. that which stands at the boundary of two infinities and whose being is simultaneously determined by this boundary. This is the *human being*.

IV. Conclusion

Transcendental philosophy thus actually ends with the question of man and yet at the same time begins with him. The true end of the *third critique*, which in terms of content deals with the differentiation of the intellectual view into thinking and viewing, thus prepares the beginning of the first critique, which begins with precisely this opposition. It is only against this background of separation that the relationship between fundamentality and legality, spontaneity and categoriality, which dominates all three critiques, finally becomes comprehensible. Accordingly, the system of the critique of reason closes in on itself, whereby this closing in on itself is at the same time a self-development, i.e. an unfolding, from which a complex pattern of self-repetition arises. This would indeed be the end of the 'critical business', but the actual philosophical work would only just begin, namely, to think through all dimensions of the human experience of the self and the world, (natural) scientific, cultural or emotive. The end of transcendental philosophy is therefore also its actual beginning and emergence.

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IDENTITY-MONISM OR THE DARK NIGHT OF THE ABSOLUTE? SCHELLING'S SYSTEM OF IDENTITY IN THE 1801 *PRESENTATION*.

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Abstract: *The year 1801 marked an important year for Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling's (1775-1854) philosophical thought. It saw the publication of Schelling's Presentation of My System of Philosophy which would stand as the marker of a new era of idealism, that Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) would coin as objective idealism. The 1801 Presentation represents a clear shift away from Schelling's seminal System of Transcendental Idealism; and the official beginning of Schelling's own Identity Philosophy which occurred through several major works from 1801 to 1806. The Presentation also characterizes a decisive genesis in Schelling's mature metaphysics of identity. The metaphysics of identity's central aim was to capture the concept of absolute identity realized as the totality of the cosmos. Using Spinoza's (1632-1677) Ethics as his guide and model, Schelling revealed a meticulous systematic philosophy that offered distinct propositions and definitions, each following one another to develop an elaborate organic whole.*

However, the works that makeup Schelling's identity philosophy would receive a series of philosophical backlashes from several of his interlocutors, which included: Karl August von Eschenmayer (1768-1852), Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814) and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. This criticism would reach forward into the contemporary scholarship. The accusations made against Schelling were directed at his monistic system and surrounded his conception of the absolute. According to Schelling's critics, his systematic concept of the absolute swallowed reality into a homogenous whole leaving no room for philosophical difference. These erroneous accusations would have several implications which would cast a long shadow on Schelling's identity philosophy with the infamous remarks describing Schelling's project eclipsed in the dark night of the absolute.

The following paper is divided in two main parts. The first, will evaluate the historical context and philosophical importance behind the structure of Schelling's 1801 Presentation. The second, will addresses Schelling's numerous critics and attempt to explicate the essence behind Schelling's

metaphysics of identity. This paper will thus conclude by showing how difference plays an integral part for Schelling, as the realm of finitude, and the ground of all phenomena. These important parts of the whole system are connected in a subterranean like fashion in primordial identity.

Thus, grounding Schelling's own novel, philosophical creation, an identity-monism.

Keywords: *Continental Philosophy, F. W. J. Schelling, Identity Philosophy, The Absolute, Indifference, Reason, Objective Idealism, Metaphysics of Identity, Identity-Monism.*

Resumen: *El año 1801 marcó un punto crucial en el pensamiento filosófico de Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling. En ese año se publicó Exposición de mi sistema de filosofía, obra que señalaba el inicio de una nueva etapa del idealismo, posteriormente denominada por Hegel como idealismo objetivo. Esta obra representa un claro distanciamiento respecto al Sistema del idealismo trascendental y marca oficialmente el comienzo de la filosofía de la identidad de Schelling, desarrollada entre 1801 y 1806. La Exposición inaugura la metafísica de la identidad madura de Schelling, cuyo objetivo central era formular el concepto de identidad absoluta como totalidad del cosmos. Inspirándose en la Ética de Spinoza, Schelling desarrolló una filosofía sistemática con proposiciones y definiciones que se integran en un todo orgánico.*

No obstante, su filosofía de la identidad fue blanco de críticas por parte de pensadores contemporáneos como Eschenmayer, Fichte y el propio Hegel. Estas críticas, que continúan en el ámbito académico actual, apuntaban al carácter monista de su sistema y a la noción de un absoluto que absorbería toda diferencia, eliminando la pluralidad filosófica. Este tipo de objeciones dio lugar a la famosa acusación de que el pensamiento de Schelling quedaba “eclipsado en la noche oscura del absoluto”.

El artículo se divide en dos partes: la primera analiza el contexto histórico y la relevancia filosófica de la Exposición de 1801; la segunda examina las críticas recibidas y aclara la esencia de la metafísica de la identidad de Schelling. La conclusión muestra que la diferencia desempeña un papel fundamental en su sistema, como ámbito de la finitud y base de todos los fenómenos, todos ellos enlazados subterráneamente en la identidad primordial. Así se consolida el proyecto filosófico de Schelling: un monismo de la identidad original.

Palabras clave: *Filosofía continental, F. W. J. Schelling, Filosofía de la identidad, El Absoluto, Indiferencia, Razón, Idealismo objetivo, Metafísica de la identidad, Monismo de la identidad.*

Introduction

For too long Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling's philosophical thought has been undervalued for its role in the development of German Idealism. Following this trend of neglect many scholars in the Anglo-Saxon world have cast Schelling as a merely intermediate figure between Kant and Hegel (Beiser 2002: 465). Of course, this image of Schelling, as the proverbial stepping stone in German Idealism, is far from the truth. Times have changed and many scholars are beginning to rethink Schelling's philosophical role in the history of philosophy. As Frederick Beiser notes, it was Schelling who created the basic principles of Absolute Idealism that Hegel carried on and systematized from 1801-1804 (Beiser 2002: 465). Although, Hegel's philosophy would in fact surpass his old Tübingen schoolmate in popularity it was from these early principles that Schelling had laid down that helped make Hegel the philosopher he would become (Beiser 2002: 465). The German philosopher Werner Marx would take this aforementioned point by Beiser, even further by declaring that Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* progressed by the same grounds laid out in Schelling's 1800 *System of Transcendental Idealism* (Marx 1984: 35). These words of both Beiser and Marx would seem to sound oddly among Hegelian scholars of today. Indeed, Schelling's philosophy is garnering much more attention with several new monographs being written on his work. It could even be stated that there is a new renaissance in Schelling scholarship. Thus, it is time for a, re-evaluation of Schelling's role and place in the history of German Idealism.

However, there is one major problem facing all Schelling scholarship, and it comes down to the following questions. Firstly, does Schelling have a completed system? And, secondly, if there is no single system, does Schelling's philosophy have a central theme or, perhaps a main focal point related to the whole? These questions have been long debated among Schelling scholars and yet the issue still haunts the modern scholarship. The many faces of Schelling's numerous works and how they relate to one another is something that I will examine. However, surveying all of Schelling's philosophy goes way beyond the confines and space of this paper.

Thus, I will investigate Schelling's conception of identity and how it relates to the absolute in the 1801 *Presentation of My System of Philosophy*. The challenging aspect of Schelling's *Presentation* is that the text is divided into two separate parts. The first part of the text consists of fifty-three distinct definitions, and aimed at disclosing a stable, and succinct metaphysics of Identity (Vater and Wood 2012: 138). The metaphysics of identity is informed by the concept of indifference and this relationship will be my focal point (Vater and Wood 2012: 137). The second part of the text, from definition 54 to 159, deals more forcefully with the philosophy of nature (Vater and Wood 2012: 137). In essence, a large majority of the text deals with a direct presentation of Schelling's philosophy of nature. It must surely come as a surprise to the reader why I would devote the entirety of this paper to only the first part of Schelling's *Presentation*. My reasoning behind this choice stems

from the fact that the first part of Schelling's *Presentation*, to quote Michael Vater and David Wood, sees the metaphysics of identity as demonstrating "how absolute identity is realized as the totality of the universe" (Vater and Wood 2012: 138). Schelling has been accused of many things but one of the most toxic complaints about his work comes from the generalization that his identity philosophy, and its understanding of the absolute swallow's reality as a whole leaving no room for philosophical difference. This claim is simply erroneous and does not adequately interpret Schelling's identity philosophy. It is quite unfortunate that this generalization still lingers in academic circles today.

Schelling's fragmentary and unfinished writings led to Hegel giving him a rather unkind nickname. Hegel called his friend a *philosophical Proteus* (Matthews 2014: 437). This unfortunate stigma has followed Schelling in many philosophical and historical circles. I, on the other hand, think this is an unfair judgement by Hegel. When speaking about Schelling's philosophy it would be better to use the metaphor introduced by the American philosopher Bruce Matthews who describes Schelling, not as a *Protean* philosopher, but as a Greek hero like *Odysseus*. Why this latter metaphor? What does it mean? Matthews's metaphor portrays Schelling as the *Odysseus* of German Idealist philosophy, who like Odysseus, on the open seas, would never want to be limited "to beginnings or endings" (Matthews 2014: 437). Schelling's philosophical journey consists of a lifetime spent on the turbulent seas of thought and experimentation. This vast open sea of thought created a thinker that could never dream of being confined to any one system (Matthews 2014: 437). It made Schelling a thinker intoxicated with freedom and free thinking. It also allowed Schelling the space to become a thinker who boldly investigated the entirety of the cosmos and its inner workings. His own unique inquisitive nature led him to pronounce in the *Stuttgart Seminars* of 1810,

"To what extent is a system ever possible? I would answer that long before [humanity] decided to create a system, there already existed one, that of the cosmos. Hence our proper task consists in discovering that system. The true system can never be created but only uncovered as one that is already inherent in itself; in the divine understanding." (Schelling 1994: 197)

This paper will be broken down into two parts. The first part will evaluate the historical context and philosophical importance behind the structure and innovation of the 1801 *Presentation*. The second part addresses Schelling's critics and attempts to disclose the essence behind Schelling's metaphysics of identity. I will show how difference plays an integral part for Schelling, as the realm of finitude, and the ground of all phenomena. These important parts of the whole system are connected in a subterranean like fashion in primordial identity (Vater and Wood 2012: 139). Thus, grounding Schelling's own novel, philosophical creation, an identity-monism.

The Historical Importance of the 1801 *Presentation*.

Another problem arises when thinking of Schelling's collective works. Individual works have often been read as transitional phases within his entire oeuvre. However, Schelling always saw these so-called transitional works as first sketches (Schelling 2012: 137). Even if we admit that there are many different phases of Schelling's philosophy there is still one central theme that is played throughout his entire philosophy. This theme is the concept of identity. There has never been a clearer presentation of Schelling's system of identity than his *1801 Presentation of My System of Philosophy*. The text expresses Schelling's own novel commitment to creating an identity-metaphysics (Berger and Whistler 2020: 119). The text also has two main critical interlocutors: Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762), and Carl August von Eschenmayer (1768-1852).

Daniel Whistler argues that when we historically think of Schelling's idealism we are often led to think of his 1800 *System of Transcendental Idealism*. The Schelling scholar, Michael Vater labeled the text as "Schelling's most polished work" (Vater 1978: xi). However, the *System of Transcendental Idealism* does not represent a mature Schelling coming to his own philosophical voice (Beiser 2002: 565). This new philosophical voice (separate from the success of his philosophy of nature) would only come to fruition in Schelling's *1801 Presentation of My System of Philosophy*. The *Presentation* embodies the first work of Schelling's *Identity Philosophy* and the first time that Schelling would present this system to the learned community (Whistler 2013: 58). This of course was no easy task for it meant dealing with Eschenmayer's critical responses, and parting ways with Fichte's philosophy. At this point in Schelling's philosophical development, he had finally overcome the influence of Fichte and was seeking a solid ground to solidify his new work.

This new found philosophical independence meant that Schelling would be critically responding to both Fichte's and Eschenmayer's objections, which potentially could sever ties with his old friends. Both Fichte and Eschenmayer were deeply skeptical of Schelling's new philosophical direction and Fichte and Schelling's friendship and philosophical collaboration was at the point of no return.

Schelling's goal in the *Presentation* was to move away from Fichte's subjective idealism and, surpass Eschenmayer's own philosophical dualism (Berger and Whistler 2020: 119). At the time Schelling had asked Eschenmayer to submit new articles he was working on to be published in his philosophical *Journal for Speculative Physics* (Vater and Wood 2012: 135). Schelling would be responding to these very philosophical submissions by Eschenmayer. It took Schelling only 6 months to write the *Presentation*. The text contains the influences of Plato (c. 427-348 BC), Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) (Vater and Wood 2012: 136).

Hegel explains in the 1801 *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's Systems of Philosophy*, that the main focal point of Schelling's philosophy is the principle of identity (Hegel 1977: 155). According to Hegel, this principle was the absolute ground of Schelling's

system. What attracted Hegel to Schelling's system of identity was how Schelling stressed the importance between the connection of philosophy and system (Hegel 1977: 155). Schelling would reaffirm this important connection between philosophy and system eight years later in the beginning of the 1809 *Freedom Essay*.

One of Hegel's most important qualifications in the *Difference Essay* is that the concept of identity is not lost in the entirety of Schelling's system. Hegel states, "Identity does not loose itself in the parts [...] for Absolute Identity to be the principle of an entire system it is necessary that *both* subject and object be posited" (Hegel 1977: 155). The importance behind Hegel's words stem from his unwavering approval of Schelling's new found system of objective idealism. This is another main reason why Schelling's *Presentation* plays such a pivotal role in the history of German idealism. This importance is heightened due to the emergence of Schelling's novel invention of objective idealism. Schelling proudly announces to all in the *Presentation* that transcendental idealism has been miraculously transformed into an Objective Idealism (Vater and Wood 2012: 137).

Beiser echoes this same point but adds an extra caveat that not only did the 1801 *Presentation* mark the first appearance of objective idealism, it also solidified both Hegel and Schelling's own commitment to a philosophy of Absolute Idealism. Beneath the surface of this text lies a hidden but prophetic phrase from Schelling's youth. Schelling reanimates an ancient credo which simultaneously breathed life into the entirety of the Identity System. This motto was the ancient Greek, "*Hen Kai Pan*," or "the one and the all" (Beiser 2002: 553). It was not a simple set of words or a mundane phrase spoken among friends. It was a mantra for the young philosophers of Tübingen. Hegel, Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843) and Schelling, saw these words symbolize a truly *free* philosophy, one free from the fetters of religious clerics and dogmatic philosophers.

Stretching out on the vast open sea of thought, our *Odysseus of German Idealism* (Schelling) knew that this new system of identity would in fact need to be a rigorous science. It would have to be grounded firmly on reality. Schelling asked his friend Goethe to borrow his copy of Spinoza's *Ethics*, and while preparing to write the draft of the *Presentation*, he took absolute inspiration from Spinoza's *Ethics*. He kept the text by his side as he wrote the work. It seems odd that Schelling would use Spinoza (of all philosophers) as his model for this new project since Spinoza's philosophy after all, embodied a pre-critical philosophy. Michael Vater explains that Schelling mirrored Spinoza's project because he thought that the *Ethics* perfectly matched the trajectory of the identity philosophy in both form and content (Vater 2012: 157). Schelling set out to create his system of identity in the *Presentation*, in a geometrical fashion just like in Spinoza's *Ethics* (1677) (Norris 2022: 92). It would have to begin with self-evident propositions, followed by air tight definitions with each definition following from the other. The text would also need in-depth corollaries, equipped with thoroughly defined explanations and remarks. There was something attractive about having such clarity behind each definition with a precise axiomatic style. The question I would like

to ask is how far Schelling followed Spinoza? How would Schelling deal with the finite? Would the finite be left to the way side only to be smuggled in to the absolute? This question will be answered in the final section of the paper.

Identity, Indifference and the Absolute: Part I.

There are further reasons why the *Presentation* of all texts in Schelling's corpus is of grave importance to the history of German Idealism. According to Schelling, philosophy as (Wissenschaft) is the only discipline that understands the importance of approaching the whole of reality from the standpoint of reason. This standpoint of reason is also, an identical standpoint of the absolute (Breazeale 2014: 93). Now the question arises why any of this is at all important? This philosophical process is important for Schelling because philosophy *must* express the highest and most universal grasp of reality (Breazeale 2014: 93). This point is extremely important for Schelling because he states in proposition 32 that, "Absolute identity is not the cause of the universe, but is the universe itself" (Schelling 2012: 154).

For Schelling, philosophy can not have an objective or subjective standpoint on the whole (Breazeale 2014: 93). A true philosophy can only ever be constructed from the absolute. Thus, it can never privilege any one starting point, such as idealism or realism (Breazeale 2014: 93). Starting from either the former or the later sets up a fundamental, philosophical opposition. Schelling's main point here is that real philosophy can only ever be expressed as absolute reason (Breazeale 2014: 93). Philosophers must firmly reject, "all fundamental oppositions between: subject, object, real, ideal, mind, nature and, knowing and being" (Breazeale 2014: 93).

Schelling's fundamental disdain for all oppositions in philosophy stems from the fact that philosophies in the past have been stuck in constant oppositions that can only ever produce a philosophy of understanding, and speculation (Breazeale 2014: 94). What a philosophy of reason can produce is *real reflection*. As the late Daniel Breazeale put it, we have to understand that Schelling's thinking is "producing a method of reflection" (Breazeale 2014: 94). This method of reflection approaches philosophy from a position of primordially. Schelling's identity philosophy is really grounded in a "knowing of knowing" (Breazeale 2014: 94). A knowing of knowing, that likewise contains all forms of cognition, and particulars, in a universal way, thereby creating an absolute cognition (Breazeale 2014: 94). Schelling stresses that this absolute cognition must be identical with the absolute itself. Schelling makes this point clearer in definition 7, "The sole unconditioned cognition is that of absolute identity since it alone expresses the essence of reason." (Schelling 2012: 147).

The merging together of being and thinking is the central starting point of Schelling's identity philosophy (Breazeale 2014: 95). Schelling states that he situates himself at the *indifference point* between the philosophy of nature and transcendental philosophy (Schelling 2012: 142). Two "opposite poles of one philosophical activity" (Schelling 2012: 142). The task of this indifference point is to construct a presentation of the integral unity between the *partic-*

ular and the *universal* in their absolute mode of indifference. However, the construction itself must come whole heartedly from reason. Thus, Schelling's system of identity cannot collapse into traditional philosophical accounts of idealism or realism. For only the highest standpoint of reason can achieve insight into the development of a system of identity (Nassar 2014: 229). In definition 1 of the *Presentation*, Schelling states "I call reason, absolute reason, or reason insofar as it is conceived as the total indifference of the subjective and the objective" (Schelling 2012: 145). According to the first definition, reason's role in the *Presentation*, is to help guide the philosopher to an absolute non-subjective thought (Nassar 2014: 229). Now the question arises, as to what an absolute non-subjective thought would look like?

For Schelling, the absolute cannot be located in the self. Neither can it be located in the process of being made into an object for the self's knowing (Nassar 2014: 230). Reason can only ever be found within reason. Schelling makes this point quite clear when he states in definition 3 of the *Presentation* that, "Reason is simply one and simply self-identical [...] reason is therefore one in an absolute sense" (Schelling 2012: 46). Schelling alludes that this self-identical nature of reason occurs within an *in-itself* because reason can never be the subjective nor the objective. As an *in-itself* reason can only be the *indifference* of the two (Nassar 2014: 230). This is where Schelling differs from both Fichte and Hegel. The absolute is not meant to be thought of as a synthesis or *sublation* of subject and object the philosopher must think of the absolute as an *in-itself* (Nassar 2014: 231).

According to George Di Giovanni, Schelling's absolute can be grasped as one identity through two identical terms (Di Giovanni 2021: 45). These terms can be represented by both *essence* and *form*. Essence and form are essentially unified, meaning they are completely equal to one another (Di Giovanni 2021: 45). Di Giovanni states "If we thus define essence as "identity," its *Form* would conceptually be expressed by the formula " $A=A$ " where the " $=$ " sign signifies the indifference of the two" (Di Giovanni 2021: 45).

Christopher Lauer brings up an important observation in regards to Schelling's role in writing the Identity philosophy. The true importance behind Schelling's identity philosophy lies not in explaining its processes or elaborating on what each part entails, but simply to formalize the system as whole (Lauer 2010: 86). In other words, we can not get tangled up in our own understanding, for this relates back to impoverished oppositions between the finite and the infinite (Lauer 2010: 86). What exactly does Schelling mean by formalizing the System of identity? Schelling is talking about the inner dynamic of what makes his identity philosophy.

"The $A=A$ is not the positing of an identity between a previously existing subject and object, but instead divides itself into subjective and objective sides. Thus, there is an $A=A$ conceived subjectively and an $A=A$ objectively, neither one assumes the subject=object role. Rather, this and all other expressions of identity are only intelligible on the fundamental basis of identity that always-already unites the subject and object." (Lauer 2010: 87).

This passage brings to light the fundamental aspect of Schelling's metaphysics of identity. Essentially, there is a doubling of the absolute that is expressed in both the *Subjective-subject-object* pole, and the *Objective-subject-object* pole. This doubling effect creates, a unilateral identity of identity, which is fleshed out as two equal poles. Each pole in this fundamental relationship expresses the absolute conditions of absolute identity, while at the same time being equal amongst each other. Hegel weighted in on this debate about identity in the *Difference Essay* when he defined identity "as the Identity of Identity and non-identity" (Hegel 1977: 155). Schelling reworked this logical formula into both his 1802 *Bruno* dialogue, and his 1804 *System of Philosophy in General*.

Identity-Monism or Dark Night of the Absolute: Part II.

According to Beiser, Schelling's 1801 *Presentation* developed out of the so-called *dark night of the absolute* (Beiser 2002: 568). A phrase that would be echoed by Hegel six years later in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Beiser 2002: 565). Hegel notoriously spawned "the critique of all critiques," that would explode in Schelling's face from time and time again, those lethal words echoed throughout history that, "[T]o pass of its absolute as the night in which, as one says, all cows are black—is utterly vacuous naiveté in cognition" (Hegel 2018: 12).

Both Hegel and Beiser's critical comments stem from Schelling's so-called *dark vision* of the Absolute. For both Beiser and Hegel, Schelling's system of Identity is centered around an absolute, that is unfortunately tethered to a *Parmenidean Monism* (Beiser 2002: 568). What exactly would a Parmenidean Monism look like? According to Beiser, Schelling's Parmenidean monism relates to how the absolute excludes *all* finite things (Beiser 2002: 568). The reason why this is problematic for Beiser is that this type of monism represents an infinite totality of reality that could only be grasped as a pure oneness. A oneness that is bound to its own unity and self-sameness (Beiser 2002: 565). Of course, the ontological problem with this account of monism, unity and self-sameness, is that it allows no space for difference or the finite realm. It also unsatisfactorily raises *absolute reason* on a pedestal. According to this reading, the end goal of the system is the complete *indifference* of the Subject and Object. If Beiser is right, and Schelling's Identity philosophy does collapse into this type of Parmenidean monism, the question must be asked how identity, the absolute, and reason relate to one another? Has Schelling created the ultimate smoke and mirrors system? Beiser states that the central problem surrounding Schelling's identity philosophy; begins with the absolute law of identity, which can be found in the infamous self-evident proposition of $A=A$ in Fichte's *Foundations of the Entire Wissenschaftslehre* (Beiser 2002: 569). Fichte saw this self-evident proposition of $A=A$ bound to the law of identity, as a profound expression of the logical copula (Fichte 2021: 201). Thus, making the insight of the proposition, an absolutely unconditioned first principle (Fichte 2021: 200). Schelling and Fichte both agreed that philosophy as a rigorous science must proceed from propositions that are grounded on a single foundational principle. Each principle would unify the next in order to form the system of the whole.

Beiser continues his attack on Schelling that the dark absolute,

“therefore, excludes all opposition between things and/or any differences between subject and object ...from this absolute standpoint, the finite simply does not exist because nothing considered finite in of itself can exist” (Beiser 2002: 565).

Beiser asks the question why should the absolute remain so bleak? Or why is the absolute drowned in an infinite darkness? He, of course, is not content with Schelling’s answer to such a question. He states that Schelling doesn’t give us an adequate response. For according to Schelling, if the absolute were not purely one, there would have to be another reason for its existence other than its own self. This claim for Schelling is problematic because it would make the infinite a contingent entity dependent on another. We should keep in mind that Schelling’s conception of the absolute is largely inspired by Spinoza’s concept of substance. We also have to ask the question whether this is an accurate account of Schelling’s *Presentation* and the system of identity. Beiser presents Schelling’s system through a problematic and pantheistic presentation. He also states that Schelling’s identity philosophy is essentially “a defense of a monistic rationalism or a rationalistic monism” (Beiser 2002: 553).

If we take Beiser at his words then Schelling’s objective idealism is basically a demonstration of three fundamental propositions. The first proposition involves the absolute. The absolute can only be one, indivisible substance which is essentially equal to the universe (Beiser 2002: 553). The second proposition involves both substance and reason. However, according to Schelling, substance cannot transcend the bounds of reason. There is nothing outside of reason. To quote Schelling’s second definition: “Outside reason is nothing, and in it is everything” (Schelling 2012: 146). Both substance and reason are essentially equal to the fundamental law of reason, which is also the same as the law of identity (Beiser 2002: 553). The third and final proposition expresses the complete totality and unity of the law of identity (Beiser 2002: 553). This involves, both the subject and object, real and ideal, falling prey into a complete *monistic rationalism* in every respect. This monistic rationalism exemplifies two equal sides of one individual substance which according to Beiser, Schelling dubs “an identity of identity” (Schelling 2012: 150).

Univocity, Immanence and Monism.

Beiser is of course one of the great historians of German Idealism but both Daniel Whistler and Dalia Nassar, have philosophical issues with Beiser’s reading of Schelling. According to Whistler, Beiser tends to read Schelling through the lens of a historical caricature, by which he means that Beiser makes several fundamental errors in his interpretation of Schelling’s system of identity. Where does Whistler differ from Beiser? For this final section of the paper, I plan on using Whistler’s defense of Schelling’s Identity philosophy as an identity-Monism to counter Beiser’s claims.

Whistler begins by stating that in order to understand Schelling's identity philosophy one must begin to grasp the importance behind its metaphysical ambition (Whistler 2013: 70). Schelling's identity philosophy as a project, is a philosophy centered on the absolute. To understand this great metaphysical ambition, we, as readers of Schelling, need to first grasp what Schelling means when he speaks of *reality* (Whistler 2013: 70). He brings up four main terms that can be read interchangeably. They are the following: *the absolute*, *identity*, *indifference*, and *God*. The first term, "the absolute" is of course synonymous with reality (Whistler 2013: 71). This is of course, a very important distinction and Schelling states in definition 26

"That absolute identity is absolute totality –Because it is everything that is, or it cannot be conceived as separated from everything that is [...] It is, therefore only as everything, i.e., it is absolute totality" (Schelling 2012: 152).

We can also say the same thing with *identity*, that it too is equal to reality. However, the term identity is an important concept in Schelling's philosophy, and it is used throughout his entire corpus. The same applies to the term *indifference*, it as well carries a large amount of weight in terms of Schelling's whole philosophy, and likewise it is also equal to reality. The one term that has an unusual relationship with the rest of the aforementioned is the term *God*. Whistler notes that God, is not a name for reality, but instead is found as a determinate entity within reality. Only later does the term *God* become synonymous with reality (Whistler 2013: 71).

According to Whistler, all four terms form an irreplaceable relationship to the whole. Schelling wants to express the fundamental *equivocal* relationship between the Absolute and its many terms of reality (Whistler 2013: 72). What makes the *Presentation* an important text in the history of German idealism, and in Schelling scholarship, is that this Schelling of the identity-philosophy abandons his earlier ideas. Moving forward there can be no place for a *two-world metaphysics*. What philosophy needs is a new ground of reality, but this ground can never proceed reality because it *is* reality (Whistler 2013: 73).

Essentially, everything is the absolute. However, Whistler states that both reality and the absolute are actually two uniquely different views of one and the same thing. What we need to understand is that this identity metaphysics is not trying to posit any transcendent entity, for we know Schelling's response. "Therefore, nothing can be outside of reason" (Schelling 2012: 146). What Schelling is alluding to is a ground of reality that is immanent to reason, where *all* things are comprehended (Whistler 2013: 76). Instead of presenting Schelling's identity philosophy as a dark Parmenidean monism, Whistler gives us another alternative. This alternative presents Schelling's *Presentation*, as a theory where being is univocal (Whistler 2013: 77). Thus, the univocity of being, describes how all properties, substances, being and reality, in Schelling's system of identity are identical to absolute

identity. We have now come to a crucial point in understanding the underlying machine of Schelling's identity philosophy.

For Schelling, Spinoza was not the only influence on the *Presentation*. Schelling also took a lot from the thought of the Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno. Through Spinoza and Bruno's influence, Schelling would create a new identity philosophy born out of a philosophy of immanence. Or to be more precise, an identity-monism. What exactly is an identity-monism? According to Whistler, it consists of "a process of an immanent self-constitution [of the absolute]. Or to unpack this comment we could say that *univocity* expresses Schelling's fundamental theory of *immanence*. To spell this out in Schelling's own terms, we need only to quote definition 33 of the *Presentation*: "The Universe is equally eternal with absolute identity itself" (Schelling 2012: 146).

Conclusion: "All Determinations are Quantifications."

One of the last issues we must discuss and conclude on is how this theory of identity-monism can spare any room for individual things. I agree with Whistler that Schelling is a monist, and that his monism cannot be reduced to a form of *monistic rationalism*. Schelling's project isn't totally reduced to Spinozism or pre-critical philosophy. I also adhere to the claim that Schelling accepts a philosophy of both absolute *immanence* and *univocity*, therefore explaining how all things are one. The emergence of both an absolute immanence and univocity are the underlying *foundation* for Schelling's identity monism. Identity is always already identical with identity. However, in all of this unity, how can difference emerge? Schelling's answer according to Whistler relates entirely to intensity. He states,

"It is this difference in intensity which gives rise to distinctions between subject and object [...] for a rigorous monism, quantity is the only way to distinguish individuals. Hence, rather than the Spinozist "all determination is negation," Schelling proposes a new dictum that "all determinations are quantifications," there is no negation here" (Whistler 2013: 105).

This proves an essential point of my argument that the Schelling of the *Presentation* saw difference as a creative product of both energy and abundance. There can never be negation nor unbalance but only *different* quantities of a continuous production (Whistler 2013: 105). The absolute does not negate its recombinants, but holds onto the negative identity of everything as a potential reserve. Schelling makes this point even clearer in definition thirty-seven when he states that "the quantitative difference of the subjective and objective is the ground of all finitude (Schelling 2012: 155). Therefore, Schelling's *Presentation* does have an adequate concept of difference, since Schelling sees quantitative difference forming the ground of all individual being.

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CRÍTICA Y SISTEMA COMPLEJO DEL MARX TARDÍO EN SU CONFRONTACIÓN CON HEGEL¹

CRITIQUE AND COMPLEX SYSTEM IN THE LATE MARX IN HIS CONFRONTATION WITH HEGEL

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Resumen: Los numerosos tratamientos sobre la teoría de Marx de la formación social encuentran en la relación de Marx con Hegel un horizonte interpretativo. Nos concentramos aquí en entender el relato de la economía política como una tarea crítica y en examinar este relato de las interpretaciones particulares de la construcción sistemática de las categorías. Intérpretes contemporáneos de Marx siguen manteniendo numerosas discusiones sobre una posible lectura de una metodología crítica en los escritos sobre la naturaleza del capital, sobre si los textos que abordan el juicio de la economía como tal pueden contribuir a una determinada epistemología.

Para tal propósito se analiza los conceptos de complejidad y dialéctica.

Palabras clave: Filosofía Marx, Hegel, complejidad, crítica, dialéctica

Abstract: The numerous studies on Marx's theory of social formation often find an interpretive horizon in Marx's relationship with Hegel. This article focuses on understanding the account of political economy as a critical endeavour and on examining this account through particular interpretations of the systematic construction of categories. Contemporary interpreters of Marx continue to engage in extensive debates over the possibility of reading a critical methodology in his writings on the nature of capital, and over whether the texts that address the judgment of the economy as such may contribute to a specific epistemology. To this end, the concepts of complexity and dialectics are analysed.

Keywords: Philosophy, Marx, Hegel, complexity, critique, dialectics

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1. Introducción

Con la popularización del paradigma contemporáneo de la *Neue Marx Lektüre* durante los años 70, se establecieron distinciones más nítidas entre niveles de abstracción a lo largo de *El capital* de lo que fue la tradición epistemológica durante el siglo xx. La nueva hermenéutica de los estudiosos de Marx como Reichelt, Backhaus y Heinrich, intenta aclarar la formación histórica del valor, el dinero y el capital por Zelený (1968) y Rosental (1969), entre otros, mediante un análisis estructural formal de las manifestaciones. Esta recepción revisada del capital discute la dimensión epistemológica del modo de abstracción de Marx como autocomprensión. En este contexto, la exposición de la forma valor es un punto de controversia respecto a la emergencia programática del *Capital*, en la medida en que plantea una exigencia metodológica del análisis del capital. El *procedimiento* categorial de la estructura expositiva se despliega resolviendo problemáticas genéticas del valor bajo un despliegue progresivo y correctivo. En este tratamiento correctivo constituye lo propio de lo que debe entenderse por *exposición crítica*.

Los *Manuscritos sobre la crítica de la economía política* sugieren la importancia de concebir la economía (política) como una crítica estable. La crítica de las categorías, determinaciones y momentos del desarrollo del valor permite la reconstrucción conceptual de la sociedad burguesa. La estructura del análisis de la sociedad burguesa se refleja en las manifestaciones del capital, es decir, en su crítica. Según Marx, el procedimiento metodológico de la economía política mienta un despliegue categorial no arbitrario. A partir de ahí, cabe preguntarse en este escrito por las fuentes de esta exposición y su relación con el concepto de crítica. Particularmente importante será la influencia del procedimiento de la *Lógica* de Hegel sobre la investigación de Marx en *El capital*. Si bien Hegel y Marx coinciden medianamente en una unidad inmanente de las pretensiones epistemológicas, tenderá Marx gradualmente hacia la crítica de la ontologización en el desarrollo de su obra tardía. La premisa que estructura este ensayo es que la herencia de Hegel del modo crítico de exposición de Marx se refiere también al reconocimiento de la supuesta inmediatez estructurada en las formas del capital como sistema complejo, que para Marx se desarrollan uniformemente de forma reconstructiva en una conexión interna entre formas de la naturaleza, pensamiento y sociedad. Se plantea aquí que la caracterización metateórica del método de Marx parece fundamental en la discusión de hoy para explicar esta disputa epistemológica. La *exigencia metodológica* (Wolf, 2008: 48) de problematizar la *crítica* concierne a la esencia de la exposición y sienta las premisas para reconocer las contradicciones dialécticas específicas.

2. La problematización de la crítica en Marx

La caracterización metateórica del método de Marx representa quizás la problematización más polémica de la cientificidad de su crítica de la economía. A pesar de las grandes diferencias entre los lectores diversos paradigmas del método en Marx, se puede encontrar algo común en todas estas lecturas: el reconocimiento común del relato de la economía política como crítica:

La obra en cuestión al principio es 'Crítica de las categorías económicas' o, if you like, el sistema de la economía burguesa representado críticamente. Es a la vez *exposición del sistema y, a través de la exposición, una crítica del mismo* (MEW 29: 550, énfasis de P.P.).

Según Marx, el análisis de la sociedad burguesa y de sus categorías debe realizarse ante todo críticamente. Así pues, la crítica no es sólo una designación de la exposición, sino un componente esencial de su cientificidad. La reconstrucción teórica de la ciencia por Marx encuentra en la concepción de la crítica de Hegel un instrumento fundamental para el desarrollo de una dialéctica expositiva.

Capital, como término genérico, de toda la crítica une en este sentido todas las etapas de la formación social burguesa. La hegemonía del capital es el objeto crítico de análisis en la obra tardía de Marx. En este sentido, todo el despliegue de *El capital* se entiende como una tarea crítica de la economía política. Lo que la crítica significa, de hecho, es ese análisis sistemático y correctivo de la riqueza capitalista en la sociedad moderna. La hipótesis aquí ilustrada muestra que (i) las manifestaciones críticas del capital en Marx, en primer lugar, sólo pueden reproducirse como una exposición *operativa* subordinada, y que (ii) el concepto de crítica de Marx debe entenderse como esencia del método de exposición, en detrimento del concepto de dialéctica.

La necesidad de una forma unitaria de exposición de la pluralidad formas determinadas de la estructura del capital es expresada por Marx en los *Grundrisse* y concierne a las diferentes fases de la dimensión económico-política por él delimitada. Sin embargo, lo que se entiende por *crítica* debe estar determinado por los respectivos ámbitos de exposición. La crítica es, pues, la exposición conceptual de lo económico como corrección de sus propias manifestaciones, apelando a la necesidad de revisar la totalidad de la clasificación de los fundamentos económicos. Las determinaciones de esta exposición deben establecerse según un criterio no-arbitrario, para lo cual no se trata de especificar las fases previamente dadas, sino que requieren de un modo específico de determinación. Sin criterio, no hay ciencia.

El objeto de la crítica de Marx tiene una exigencia: el responder sobre cuál es el objeto de la economía política o el modo de producción capitalista. La pregunta fundamental es de qué manera se critica esta economía política. Esta exigencia crítica aparece en forma de *dialéctica*. Conviene aclarar, sin embargo, aquí algunos aspectos de la concepción de Hegel para comprender esta exigencia. Hegel critica la concepción kantiana de los hechos relacionales a determinar en el sentido de un cierto modo separativo de exponer el conocimiento. La iluminación especulativa del concepto como corrección del pensamiento, como *adaequatio rei et intellectus* constituye también la disolución de toda trascendentalidad. De manera similar, se organiza el desarrollo marxiano del valor. La restauración de la crítica como *modus operandi* de lo científico, en la que la economía política se aprehende en el concepto como síntesis categórica del trabajo socialmente necesario, marca el carácter negativo del desarrollo conceptual de la forma social capitalista. La descripción del comportamiento de las formas del capital

debe vincularse al estudio de las influencias sobre su concepto de crítica, donde se realiza un examen escéptico continuo de las formas de la sociedad burguesa.

El énfasis en el concepto de crítica manifiesta la necesidad de la disolución de las categorías de la modernidad en la exposición y se diferencia de la filosofía clásica alemana en la medida en que esta última reivindica una conexión de la actividad material o práctica con la teoría sin determinar *prima facie* los fundamentos epistémicos (Haug, 2014: 59).

El concepto de crítica en la modernidad funciona, entonces para Marx, como término genérico fundante de su *práctica social* (Schmied-Kowarzik, 2008: 49). En este sentido, la crítica es también una exigencia analítica que comprende dos características fundamentales heredadas de la tradición filosófica griega: κριτική ὁρθή (Aristoteles, EN 1143a 23) y δύναμις κριτική (Aristoteles, De an, 424a 5). El juicio crítico como momento necesario en la exposición de la economía política se torna en la característica principal del pensamiento metodológico de Marx. La crítica como κριτική ὁρθή y como δύναμις κριτική constituye la determinación esencial del modo de exposición de la economía política. Así pues, en la obra tardía, la economía es siempre también una crítica de la economía, o una exposición crítica de la economía política. El análisis de Marx sobre el capital se concibe entonces esencialmente como exposición en forma de crítica.

El capital, como objeto de lo económico, plausibiliza la crítica de las fases de la producción, donde tiene lugar la corrección de las inconsistencias epistemológicas y filosóficas (Fineschi, 2020: 197).

En este respecto, el modo del tratamiento crítico de Marx, sin ser isomórfico al hegeliano, está en línea con la propia presentación crítica que ya se presentaba en la *Lógica*. Theunissen comenta que «la crítica de la crítica de Hegel se basa en una reacentuación, pero Marx supone que responde a la intención de Hegel, que al mismo tiempo se oculta en su expresión lingüística» (Theunissen, 1978: 48). No sólo *El capital*, sino toda la obra tardía de Marx constituye una investigación metodológica del sistema económico, más allá de la especificidad de una crítica de la economía política.

El despliegue expositivo del capital moderno consiste en un desarrollo general del modo de producción y circulación en el contexto de la dominación del capital y sus relaciones económicas de producción. Estas relaciones de *producción* son etapas de la *producción* que *producen* una sociedad moderna de clases resultante (abstracta) que es la acumulación de capital.

Marx presenta la tarea principal de *El capital* bajo dos aspectos, por un lado, como relato programático y metodológico del conjunto de la sociedad burguesa y, por otro, como una crítica de la economía política. El método o *programa* de la reconstrucción del concepto de sociedad consiste en el desarrollo de la totalidad de las relaciones de producción, es decir, en el desarrollo de la totalidad de las fases necesarias de la producción, que por regla general transforman la sociedad de clases mediante la acumulación de capital.

La pregunta de Dieter Wolf, formulada repetidamente en los últimos lustros, «¿por qué la *Lógica* pudo ‘prestar un gran servicio’ a Marx?» (Wolf, 2011: 27 y s), no tematiza una

cuestión menor cuando se trata de la estructura, el método y la exposición sistémica de *El capital* de Marx. Las similitudes entre ambas obras en su estructura de movimiento deben ir acompañadas de la distinción y clarificación de los objetos de investigación. En la obra tardía de Marx, especialmente en *El capital* y los *Grundrisse*, la cuestión del contexto mediador inmanente de las formas sociales del capital se relaciona – de forma conflictiva – con la estructura de pensamiento de Hegel (MEW 23: 27).² Las cuestiones metateóricas de este método *dialéctico* en Marx se plantean en el marco de una *lógica peculiar* o *lógica de suyo* [eigentümliche Logik] (MEW 1: 296). La peculiaridad de esta lógica aparece en la obra tardía como una caracterización fundamental del procedimiento metodológico. La exigencia de una *lógica peculiar* se traduce así en la necesidad de una exposición específica de esta lógica.

La crítica marxiana de la economía se concibe a sí misma como corrección (o inversión) de la lógica especulativa mediante el desarrollo conceptual de las determinaciones de la totalidad de la sociedad civil/burguesa. La orientación de esta crítica representa simultáneamente i) una concretización dialéctica de las categorías de las relaciones político-económicas y ii) un modo materialista de abstracción. Es Adorno quien enfatiza en este punto, acentuando que la concretización económico-crítica de la obra tardía de Marx culmina en la exposición programática negativa de las categorías. La crítica del capitalismo sólo puede entenderse si es crítica de sus categorías. Estas categorías exponen una totalidad que, en su reconstrucción metodológica, sistematiza lo económico y expresa «formas objetivas de pensamiento» (MEW 23: 90). Los postulados económico-críticos sólo se hacen plausibles, en este sentido, como método crítico de exposición de las formas de pensamiento político-económico. Sin este método objetivo, no habría científicidad en todo el modo de abstracción que subyace en las formas de valor de los primeros capítulos (Adorno, 1974: 34).

Puntualmente, la descripción que Adorno hace de la ‘crítica’ es acertada cuando sugiere que la totalidad expositiva sólo puede reconstruirse a partir del intercambio lógico y la forma mercancía. Sin embargo, este *principio de intercambio* [Tauschprinzip] no debe interpretarse axiomáticamente, sino en términos generales como una concatenación social de leyes político-económicas que determina el acto de intercambio como base inmanente de la economía. Para Adorno, la totalidad de la sociedad capitalista dentro del método crítico de exposición se constituye sobre la base de estas «leyes estructurales» (Adorno, 1970: 151) económicas, como la realización de las relaciones progresivas de intercambio. La exposición de lo económico, sin embargo, es una determinación crítica básica del método en general.

En relación con la teoría del valor, la crítica adorniana debe entenderse rayana a la crítica de Marx como la esencia de la exposición, en la medida en que es completamente una forma negativa contra el simple planteamiento de las determinaciones del pensamiento, la

2 . En este punto, la noción de Adorno (2007: 15) de una *dialéctica negativa* como *desgarramiento* [Unversöhnheit] está muy cerca de la concepción de Marx de una teoría crítica de la exposición.

cual expresa «la potencia propia de los fragmentos resultantes de la disgregación antes que la construcción de una unidad conciliatoria de la disolución.» (Moreno, 2020: 324).

En la adopción marxiana del procedimiento metafísico clásico (aquí, en el sentido de Hegel y, en parte, de Kant), se trata de adoptar un instrumento conceptual para sustituir las «autorrelaciones subjetivas sobre la base de presupuestos socioestructurales» (Fink-Eitel, 1987: 164), sobre todo porque el procedimiento burgués aparece como una teoría deficitaria y sin presupuestos de la intersubjetividad. La crítica expositiva de lo económico examina la contradictoriedad de las relaciones fundamentales con resultados concretos: la cosificación sistemática de las determinaciones en relación con la producción y la subjetivización de sus fundamentos materiales.

3. Hegel: metafísica crítica

Marx intenta establecer la dialéctica como esencia del método de exposición a través de su análisis de la forma-valor. Sin embargo, su pretensión científica es liberarse de una comprensión, según su punto de vista, idealista.³ La reconstrucción de la dialéctica en la obra tardía de Marx aparece también como una adopción crítica de la terminología de Hegel, que, sin embargo, refleja el proceso del pensamiento en la realidad efectiva material (MEW 23: 27). Marx concibe su método en relación con determinaciones de la reflexión, que objetivan las abstracciones de la realidad en la exposición. En la estructura fundamental de la formación social, la exposición sólo se hace posible como crítica de un proceso de pensamiento metafísico.

Sobre esto último, es menester acentuar que la relación entre lógica y metafísica es abordada como problema, ya desde su etapa en Jena, como desarrollo crítico de la metafísica clásica. La metafísica de Hegel se ocupa de la fundamentación de la ciencia filosófica de un modo crítico (Pippin, 2019: 41). Según Theunissen, el hecho de que la lógica hegeliana sea crítica significa que la crítica de la metafísica es al mismo tiempo una forma crítica de la exposición de lo lógico, es decir, es una corrección de las categorías lógicas. Con esto queremos decir que el problema lógico se presenta del mismo modo que un problema metodológico (de análisis del concepto a través de su desarrollo). Se trata de una cuestión del procedimiento de pensamiento como autocorrección. Sin embargo, esto también significa que el concepto hegeliano mienta una restauración conceptual en relación con su negatividad. La restauración del ser como crítica de su contenido. Con estas características, nos referimos por un lado a una lógica del fundamento [Grundlogik], o una metateoría, sin presupuestos en la que las determinaciones ontológicas sólo pueden presentarse como pre-reflexivas, como

3 «Las afirmaciones tempranas y tardías de Marx sobre la dialéctica de Hegel y sobre la transformación que iba a llevarse a cabo con ella concuerdan entre sí en puntos centrales. Los puntos de acuerdo son al menos los siguientes: el error básico de Hegel, también con respecto a su concepción de la dialéctica, es el idealismo. [...] Una consecuencia del idealismo son las mistificaciones que sufre la dialéctica en manos de Hegel. Hay que criticar estas mistificaciones.» (Fulda, 1978: 183 ss).

simple posición y primer operandum de lo lógico. Por otra parte, la determinación del ser se refiere a una lógica del objeto [Objektlogik], al objeto del pensar: el pensar puro. El paso de la lógica del ser a la de la esencia muestra la significación del proceso lógico como operación correctora de la indeterminación, como resultado negador del devenir. La crítica de Hegel a la metafísica reacciona ostensiblemente contra una teoría del conocimiento que forma el proceso de cambio del pensamiento y su correspondiente *corrección*, con lo que en última instancia llegamos al resultado de la *operatio* negadora del *operandi*. En esta continuación, el concepto aparece como la verdad correctora del ser y de la esencia.

El concepto sólo es válido como concepto cuando se *estabiliza* en la *operatio* de identidad entre el ser-en-y-para-sí y el ser-puesto; es decir, el hecho de fijar las determinaciones del ser se articula mediante la mediación (en la reflexión) con lo interno y esencial del ser. El concepto es lo que postula y viceversa. Esta formación de conceptos es la autoexposición de la anulación de la negación anterior y la restauración del ser como contradicción superada. La estructuración del concepto a través de la sistematización de los momentos del pensamiento en general es, sin embargo, más una corrección del ser restante que una operación de construcción de categorías. De esta misma manera, se quiere explicar el concepto general de ser postulado y su contenido epistémico, es decir, el ser como producto del proceso de negación no es lo mismo que el ser simplemente postulado a través de la determinabilidad. El concepto es ahora una *estabilización* y una autocorrección del pensamiento en el ser.

En este sentido, podemos captar aquí dos grandes dimensiones de la metafísica hegeliana: (i) como estructura científica de determinaciones del pensamiento en la que el ente se reconoce a sí mismo como adecuado al pensamiento, como conocimiento epistemológico unificado de la cosa como multiplicidad estática o patrón de categorías que separan verdad y validez; (ii) como relato crítico de la metafísica o, en otras palabras, como *metafísica especulativa*, como negación del dualismo entre forma de la realidad y entidad del pensamiento en la percepción del concepto (Koch, 2006: 206).

4. Autorrealización del concepto

Hasta ahora, sin embargo, sólo tenemos un esbozo del problema. En este contexto, la realización absoluta final de la objetividad, en la que se presenta la autorrealización de la idea y la autosuspensión de la metafísica clásica *in rebus* (Koch, 2006: 214), muestra la idea como lo real, no en tanto una representación regulativa, sino la estructura en la que las cosas se realizan de forma estable en el mundo. La Idea se realiza a través de la adecuación del concepto de finalidad, por lo que podemos decir que la teleología encuentra una autorrealización existencial de su propia abolición, en la medida en que el final del desarrollo de la Idea en el punto de partida reaparece a su vez como la autoabolición inicial (Hegel, *Enz I*, W 8, § 204). El fin se desarrolla en la unidad del silogismo con su realización, a través de un medio, de tal manera que su relación final es, al mismo tiempo, la unidad de tal fin y del medio. Sólo de esta forma se puede llegar a la conclusión de que la teleología (el fin) es la existencia

libre del concepto, como liberación existencial como concepto que reside esencialmente en su relación extrasubjetiva. La forma objetiva y exteriorizada de la teleología puede entenderse como finalidad y, como tal, encuentra su limitación, su medida (por así decirlo, como síntesis de las finalidades puramente cuantitativas y puramente cualitativas), por lo que se produce la restricción del contenido a la capacidad conjuntiva de su forma general.

En resumen, el concepto postulado en la objetividad de sus determinaciones reales, expresa la unidad de fin, y en este proceso tiene lugar una adecuación que puede llamarse una idea que expone una unidad del concepto absoluto consigo mismo en relación con lo real.

Al final de la doctrina del concepto se puede vislumbrar que todo el proceso de la cosa en sí no es otra cosa que el movimiento de la idea misma, por lo que la totalidad del desarrollo comporta una exposición de la idea en la lógica, y donde la lógica se entiende como el automovimiento gradual y sistemático del concepto.

La lógica, por tanto, presenta [darstellt] el automovimiento de la idea absoluta sólo como la *palabra* originaria, la cual es una *expresión* [Äußerung], pero que ha desaparecido inmediatamente de lo *exterior* [Äußeres] en el que ella está (Hegel, W 6: 550.)

En este automovimiento se supera simultáneamente una incoherencia, en la medida en que este ser suspendido forma parte de los rasgos estructurales del pensamiento, donde la antinomia se resuelve mediante la operación negativa (Goretzki, 2011: X). Lo lógico o la cosa en sí es lo mismo que su desarrollo.

5. Marx: la *desontologización crítica*

Se pueden encontrar referencias críticas a la exposición crítica de la metafísica hegeliana en numerosos pasajes de los textos de Marx. Pero para hacer un análisis concreto, nos centramos en la crítica de la metodología de Hegel en los *Grundrisse* y *El capital*. El hecho de que para Hegel la metafísica coincida con la epistemología contribuye a que el ser de la esencia no sea otra cosa que el ser del concepto. La lógica es en consecuencia una propedéutica de las determinaciones del pensamiento, que Hegel piensa en determinaciones metafísicas; así se puede decir que la corrección de las categorías de la Lógica de la objetividad es la corrección de la ontología. Para Marx, esta propedéutica desempeña un papel importante en la construcción de su propio fundamento y modo de exposición. No obstante, podemos constatar que la exposición de las determinaciones económico-políticas en Marx no sigue isomórficamente el mismo modo de desarrollo que la contenida en la *Lógica*. En otras palabras, podemos encontrar diferencias temáticas, terminológicas, fraseológicas, estructurales y doctrinales en la formación de métodos en Marx y Hegel. Nos centramos en la diferencia estructural específica entre las dos concepciones de su sistema de determinaciones complejas y su método correspondiente. En el desarrollo de las diferentes teorías sobre el concepto de método de Hegel, se puede encontrar a menudo una fusión teórica entre los conceptos

de dialéctica y método. Estos dos conceptos son también fundamentales en la teoría marxiana, en la medida en que funcionan, por un lado, como resultados de la determinación del pensamiento y, por otro, como requisitos previos de estas determinaciones. En contraste a Marx, la dialéctica hegeliana no es parte inmanente del mismo método, sino un rasgo de la consideración dialéctica general (Hegel, W 6: 107). La dialéctica forma así parte del proceso de generación lógica, *in sensu lato* como principio del movimiento del concepto (Hegel, W 6: 237 s.), como su contemplación esencial, pero precisamente por ello no constituyente del movimiento del método (Wolff, 2014: 71-86; Wolff 2017). No debemos olvidar, sin embargo, que aunque no podamos identificar estos conceptos, debemos reconocer que la *dialéctica* funciona como esencia abarcadora del método, que, de acuerdo con el desarrollo de las categorías, se entiende como la unidad del método analítico y sintético. La dialéctica aparece como la cadena que une inmanentemente el concepto consigo mismo en su proceso de corrección y restitución en el ser desde el principio. Ahora bien, para aclarar estos conceptos (dialéctica y método) en la teoría crítica de Marx, hay que prestar atención a la diferencia con Hegel que aquí se describe. Se trata de aclarar por qué esta metodología representa en Marx una desontologización, tanto en forma de crítica de la metafísica como en forma de dialéctica de las formas lógicas, pero sin ninguna relación con una forma directa del ser.

En primer lugar, debemos entender que cuando Marx hace una distinción entre el modo de investigación y el modo de exposición en *El capital*, entiende el método de descubrimiento orientado a la investigación con respecto a las categorías económicas como no idénticas con su ordenamiento categorial. Sólo con esta distinción se puede comprender que el modo de investigación, sobre la base del método, debe clasificarse como materialismo, es decir, en el sentido de una teoría que se refiere a la cosa-en-el-mundo como directamente real (en contraste con Hegel, sin *realización* del concepto). El modo de exposición de Marx se refiere en cambio directamente a la dialéctica, es decir, al proceso de autocorrección de las categorías de la economía política. A diferencia del procedimiento lógico de Hegel, para Marx la dialéctica es la expresión negativa de lo metafísico y no su identidad crítica. A diferencia de Hegel, el método dialéctico de Marx se refiere a una abstracción real de las relaciones sociales, que se concreta en un proceso que va de lo simple a lo más complejo. Marx entiende, aunque sin mayor tratamiento, esta tarea como una *inversión* de la dialéctica de Hegel. Esto sólo puede entenderse si distinguimos específicamente los métodos de presentación. Por un lado (i) porque para Marx no hay un reposicionamiento ontológico en el pensamiento especulativo, sino una objetivación en el pensamiento de las cosas en el mundo, así como el pensamiento es siempre adecuado a los elementos del mundo. Esta adecuación aparece como abstracción real o concreta; por otra parte, (ii) el desarrollo marxiano del capital no puede ser otro desarrollo que uno en relación, oposición o diálogo con el modo hegeliano de abstracción (y no sólo con sus términos), porque el desarrollo crítico de Hegel de las manifestaciones del pensamiento funciona como base para el desar-

rollo crítico de Marx de las manifestaciones del valor burgués. En este contexto, el análisis de la forma-valor de Marx, como primera abstracción metodológica real del capital, aparece como una tarea necesaria de esta investigación.

7. Exposición metodológica en la teoría del valor

Marx consideraba todo el capitalismo como un modelo económico dominante que reproducía una determinada transformación del valor general en precio (incluida la plusvalía en beneficio). La teoría del valor, presentada en su abstracción general en los primeros capítulos de *El Capital*, funciona como base de cualquier análisis de la relación de valor en general. Marx supuso que su presentación de los niveles capitalistas de valor revelaría sus contradicciones internas esenciales con el paso del tiempo. La contradicción surge en la relación de intercambio de dos mercancías expresada en precios. El valor puede entenderse como «lo que se mide en la relación cuantitativa de intercambio de las mercancías, su idéntica calidad. El valor es, por tanto, la medida inmanente en las mercancías de su relación de intercambio» (Iber, 2006: 190). Al expresar una identidad cualitativa de las mercancías, el valor expresa una cierta abstracción cuantificada por los precios. Lo abstracto expresado en el valor no es una expresión del objeto material en sí, sino de lo que ese objeto contiene, a saber, una delgada concepción del trabajo per se. El trabajo aparece así como una caracterización indiferente de todos los actos transformadores de la producción. Ser-valor no es otra cosa que contener el trabajo abstracto-humano, *simpliciter* como trabajo productivo objetivado. Todas las manifestaciones del valor pertenecen al proceso de intercambio como momentos abstraídos de las relaciones de mercancías, que forman las transiciones primarias de todos los desarrollos capitalistas del valor. El valor (de cambio), como abolición de la fase utilitaria del valor de uso, muestra simultáneamente una conexión o inseparabilidad entre la teoría del valor y la teoría del dinero, según la cual el dinero como tal no representa otra cosa que una «forma equivalente universal» (MEW 23: 81) expresada dentro del valor. Según Marx, toda la teoría del valor es válida no sólo como marco disciplinario de la economía, sino como teoría central de cualquier análisis crítico del capitalismo, en la medida en que el concepto de valor es considerado como un existente *sustancial* (es decir, trabajo *abstracto*) de las relaciones de producción, como una existencia autodesarrollada en la presentación del procedimiento económico. Según Marx, «el valor [...] es la existencia burguesa [das bürgerliche Dasein] de la propiedad» (MEW 1: 114) en la medida en que este valor se fetichiza en la propiedad (en general, a través de la acumulación de capital). En el dinero, sin embargo, este valor se fetichiza como medio sustancial de la mercancía; este carácter fetichista de la mercancía no puede explicarse simplemente sobre la base de un desarrollo superior del ser-valor [Wertsein], sino que debe entrar en juego el trasfondo social de este valor o trabajo socialmente necesario. El dinero es la apariencia medida del valor en general, en la que la forma precio es la expresión de la forma mercancía transformada. El ser monetario del valor

es, por un lado, la disolución de la simple relación de valor de cambio (x mercancía A = y mercancía B) y, por otro, la medida o unidad de medida de la sustancia y magnitud del valor. Con este cambio de paradigma, Marx critica simultáneamente el relato *burgués* de la economía clásica, que propugna una relación *libre* entre valor y dinero. En este sentido, la teoría del valor total de Marx no funciona ni como mero monetarismo, ni como una simple teoría del mercado mundial, sino como una limitación específica de todo el proceso capitalista (MEW 23, p. 211). La exposición general funciona en este sentido como la adecuación de lo económicamente concreto o de las determinaciones de las fases capitalistas con las categorías de lo abstracto.

No se trata de tratar las diversas etapas del capitalismo como una teoría global de la economía en general o como niveles separados de una economía científica especializada, sino de discutir las realidades históricamente desarrolladas de los fenómenos de las mercancías. La determinación del estatuto y del procedimiento de la teoría del valor es una estabilización de las formas de trabajo existentes expresadas en valor en categorías generales. La transformación de los valores en dinero manifiesta de este modo una transición del trabajo valorizado general a la aparición de la equivalencia general de todas las mercancías a través de la forma equivalente, que es un elemento teórico del valor de «su intercambiabilidad inmediata» (MEW 23: 70) en general. La equivalencia de las mercancías es la expresabilidad del valor, su aparición determinada en el movimiento de las mercancías como equivalencia de la determinación relativa de la forma de valor abstraída de su cualidad.

El énfasis de Marx radica en la conexión necesaria de fases de producción y determinaciones de valor, la cual forma contradicciones en el modo en que se interconectan los mismos actos de producción sin observar críticamente la relación de acción o intercambio del trabajo humano. Según Marx, los valores eran las manifestaciones más abstractas del trabajo productor, consideradas como el trasfondo metodológico de todas las relaciones político-económicas. Para la economía clásica, sin embargo, el ser-valor del producto en la relación de intercambio parecía ser la condición previa para producir. Según Marx, se trataba de una *contradictio in adjecto*, ya que «el valor de cambio [...] sólo puede ser el modo de expresión, la “forma de apariencia” de un contenido que puede distinguirse de él» (MEW 23: 51). El valor, al fin y al cabo, es una relación que se ha hecho de la forma material del trabajo, que aparece en el intercambio en su forma esencial de existencia. El valor es la medida económica fundamental expresada de todas las relaciones capitalistas como tales, que existe realmente en el intercambio sobre la base de su abstracción. Lo que en última instancia intercambiamos es sólo una transformación valorada de la naturaleza (trabajo) que es socialmente necesaria. Socialmente, porque esta acción modificadora (trabajo) debe cumplir la condición de intercambiabilidad al menos para un segundo productor o consumidor. Necesaria, porque esta transformación productora de la naturaleza del hombre de uno a otro debe producirse en todos los casos para transformar un objeto dado (utilidad) en un producto mediado (intercambiabilidad).

Los seres humanos, por lo tanto, no relacionan sus productos del trabajo entre sí como valores, porque estas cosas son consideradas por ellas como meros cascarones fácticos de trabajo humano homogéneo. A la inversa. Al equiparar sus diversos productos entre sí en el intercambio como valores, equiparan sus diversas labores entre sí como trabajo humano. No lo saben, pero lo hacen. (MEW 23: 88)

En este nivel de abstracción, Marx asevera que el hecho real del intercambio sólo podía consistir en una relación de trabajo humano. Nuestros actos de intercambio consisten en estas relaciones (independientes de la conciencia productora y de la racionalidad de los productores individuales de mercancías), que pertenecen a una estructura socialmente determinante del valor, en la que hay que examinar esta llamada socialidad del trabajo (Heinrich, 1988: 32). Se piensa que los sujetos productores, los productores por excelencia, intercambian in abstracto determinados productos con las mismas magnitudes de valor, pero en cambio intercambian entre sí diversas magnitudes de tiempo de trabajo invertido, en el que el trabajo encuentra una determinación cuantitativa en la forma equivalente.

El desarrollo reconstructivo del valor encaja realmente en el marco dialéctico del sistema de mercancías. De ello se concluye que la oposición de las relaciones económicas, que relacionan continuamente sociedad y naturaleza mediante la producción, se integra negativa o dialécticamente. Lo dialéctico en Marx es, pues, siempre «teoría materialista histórica del *desarrollo* social» (Fink-Eitel, 1987: 10), en la medida en que el materialismo crítico trata de corregir las simplificaciones sujeto-económicas. El término *dialéctico* apunta meramente al elemento crítico, propedéutico, del procedimiento metodológico de la formación del capital, que en general busca dilucidar los determinantes de lo concreto (MEW 42: 22.), mediante una complejización de las variantes económicas (para Marx: independizar y osificar), es decir, mediante consideraciones críticas de conjunto. Este marco dialéctico es la estructura de movimiento del capital como tal, que a saber funciona como la primera abolición circulante del valor inmediato. La dialéctica negativa no es, sin embargo, un concepto fijo en el relato de Marx; desempeña un papel central en el desarrollo de lo económico, pero fue canonizada más como método de conocimiento en la lectura engelsiana y en el primer marxismo soviético. En cambio, en este contexto, la tematización de la anatomía de la dialéctica contribuye a una mayor verosimilitud del análisis crítico. En este relato negativo del capitalismo, la forma general del capital aparece como la abolición del valor del dinero en la forma de ganancia del dinero, o en otras palabras, el capital general es dinero transformado de nuevo en el circuito D-M-D'. La primera aparición del dinero o la moneda en su forma general es el valor como medio general abstracto de circulación, la cópula de dos mercancías (forma I: M-D-M). La primera aparición del capital o dinero como finalidad del proceso circulatorio de las mercancías corresponde al valor como excedente concretamente creciente (Forma II: D-M-D). Pero la segunda forma de dinero (D', donde $D' = D + \Delta D$) ya no es igual al primer valor, sino que expresa plusvalía (ΔD) en

virtud de este incremento de la suma de dinero. La plusvalía debe entenderse aquí como un incremento valorizado y unilateral de la relación de intercambio, como la abolición material de la primera forma equivalente de mercancía. Mientras que el valor, por un lado, asume su forma general en el dinero y su aparición fija en forma de precio, la plusvalía encuentra su generalidad en el capital dinero y su aparición fija en forma de beneficio. El capital se representa como la última transición de la simple abstracción del valor o como el primer resultado de todo el acto de producción. El capital se entiende así como la esencia burguesa de la ganancia, en la que la plusvalía constituye su realidad efectiva (MEW 25: 822).

En Marx no hay independencia conceptual del desarrollo lógico de los momentos epistemológicos respecto a las categorías *prácticas*, es decir, los presupuestos epistemológicos de las ciencias individuales, a las que pertenece la ciencia económica, no se encuentran en una determinación precedente del pensamiento. En relación con la crítica de la economía política, los hechos de la riqueza existente sólo pueden determinarse mediante una relación objetiva. La representación de la cosa en sí (lo concreto, lo dado) en relación con lo económico se presenta como una ciencia peculiar sin determinar todo lo general del pensamiento. Marx entiende las pretensiones de verdad epistemológicas como un fundamento necesario que puede estabilizarse mediante el procedimiento de la abstracción real. La abolición correctiva del pensamiento económico no puede lograrse sin su autorrepresentación crítica, no en una ciencia presupuesta que se limita a añadir su propia verdad ulterior a las demás ciencias, sino que en su peculiar complejidad de abstracción llega a lo concreto, es decir, a la manifestación unificada del todo.

La complejidad es el modo de aparición de lo concreto. Puesto que la multiplicidad de determinaciones sólo puede ser examinada como un todo en el análisis, las concreciones sólo pueden ser comprendidas a través del pensamiento como el resultado fijo de la crítica representacional, mediante la cual la sociedad burguesa debe aparecer como el todo considerado, como el más concreto de todos los actos capitalistas de producción. Según Marx, no hay concretización científica de la economía a partir de una pura abstracción especulativa, sino que su científicidad es siempre sólo el resultado de una conectividad orgánica de las manifestaciones representadas como una comunalidad de relaciones sociales. El movimiento dialéctico de la exposición lógico-sistemática establece así el carácter científico del procedimiento crítico. En el modo crítico de presentación del capitalismo, lo lógico funciona como un instrumento epistemológico, que, sin embargo, no debe entenderse como una presentación sin presupuestos, sino como una crítica del objeto material que se desarrolla a partir de los abstractos más simples de las relaciones político-económicas. Del lado de la crítica de la economía política, los conceptos centrales más abstractos de la presentación de la sociedad son el punto de partida sistemático para organizar conceptualmente el conjunto de la riqueza social. El valor, visto así, es una «existencia antediluviana [antediluvianisches Dasein]» (*Grund*: 22) de la producción a representar, por lo que es necesario elaborar cualquier tratamiento dialéctico de la *pretensión de verdad* capitalista bajo este mismo presupuesto.

8. Conclusión: Necesidad de un punto final de exposición

En la introducción a los *Grundrisse* se esboza la producción en general. A diferencia de *El capital*, el concepto de producción contiene aquí su propia reflexión metodológica. Su introducción explica el punto de partida sin presupuestos del análisis del capital como aparición de una producción total orgánica y entrelazada. La comparación entre el punto de partida en los *Grundrisse*, por un lado, y en *El capital*, por otro, proporciona enfoques teóricos para aclarar la formación metodológica de Marx. En *El capital* no encontramos una respuesta puntual a la cuestión de la pretensión metodológica, pero lo que sí podemos observar es un procedimiento metódico y sistemático de presentación dialéctica de las formas de valor. Por el contrario, podemos subrayar que en los *Grundrisse* no se reproduce exactamente el modo de presentación y formulación de las categorías político-económicas del *Capital*. Sin embargo, podemos identificar una intersección entre los *Grundrisse* y *El capital*, a saber, en que la sociedad (burguesa) aparece como el punto final del método crítico de exposición. La teorización de Marx sobre las formas de valor es un desarrollo *lógico-estructural* de las relaciones de trabajo intersubjetivas, que se presenta como una totalidad orgánica de la economía política. Sin embargo, esta estructura lógica (exposición) es también una corrección aparente de toda la sociedad burguesa (crítica). En este sentido, la sociedad burguesa, según Marx, funciona como un todo cristalizado de la producción, como un momento conceptual del desarrollo del valor que se organiza en su totalidad: (*Grund*: 25 s.)

Esto contribuye a que cada momento de la presentación global deba entenderse como una cristalización precisa de las relaciones de producción en la sociedad burguesa. La crítica económica es, por tanto, la investigación negativa (es decir, dialéctica, crítica) de la formación social burguesa en una complejización sistemática de conexiones humanas o relaciones humanas. En la introducción a los *Grundrisse*, Marx comienza con la ley de las ramas capitalistas de producción; en cambio, en la introducción a *El capital*, la formación de la producción en general se presenta como una revelación preconceptual y externa del desarrollo del valor (todavía caótico en los *Grundrisse*).

Toda la exposición de la Crítica de la Economía Política, vista desde el análisis del valor, forma una crítica de la sociedad. La complejidad de la crítica de la sociedad constituye la esencia de la estructura metodológica, en la medida en que representa una concreción o complejización del valor en la riqueza. El análisis de la anatomía de esta abstracción paso a paso nos permite elaborar los *extremos*, los *polos* de la exposición metodológica de Marx de la sociedad como un desarrollo concatenado, en el que el valor mercancía altamente abstracto aparece como el «resultado y la condición previa de toda relación social» (Pfreundschuh, 2009: 58). El desarrollo de la sociedad es, pues, el desarrollo de su riqueza. El desarrollo de la riqueza es el desarrollo de las fuerzas productivas. La presentación del valor es, en consecuencia, una presentación del desarrollo de la riqueza capitalista o productora de mercancías, es decir, del enriquecimiento capitalista. La riqueza de capital, sin embargo, adquiere una manifestación culminante concreta y

comprende la capitalización del excedente de producción de mercancías, que condiciona el desarrollo ulterior de la formación social.

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HOW SHOULD NATURE BE STUDIED PHILOSOPHICALLY? A HEGELIAN RESPONSE

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This paper addresses the question of how nature should be philosophically studied within a Hegelian framework. The focus is epistemological: it examines the relationship between philosophy and the empirical sciences in the constitution of natural categories. I argue that this relationship is neither strictly a priori nor strictly a posteriori but unfolds through a speculative interplay between an a priori philosophical principle of unity and an a posteriori attentiveness to empirical discovery. To support this view, I engage with prominent positions in the secondary literature – namely, Alison Stone’s strong a priorism and John Burbidge’s a posteriorism. After addressing two key problems in these interpretations, I show how both mistakenly attempt to read Hegel’s Philosophy of Nature through the rigid Kantian dichotomy of a priori and a posteriori, which speculative thought seeks to overcome. Drawing on the work of Brigitte Falkenburg, Cinzia Ferrini, and Sebastian Rand, I propose that natural categories should be understood as the result of empirical content that is reorganized, a posteriori, in accordance with an a priori principle of systematic unity. This interpretation not only aligns with Hegel’s own texts but also highlights the dynamic and active character of his philosophy.

Keywords: Hegel – Philosophy of Nature – A priori/a posteriori – empirical sciences – classical German philosophy

Este artículo aborda la cuestión de cómo debe estudiarse filosóficamente la naturaleza dentro de un marco hegeliano. El enfoque es epistemológico: se examina la relación entre la filosofía y las ciencias empíricas en la constitución de las categorías naturales. Sostengo que esta relación no es estrictamente a priori ni estrictamente a posteriori, sino que se despliega a través de una interacción especulativa entre un principio filosófico de unidad a priori y una atención a posteriori al descubrimiento empírico. Para defender esta postura, dialogo con posiciones destacadas en la literatura secundaria —en particular, el apriorismo fuerte de Alison Stone y el posteriorismo de John Burbidge. Tras abordar dos problemas clave en estas interpretaciones, muestro cómo

ambas intentan erróneamente leer la Filosofía de la Naturaleza de Hegel a través de la rígida dicotomía kantiana entre lo a priori y lo a posteriori, dicotomía que el pensamiento especulativo busca superar. Basándome en los trabajos de Brigitte Falkenburg, Cinzia Ferrini y Sebastian Rand, propongo que las categorías naturales deben entenderse como el resultado de un contenido empírico que es reorganizado, a posteriori, de acuerdo con un principio a priori de unidad sistemática. Esta interpretación no solo se alinea con los propios textos de Hegel, sino que también resalta el carácter dinámico y activo de su filosofía.

Palabras clave: *Hegel – Filosofía de la Naturaleza – A priori / A posteriori – ciencias empíricas – filosofía clásica alemana*

In recent years, Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature* has seen a notable revival. This renewed attention is largely driven by the work of contemporary Hegelian scholars such as Cinzia Ferrini, Wes Furlotte, Luca Illetterati, Karen Koch, Edgar Maraguat, Raoni Padui, Terry Pinkard, Sebastian Rand, and Alison Stone, among others.¹ What seems to underlie this renewed interest is a growing shift within Hegel scholarship away from the idea that Hegel must be understood as a rigid thinker. While the rational core of Hegelian thought is still acknowledged, scholars are increasingly turning their focus to the parts of the system that are more problematic or even unsalvageable—above all, the *Philosophy of Nature*. In continuity to this new general tendency, the present article proposes a reconsideration of Hegelian thought which does not neglect the *Philosophy of Nature* but rather considers its integral place in the systematic venture, since, as Wes Furlotte underlines, it is impossible to deny that “Hegel himself saw his philosophy of nature as a fundamental dimension of his final system” (Furlotte, 2018, pp.4-5).

This paper sets out to answer, in a Hegelian manner, the question: How should nature be studied philosophically? The aim is therefore primarily epistemological, focusing on the relationship between philosophy and empirical sciences. The central claim is that this relationship is neither strictly *a priori* nor strictly *a posteriori*. Rather, natural categories arise from a speculative collaboration between a logical *a priori* principle of unity and an *a posteriori* attentiveness to scientific discoveries. To support this position, I will engage with both recent and older debates surrounding Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature*, thus aiming also to provide an overall framework of the debate concerning the epistemological problem of this systematic sphere.

The paper is divided into the following sections. In the first, I analyze two opposing positions in the epistemological debate on Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature*: Alison Stone's strong *a priori*ism and John Burbidge's *a posteriori*ism. In the second section, I examine the central problems of each: while strong *a priori*ism fails to give equal weight to philosophy and empirical sciences, I will argue that *a posteriori*ism approaches are unable to account for the local contingency of nature, collapsing back into the rigid *a priori* conception that sees contingency as logically necessary. The third section addresses the deeper problem

¹ Ferrini, 2002, 2009, 2012; Furlotte, 2018; Illetterati, 2014, 2020, 2023; Koch, 2023, 2024; Maraguat, 2020, 2023; Padui, 2010, 2013; Pinkard, 2012; Rand, 2007, 2015, 2017; Stone, 2005, 2018. A general interest in the question of nature in Hegel, and more broadly in classical German philosophy, is evidenced by the volumes: Corti, Schüle, 2023a, 2023b; Bykova 2024. This is a very recent interest. In fact, as Sebastian Rand emphasized in 2007: “There can be no doubt that interest in Hegel among Anglo-American philosophers is greater now than it has been at any point in the past 100 years. This interest has happily taken the form of increased attention to his major published works, primarily the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the *Philosophy of Right*. (...) But amidst all this increased interest in Hegel, a major part of his mature system has been almost completely ignored: the *Philosophy of Nature*” (Rand, 2007, pp.379–80). Nonetheless, it should not be forgotten that already before this recent attempt to approach Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature*, there were other scholars who had taken it seriously. To mention a few volumes and books that deal directly with this topic: Burbidge, 1996, 2007; Cohen, Wartofsky, 1984; Findlay, 1993 (1958); Houlgate, 1998; Petry, 2002 (1970), 1987, 1993.

of reading Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature* through the still rigid Kantian dichotomy of *a priori* and *a posteriori*—a distinction that Hegel sought to overcome through speculative thought. Here, I side with those interpreters who, in my view, recognize the reciprocal relationship between *a priori* and *a posteriori* in Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature*. In my interpretation, natural categories should ultimately be understood as neither strictly derived logically *a priori* nor as fully independent from a systematic logical principle. Following especially the proposals of Brigitte Falkenburg, Cinzia Ferrini, and Sebastian Rand, I argue that these categories should be seen as *both a priori* and *a posteriori*: they are the result of the scientific laws and categories which are reconsidered and reorganized, *a posteriori*, according to the *a priori* principle of systematic unity. The paper concludes in two steps: first, by supporting my position with textual evidence from Hegel's writings on the relation between philosophy and empirical sciences; and second, by showing how this position helps to overcome the respective limitations of both strong *a priori*ism and *a posteriori*ism. Finally, I will also show how my interpretation permits to consider the Hegelian one a dynamic and complex philosophy.

***A posteriori* and *A priori* Positions**

There is a heated debate surrounding the question as to how the *Science of Logic* and its categories should be understood to relate to the successive part of Hegel's system, the *Philosophy of Nature*. In my view, this can be read not just as an ontological problem, but also as an epistemological question concerning the natural categories and the best way to study nature philosophically. In this sense, this is a debate that has consequences for how we understand the relation between philosophy – understood as the study of the necessary development of the concept – and empirical sciences – understood as the empirical study of the natural world. Stephen Houlgate underlines this epistemological problem regarding the relationship between philosophy and empirical sciences in the study of nature, referring to the two most extreme positions in this debate – which will be considered in this section of the paper:

It should be noted, however, that there is by no means universal agreement amongst Hegel scholars on the precise nature of the relation between philosophy and natural science in Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature*. Some argue that the structure or skeleton of the *Philosophy of Nature* is developed purely conceptually, but that the flesh, as it were, is derived from empirical observation and scientific experimentation and analysis. (...) Discoveries in science are thus understood and evaluated in the light of a conceptual account of nature which is developed *a priori*. Others argue, however, that scientific discoveries themselves condition, and perhaps even determine, the development of Hegel's conceptual account of nature. On this view, the procedure of Hegel's philosophy is not to map natural phenomena on to an *a priori* conceptual structure, but to provide a flexible conceptual framework which organizes in an intelligible way, and

is wholly *relative* to, the scientific knowledge of a given time, and which changes with future scientific discoveries (Houlgate, 1998, pp.xiii, xiv)

The breadth of the debate with numerous different positions is testimony to the difficulty and obscurity of these passages in Hegel. Unfortunately, there is no textual evidence proving any one interpretation, since there are many passages on the subject that lend themselves to opposing readings.² To show this uncertainty, it is enough to refer to the following passage, in which Hegel on the one hand stresses the importance of a link between empirical sciences and philosophy – the philosopher indeed considers them similar, since science is also “a *theoretical*, and indeed a *thinking* consideration of Nature” (Hegel, 2004, p.6, §246) – and then affirms their fundamental difference precisely in relation to the empirical foundation:

The relation of philosophy to the empirical sciences was discussed in the general introduction [to the *Encyclopaedia*]. Not only must philosophy be in agreement with our empirical knowledge of Nature, but the origin and formation of the Philosophy of Nature presupposes and is conditioned by empirical physics. However, the course of a science's origin and the preliminaries of its construction are one thing, while the science itself is another. In the latter, the former can no longer appear as the foundation of the science; here, the foundation must be the necessity of the Notion (Hegel, 2004, p.6, §246R)

Taking this passage alone we can discern the basis for the two principal – and radically opposite – interpretations that stand out in the contemporary debate on this topic. The first one is what Alison Stone calls “a posteriorism”, whose main representative is John Burbidge in *Real Process: How Logic and Chemistry Combine in Hegel's Philosophy of Nature* (1996).³ To analyze Burbidge's position, I will principally address to his book *Hegel's Systematic*

2 For a detailed analysis of the textual ambiguities in the *Philosophy of Nature*, see Stone, 2005, pp.2-9. J.N. Findlay also writes: “Hegel gives no wholly clear account of the precise relation between his rational physics and the flourishing empirical sciences on which it obviously depends. At times he holds that we must take the concepts hammered out in the empirical sciences, and transform them in the ‘quietude of thought’: more commonly he holds that we must first frame notions of the abstract ‘other’ of the Idea, and *then* look for empirical cases which more or less illustrate them” (Findlay, 1993, p.270).

3 In this sense, I draw on Alison Stone's reading, which highlights the distinctive character of Burbidge's position: “I have expounded Burbidge's reading of Hegel at length to see whether his work can be considered to recast weak a priorism in a tenable form. As I have explained, previous scholars—notably Petry and Buchdahl—have plausibly argued that a tenable version of the weak a priori method must investigate not which scientifically described forms are rationally necessary, but how far scientific accounts can be reorganized or reinterpreted in light of a priori logical categories. Yet Burbidge's arguments show that this reconstructive method can only accommodate the contingency and diversity of empirical findings by organizing them not through a priori logical categories but through a distinct set of “natural” categories that are a posteriori. In this way, the interpretive effort to reformulate weak a priorism has transformed it into a significantly different method, which can be called ‘a posteriorism’” (Stone, 2005, p.19).

Contingency (2007). The second position in this debate is what can be defined a “strong apriorism”, whose main supporter was, initially, Alison Stone in *Petrified Intelligence* (2005). These two positions – far from exhausting the debate on the relation between philosophy and science but rather representing its extreme limits – are in opposition with one another.⁴

On the one hand, Burbidge’s work has focused on the analysis of the role played by contingency in the Hegelian system, taking as its starting point the *Science of Logic*, in which Hegel concludes that “contingency is absolutely necessary – that unique individuals are not simply subordinated to overarching uniformity” (Burbidge, 2007, p.16). If contingency proves to be necessary, then we must try to understand the role played by it when we approach a natural and social world of which we want to gain knowledge and for which general logical laws do not seem to be exhaustive. To solve the question concerning the presence of the contingent in the world, Burbidge takes up the following categories: “firstness”, understood as the immediacy of a universal law; “secondness”, understood as the “brute facts” (Burbidge, 2007, p.50) of our experience; and “thirdness”, understood as the mediation between the first two. The moment of secondness recalls, therefore, the contingency of the brute facts, which are characterized by the element of unpredictability, by the fact that they might not be as we expect them to be.

When we try to find philosophical explanations of the world, we find ourselves faced with an essential problem: experience does not always correspond to our certain beliefs, on the contrary, being contingent and unexpected it can show how our certainties do not in fact correspond to the truth. In this way Burbidge links the necessity of the contingency declared by Hegel in the *Science of Logic* to the *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, whose purpose lies in demonstrating how true knowledge needs to face the negative power of secondness. How, then, does true knowledge take place? For Burbidge the answer lies in the concept of necessity understood speculatively, that is, in the way in which, through thirdness, we find a mediation between absolute and universal thought and the contingencies of the world. The

4 There are positions in between the two opposing ones that I am considering here, which will be touched on in the following sections. For the moment, it is necessary to highlight four innovative positions. First, the position of Edward Halper, for who the natural categories are not new logical categories, but the result of two logical categories, the absolute idea and being. In this way, “the conceptual development that constitutes the content of the absolute idea along with the simple immediate (category of) being that constitutes its form comprise together a ‘totality’ that defines the realm of nature” (Halper, 1998, p.33). Second, the position supported by Stephen Houlgate, for whom there is a distinctive logic of nature, which “is ultimately derived from the purely logical Idea, since the Idea determines itself to be nature; but it follows a course of its own that is generated by the natural-logical structure of externality” (Houlgate, 2002, p.118). See also Houlgate, 2024, p.181). Third, the position of Terry Pinkard, for whom the a priori does not stop at logical categories, but the basic objects of nature themselves “are to be established by developing them out of the concept of what is external to [logical] thought” (Pinkard, 2024, p.264). Fourth, the position of William Maker, who, sustaining the necessity of a common work of philosophy and empirical sciences, affirms that “Hegel articulates a philosophy of nature which avoids metaphysical idealism and which provides an a priori account of nature, not as it is given in all its specificity (as that must fall beyond systematic thought), but in terms of delineating and accounting for the general features of givenness as such” (Maker, 1998, pp.19-20).

latter relativize the claim of absoluteness of the former, which becomes part of a new claim, capable of containing the mediation between firstness and secondness:

Secondness or contingency is critical, then, at two stages. Initially it indicates the brute experiences that dialectically frustrate absolute claims to knowledge. But more critically, that frustration must be taken seriously as both conditioning that original claim and being conditioned by it. We need to investigate that mutual dependence if we are to understand how and why qualitatively new claims to absolute knowing emerge (Burbidge, 2007, p.54)

This general focus on the problem of contingency brings attention to that systematic part of Hegel's philosophy where unpredictability seems to have a dominant character, namely the *Philosophy of Nature*. I will therefore try to make the following connection: the natural categories, for Burbidge, are that "thirdness" which is the result of the joint work between "firstness" – i.e. the categories developed in the *Science of Logic* – and "secondness" – i.e. the brute facts of nature, to which empirical sciences try to give order. In this way, the categories of nature cannot be derived *a priori* from the *Science of Logic* and are not even a simple reformulation of them. Rather, they are a result which is dependent on the logical categories but equally distinct from them, thus giving birth to a new set of categories:

In the first place, the *Philosophy of Nature* is not simply an extension of the *Logic*. (...) When (...) Hegel appeals to the results of science, there are no derivations of these instantiations logically. They are simply introduced, and discussed in his lectures, as they have been presented by scientists. The logic of itself cannot justify the introduction of the references to water or air, to galvanism or combustion, nor even to the fact that separation relies on the various processes of combination and is not itself a distinct process. We discover in nature phenomena that fit the conceptual pattern we have in mind. The final section incorporates the results of this observation of nature into a new conceptual framework.

Yet on the other hand, the philosophy of nature does not simply describe nature in its diversity. General patterns of natural phenomena are introduced as instances of a structure that thought has previously articulated; and in the end thought reflects on the total picture and incorporates both the original general considerations and the specific results of experimental evidence into a new conceptual pattern, significantly different from what appeared in the logic, but which can set the systematic stage for the next section (Burbidge, 2007, p.116)⁵

5 See also: "In other words, for all the value of the logical analysis in providing ways of characterizing chemical phenomena, there is no one-to-one correlation. Experience alone can show what phenomena actually occur, and logic does its

On the other hand, we have Stone's form of strong *a priori*ism, which can be summarized as follows: nature and its essential forms can simply be derived *a priori* from logical thinking. Thought – through its developmental activity in which it thinks itself – is determined by logical categories derived from one another, and they are nothing more than the same basic categories of nature. Philosophy therefore already develops *a priori* the categories that characterize nature. As a result, the relationship between philosophy and empirical sciences is articulated according to a dynamic in which the philosopher must find in the empirical laws those that best fit the philosophical category of reference already developed *a priori*:

Having by *a priori* reasoning constructed a skeletal vision of nature, the philosopher subsequently asks whether any of the forms independently identified by empirical scientist “correspond to” (*entsprechen*) the forms whose existence she has ascertained rationally. (...) Only if an empirical account “accords” or “corresponds” with some element in Hegel’s preconstituted *a priori* theory of nature does that empirical account get incorporated (Stone, 2005, p.5)⁶

To defend her position, Stone had to first respond to three critiques. The first criticism of this interpretation can be made considering many passages in which Hegel stresses philosophy’s appreciation of empirical sciences. In fact, one could assume that the attention shown by Hegel towards the scientific discoveries of his time, to which he dedicates copious sections of the *Philosophy of Nature*, contradicts the idea of a construction of natural categories completely *a priori*.⁷ As Stone points out, however, the strong *a priori*ism does not imply an

best to sort that confusion of data into a coherent framework” (Burbidge, 1996, p.164); “The two disciplines, however, differ in the intermediate stage. In the logic, dialectic passes over to an antithesis or contrary in the very process of understanding its initial concept. In the philosophy of nature, in contrast, thought ‘declares itself redundant’, looks to see what in nature corresponds with its analysed starting-point and then incorporates the results of these observations into its final reflections. On my reading of the philosophy of nature, then, new experimental evidence would introduce complications into the systematic story” (Burbidge, 2006, p.182).

6 The same position is shared by Manfred Gies and Dietrich von Engelhardt: “Die Eigennotwendigkeit der Begriffsentwicklung kann sich dann nicht mehr um die bloße Erfahrung scheren, allerdings (...) müssen die verschiedenen stufen in der Entwicklung des Begriffs ihre Entsprechungen in der Empirie haben bzw. In den Begriffsbildungen der empirischen Wissenschaften. Allerdings: wenn diese Entsprechungen nicht zu finden sind, dann, so Hegel, ist dies ein Mangel der Empirie, nicht der Naturphilosophie” (Gies, 1987, p.77); “Stets wird der rahmen der empirischen Naturforschung übers-tiegen, werden metaphysische Ableitungen entwickelt oder verworfen, die sich in der Naturforschung nicht gewinnen oder nicht bestätigen lassen. Sas Verhältnis der Naturphilosophie zur Naturwissenschaft ist so grundsätzlich kompensierend-kritisch; Hallers Vorstellungen über Sensibilität und Irritabilität erscheinen bei aller empirischen Plausibilität als philosophisch noch unzulänglich (...). Naturphilosophie besitzt eine transempirischen Unabhängigkeit auch einen beispielhaften Zug; empirische Irrtümer müssen deshalb nicht ohne weiteres schon die Naturphilosophie insgesamt infragestellen” (von Engelhardt, 1987, pp.424-425).

7 This is the kind of criticism moved, for example, by Ernan McMullin, who defines the philosophy of nature characterized by this *a priori* approach as a ‘first order’ philosophy of nature (PN1), “because the warrant on which it rests purports to be a

ignorance of scientific discoveries. On the contrary, the philosopher, in the application of *a priori* structures, must always pay attention to scientific progress, to find those laws that can best fill the category of thought corresponding to them. It follows that “the extensive presence of scientific findings in the Philosophy of Nature is quite compatible with strong *a priori*ism” (Stone, 2005, p.8).

The second kind of criticism accuses strong *a priori*ism of trying to deduce purely *a priori* the existence of those same forms that scientists have already empirically found. According to this criticism, the work of the philosopher who wants to find the natural categories *a priori*, can therefore be valid only from a theoretical point of view; from a practical-applicative point of view, the philosopher cannot start the philosophical development of the natural categories without taking the same scientific discoveries as the starting point of her philosophical deduction.⁸ Stone responds to this kind of criticism by supporting the *a priori* character of natural categories, referring in particular to the Hegelian discussion about light. Stone in fact refers to a Hegelian passage in which there is no doubt that “Hegel designated himself a strong *a priori* thinker, stating unusually clearly that he is first deducing a certain natural form and then subsequently equating it with empirically described light” (Stone, 2005, p.10). Hegel therefore seems to make a clear distinction between philosophical and scientific work. First, philosophical work emerges as a research founded *a priori*, which follows the necessary development of the concept. Second, the philosopher searches in the discoveries of sciences those empirical manifestations that contain the necessary properties demonstrated *a priori* by philosophical reflection.

These reflections may be sufficient to save the *a priori* procedure from the two criticisms outlined above. However, a third issue remains to be addressed. The problem consists in the fact that this correspondence between logical category and natural laws could lead to an absolutization of scientific discoveries, which are, precisely because of their empirical nature, contingent and always subject to revisions and modifications. Stone is concerned about the possible criticism that finding a correspondence between the necessary logical development of the concept and the scientific laws could absolutize those same scientific laws. This would lead to a decidedly negative view of philosophical work, which would be highly limited and limiting, as it would be incapable of accounting for the obvious and universally accepted non-absolute structure of the sciences, which find numerous modifications

‘philosophic’ one distinct from, and prior to, that of science” (McMullin, 1969, p.33). This approach “would provide an understanding of nature prior to, and thus to some extent, at least, unaffected by, developments in science” (McMullin 1969, p.35).

8 This is a critique moved by J.N. Findlay: “Thus the abstract notion of *Ausserisichseyn*, of *partes extra partes*, finds its empirical illustration in our intuition of space, just as the equally abstract notion of an identity pervading differentials finds an empirical illustration in the magnet. If we turn, however, to Hegel’s practice, it seems plain that his notions have all been framed and moulded so as to cover empirical phenomena, that he has been trying to find ways to talk in Hegelian fashion about phenomenal features such as cohesion, light, magnetism, colour, digestion, procreation, etc., rather than to find phenomenal features which correspond to ideas independently arrived at” (Findlay, 1993, p.270).

and alterations during scientific and technological progress. However, a clear account of the character of this correspondence between conceptual structures and empirical discoveries shows this criticism to be invalid. This is because the search for a correspondence between categories developed *a priori* by thought and empirical discoveries in no way implies an absolutization of the latter. In fact, the necessity of the content is present, in this interpretation, only at the moment of the development, by philosophy, of the necessary categories of thought: beyond this moment – beyond the research that operates purely *a priori* in the field of abstract thought – one can no longer speak of necessity. Here lies the difference between philosophical science and empirical sciences, which, unlike the former, cannot be based purely on the necessity of the concept, but take the (contingency of the) empirical world as their starting point. Scientific discoveries cannot, therefore, be totally based on a logic of necessity, and, even if empirical sciences play a role in the structure of the *Philosophy of Nature* – they must correspond to logical categories – they do not play a determinative role in the philosophical construction of natural categories.

Two Problems with A posteriorism and Strong A priorism

Before presenting my view of the relationship between philosophy and empirical sciences in Hegel, I shall first demonstrate why the positions of Burbidge and Stone are, from my point of view, untenable. This is before considering the misattribution of the *a priori* and *a posteriori* terminology in Hegel, which will be the subject of the next section. First, Burbidge's reading appears problematic insofar as it seems to imply that Hegel has in fact already justified the existence of natural contingencies *a priori*. Indeed, one could say that Burbidge himself seems to go against his *a posteriori* reading: Hegelian logic seems to have already anticipated the existence of the contingency of the world, in particular the natural one, and totally *a priori*, without any reference to experience. Of course, anticipating the existence of contingency does not equate to specifying how this contingency will manifest itself, but in any case, there is a serious risk of falling back into that form of a priorism in which the natural elements simply fill in logical categories already developed *a priori* – in this case, the category of contingency.

This problem becomes clear if we consider a point raised by Raoni Padui, who argues, in the article *The Necessity of Contingency and the Powerlessness of Nature: Hegel's Two Senses of Contingency* (2010), that it is essential to outline two different characterizations of contingency in Hegel. The first sense of contingency has to do with the category analyzed in the *Science of Logic*, where it is understood as dependence and conditionality. The second sense of contingency is instead the one present in the *Philosophy of Nature*: it expresses that character of unpredictability characteristic of natural phenomena. Seeing the contingency of nature as unpredictable seems to link this contingency to one of the senses of contingency encountered in the logical category of formal possibility, i.e. contingency as lack of a 'why'. But in the absolute necessity of the *Science of Logic*, this

contingency understood as the lack of a 'why' is accepted from a universal perspective: the set of existing conditions represents an absolute which, in its unconditionality, cannot be justified by anything else. In nature, instead, we find what Padui calls a local and pre-categorical sense of contingency. The contingency, understood as the lack of a 'why' in a particular and relative sense, has not been proven in the *Science of Logic*. That of nature is therefore a sense of unpredictability and contingency in a 'pure' sense:

While Hegel may not admit of this language, it appears that there are two different types of limits for philosophy corresponding to these two senses of contingency, one set by reason itself in determining its own limits, and one set by nature's irrationality thereby limiting Reason's comprehension of natural products. Reason cannot ground the irrational in nature without undermining precisely what makes it truly irrational. So, while Hegel does *include* the category of contingency within Reason, he also must *exclude* the radical contingency of real natural objects from rational comprehension (Padui, 2010, p.250)

The problem raised by Padui is the fact that some authors have derived the justification of the existence of contingency in the natural world through logical argumentation, without making any distinction between the two senses of contingency. Paradoxically, this would in fact lead Burbidge's position to collapse back into a priorism.⁹

On the other hand, while Stone's position of strong a priorism has managed to withstand criticism, a fundamental issue remains concerning the relationship between philosophy and empirical sciences, which appears unbalanced and unsatisfactory. In response to the first criticism, Stone emphasizes how strong a priorism is not characterized by a denial of scientific discoveries, but rather by close attention to them, since it is necessary to find, in the course of scientific progress, the physical phenomenon that best corresponds to a certain conceptual category. The problem with this interpretation is that, although it recognizes some kind of value in the empirical sciences, it does not grant them equal status in relation to philosophy. Rather, it is a relation in which, clearly, philosophy dictates the rules of the game, by establishing absolute logical and natural categories: all that science can do is to try to adapt to these, making its laws fall into these fixed and absolute structures. In Stone's proposal, therefore, one cannot unfortunately find an active role on

⁹ The problem of these readings is accurately underlined by Padui: "By identifying the logical reconstruction of the category of contingency with claims about "reality generating its own irrationality" and "contingent things in the world," these commentators have simply played into the hands of those who see Hegel deducing the contingent objects of nature from Reason alone. If Hegel does not fall prey to eliding the logical category of contingency with actual manifestations of contingency in nature, then there must be two senses of contingency operative in Hegel's philosophy. The second meaning of contingency would actually be incompatible with the first and suggest that contingency in nature is not the *category* of contingency, but a *pre-categorical* sense of contingency" (Padui, 2010, p.249).

the part of the empirical sciences: certainly, the space for change and the claim of non-absolutization of scientific theories is guaranteed by Stone's project, but this is not enough to guarantee a reciprocal – we could say, dialectical – relationship between philosophy and empirical sciences.

Moreover, Stone's interpretation runs the risk of applying an anti-Hegelian division between form and matter, considering empirical discoveries as a content to fill a pre-given logical form. Also, her position considers the sciences as mere empirical studies, while it is clear that they are studies that involve a large theoretical part of conceptual consideration – something that Hegel himself argues. So, the risk is that "(i)t is the dialectic of Hegelian philosophy which takes over the scene, and the physical sciences which it reduces to mere empiricism are accorded very short shrift" (Wahsner, 1993, p.86). In other words, in the relation between philosophy and sciences, these are limited and subordinate to the work of the former.¹⁰

A Speculative Relation between *A priori* and *A posteriori*

In the articles *The Importance and Relevance of Hegel's "Philosophy of Nature"* (2007) and *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature* (2017), Sebastian Rand holds that "Hegel rejects all versions of the *a priori/a posteriori* distinction" (Rand, 2007, p.385).¹¹ Following his argumentation, I want to sustain that there is a fundamental problem regarding both Stone's and Burbidge's readings regarding the Hegelian treatment of the categories of *a priori* and *a posteriori*. In fact, both readings seem to be linked to a pre-Hegelian, Kantian consideration of these categories. In Kant, indeed, we find a clear distinction between *a priori* and *a posteriori*, as the author clearly states in the *Critique of Pure Reason*:

It is therefore at least a question which requiring closer investigation, and one not to be dismissed at first glance, whether there is any such cognition independent of all experience and even of all impressions of the senses. One calls cognitions *a priori*, and distinguishes them from empirical ones, which have their sources *a posteriori*, namely in experience (Kant, 2000, p.136)

10 For another statement of this problem, see Jürgen Habermas: "When philosophy asserts itself as authentic science, the relation of philosophy and sciences completely disappears from discussion. It is with Hegel that a fatal misunderstanding arises: the idea that the claim asserted by philosophical reason against the abstract thought of mere understanding is equivalent to the usurpation of the legitimacy of independent sciences by a philosophy claiming to retain its position as universal scientific knowledge" (Habermas, 1972, p.24).

11 "The evidence thus suggests that Hegel is not much interested in appealing to this distinction to characterize any of his own claims—either as *a priori* or *a posteriori*. If we want to understand the relation Hegel articulates between the natural sciences and his own philosophy of nature, then, we do well to put the *a priori/a posteriori* distinction aside and draw instead on other resources. Such resources are readily available; they offer both a Hegelian picture of the character of natural-scientific representations and the elements of a method for transforming these representations into properly systematic Hegelian concepts" (Rand, 2017, p.389).

Uncritically applying this Kantian distinction to Hegelian philosophy can be misleading and may be incorrect, since Hegel's position goes beyond a straightforward dualism and moves towards a speculative reconsideration of the terms *a priori* and *a posteriori*. Indeed, in Hegel the fundamental point consists in overcoming any dualistic opposition in the name of the speculative union of the two terms. This unity can be summarized by the notion of union-in-difference: in this structure, both terms maintain their own identity, but the identity of each is shown to be dependent on its essential inseparability from the other term of the couple. In other words, each term cannot be understood as a simple immediacy but as immediacy mediated by the relationship with the other. The use of the term union-in-difference serves here to underline that in Hegel the overcoming of the dualistic opposition between two terms does not imply abandoning the use of the terms themselves. The overcoming that Hegel achieves with the speculative union is therefore not an overcoming in the use of terms, but an overcoming of their rigid opposition. In this sense, the terms *a priori* and *a posteriori* can still be used, but with an awareness of their intrinsic relationality.

We must therefore try to analyze what it means to understand *a priori* and *a posteriori* according to this speculative union. According to Sebastian Rand, to do this, philosophy must be understood as *Nachdenken*, that is, as that thought which reflects on scientific laws, in order to take them and reorganize them according to a systematic conformation. The work of philosophy, therefore, consists in taking these scientific universals – which for Hegel, although rational, are still abstract universals, not connected among them in a systematic way – and organizing them according to an organic and systematic form. Philosophical thought therefore allows us to approach the realm of the natural through a different form. Indeed, the natural world, grasped through scientific laws and their universal abstracts, is not yet understood in a concrete way. If instead it is thought through philosophical thought, we can 'purify' it and observe it through the lens of the universal necessity of reason:

Hegel's method aims to give the sciences a form of generality that does not exhibit the shortcomings of abstraction, by transforming the "unconceptualized concept" of the understanding into an explicitly "conceptualized" one of reason (...). As a "*conceptualizing* consideration" of nature, the philosophy of nature deals with "the same *universals*" produced by natural science, "but *for themselves*" (...); by means of a synthetically oriented thinking-through or *Nachdenken*, rather than an abstractive *Reflektion*, it "translates the universals delivered to it ... into the concept" (Rand 2017: 391)

Philosophy, therefore, appears to be open to change, progress and scientific discoveries, since its task is not to determine *a priori* the unfolding of nature, but to organize the universals of the natural sciences (and so, to operate *a posteriori*) according to a systematic *a priori* principle. In this sense, as Cinzia Ferrini states, the task of the Idea is to arrive afterwards in a chronological

sense, in order to systematically organize natural laws. This means that, although the Idea has logical priority over the external world, it does not organize nature *a priori*:

It is worth noting, indeed, that *philosophical knowing* “starts” from the condition (*Bedingung*) of a content that does not belong to thought, but which has been already processed by the theoretical consideration of the sciences and handed on to the conceptual one of philosophy. The latter has the task to ground necessity of what actually is: the Idea is not the first in time, but philosophically-scientifically speaking (...) it “becomes” the first, from the last (Ferrini, 2002, pp-80-81)¹²

This perspective can be traced back to the position that Stone embraces in *Nature, Ethics and Gender in German Romanticism and Idealism* (2018). Stone claims that Hegel achieves a rational reconstruction of nature in the following way: we must start with the scientific laws themselves and then organize and systematize these retroactively with philosophical thought. Philosophy gives scientific laws a necessary order, in which they gain a rational relation to each other. In this way nature is organized according to a system of degrees, in which each degree resolves the tensions and contradictions present in the previous one:

Nature thus exhibits a progression in that each of its forms resolves tensions within other forms, the most advanced forms being those that maximally resolve all the preceding tensions. The philosopher does not identify these tensions and their resolutions on a purely speculative basis. He or she first examines the accounts of natural forms provided by scientists, then discerns the tensions within these forms so described, and on this basis rearranges these forms into a sequence from most to least tension ridden. By doing so, the philosopher of nature is simultaneously deriving each form from its predecessor by *a priori* reasoning (Stone, 2018, p.133)

12 Thomas R. Webb also shares a similar position: “This comprehensive grasp of nature thus involves a double mediation. First, nature is mediated by non-philosophic life, pre-eminently, though not exclusively, by the activity of the natural scientist. On the basis of observation and experiment the scientist arrives at descriptions, correlations and laws which give universal form to the diversity and complexity of the phenomena as they originally present themselves. Already here, as we have noted, there is a partial rise above contingency, namely, above that of the instances which fall under the scientist’s laws and concepts. But this rise remains partial because the content of these laws and concepts is itself contingent. Then, in a second mediation, the philosopher of nature takes up these contingent laws and descriptions and gives them an absolute form. In doing so he is guided by the knowledge that nature is a form of the Idea, but this knowledge is only an assurance which must be made good by the actual course of philosophy of nature. Philosophy of nature does not merely ‘apply’ a schema provided by the Hegelian logic. It has, rather, to *discern* the presence of the Idea in the data provided by empirical science” (Webb, 1980, p.184). Marina F. Bykova sustains something similar: “Hegel advocates for an epistemology grounded in nature, where empirical knowledge is not only possible but also essential, as it forms the basis upon which philosophy constructs its concepts and theories. (...) Therefore, the Philosophy of Nature should not be seen solely as a conceptual exercise, especially not an *a priori* one. Instead, it primarily concerns the analysis of interactive forces and actual causal relationships prevalent in nature, which are captured by these concepts” (Bykova, 2004, p.87).

In this sense, the positions examined here may appear similar to what Alison Stone, in *Petrified Intelligence*, defines as a weak *a priori*ism, according to which the task of philosophy consists in taking the forms provided by the empirical sciences and then reorganizing them rationally, translating them into logical categories. This means that authors such as Michael John Petry and Gerd Buchdahl had already grasped the dialectical character of the relationship between *a priori* and *a posteriori* in Hegelian philosophy. For Petry, logical structures provide a universal form to which the structure of nature refers. However, since logical structures are universal and abstract, they merely offer general guidelines for how nature should be studied and organized philosophically.¹³ According to Buchdahl, as Stone points out, the issue lies not so much in reorganizing the sciences, but rather in the fact that “Hegel completely reinterprets scientific concepts in light of logical categories” (Stone, 2005, p.15). For example, Buchdahl interprets the categories of repulsion and attraction in terms of the logical categories of the one and the many.¹⁴

Another, similar and more recent position is sustained by Thomas Posch, who affirms that in Hegel the skeleton of the *Philosophy of Nature* is developed conceptually in the *Science of Logic*, but without losing the attention to the borderline events of nature. This means that Hegel’s project is not entirely *a priori* and nonempirical – something that can be argue stressing two fundamental points. First, Hegel looks for a correspondence between a natural law and a logical category to give to the former a conceptual necessity. In this way, “the main point to be made about conceptual necessity is that it does not preclude reference to experience. On the contrary, conceptual necessity ‘justifies’ the content of empirical laws or observations; it is their ‘rationalization’ by means of dialectics (Posch, 2011, p.182). Second, when we deal with natural details “Hegel does not claim that philosophy should aim at deriving all of them *a priori*, that is, at proving that all natural phenomena necessarily present themselves in the way they do” (Posch, 2011, p.182). However, in the interpretations of Petry, Buchdahl, and Posch, although one can already discern a dialectic between *a priori* and *a posteriori*, this is still understood as a mirroring of natural categories in logical ones. The emphasis remains primarily on the logical categorical system and on the search for correspondence in the natural realm, albeit a freer one compared to strong *a priori*ism.

13 “The categories of the ‘Logic’ stand in relation to natural and spiritual phenomena [...]. They are an integral part of these phenomena, and yet, on account of their greater simplicity, universality or generality, and on account of the complexity relationships in which they stand to one another as categories, they have also to be regarded as constituting a distinct sphere and as demanding treatment in a distinct discipline” (Petry, 2002, p.42).

14 “In other words, attraction and repulsion must not be introjected *ab extemo*, but need to be explicated as logical aspects of the Notion involved in the very consideration of matter *qua* matter, under its aspect of the one and the many” (Buchdahl, 1984, p.25); “From the very outset, repulsion and attraction make their appearance not on account of empirical analysis, but at the logical level, as aspects or moments of being-for-self, where they are treated as purely pictorial expressions of a strictly logical process. It is only later on, when Hegel turns to the construction of matter in the *Philosophy of Nature*, that they are given any physical significance” (Buchdahl, 1993, p.67).

A position in which the relation between philosophy and empirical sciences appears even more speculative, in my view, is developed by Brigitte Falkenburg, who highlights two fundamental points. First, although there is a correspondence between logical and natural categories, this does not amount to a one-to-one map, since the natural realm always retains a degree of unpredictability and contingency. This implies that, for Falkenburg, a purely *a priori* consideration of nature is not possible. Second, she maintains that the task of philosophy is to assist physics in making the relationship between its laws conceptual — that is, necessary. In this sense, the *Philosophy of Nature* follows the structure of the *Science of Logic*, moving from conceptually poorer stages to richer and more complex ones:

The philosophical task is to help physics in organizing its concepts into an adequate phenomenological system of natural kinds. In doing so, natural philosophy is committed to *criticizing* physics whenever the preliminary concepts of that science do not denote natural kinds but unobservables, such as atoms, and whenever physics disregards the organization of concepts into an adequate structure in which no concept is universally valid. The systematic order of organizing the concepts of physics into a system of natural kinds is prescribed by the systematic order of conceptual types of structure as expounded in the *Logic*, starting from the most abstract (or structurally poor) concepts and ending up at the most complex (or structurally complete) concepts (Falkenburg, 1998, p.130)

Conclusion: Philosophy and Empirical Sciences

I have tried to show how my interpretation allows to revise the concepts of *a priori* and *a posteriori* according to the Hegelian speculative process. In this way, I managed to avoid the two problems I underlined, respectively, in strong a priorism and a posteriorism, and their generally inadequate application of a Kantian terminology to the Hegelian philosophy. In this reflection on the relationship between philosophy and empirical sciences, paragraphs 7, 9, and 12 of the Introduction to the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline* can be helpful to sustain my interpretation.

In paragraph 7, Hegel highlights how, despite beginning from an empirical standpoint, what the natural sciences “aim at and produce are *laws, general propositions, a theory*, i.e. the *thoughts* of what there is” (Hegel, 2010, p.35, §7R). This implies that a certain affinity already exists between the empirical sciences and philosophy, insofar as both aim to comprehend nature rationally. In this way, it does not seem strange at all to claim that natural categories are the result of a joint effort between these two fields of knowledge, which appear to have much more in common than they do in difference.

In paragraph 9, Hegel underlines how philosophy does not deny or disregard the empirical knowledge of the sciences, “but instead acknowledges and uses it; that it likewise

acknowledges and utilizes as its own content the universal produced by these sciences, such as their laws, genera, etc.” (Hegel, 2010, p.37, §9R). This means that, in addition to scientific categories, philosophical thinking will elaborate further categories to render everything organically and conceptually valid. In this sense, philosophy, in relation to scientific categories, “introduces into those categories others as well and validates them” (Hegel, 2010, p.37, §9R). As a result, in the relation between philosophy and science “the difference (...) concerns solely the said modification of the categories” (Hegel, 2010, p.37, §9R). This passage, then, also supports my position, since it is the joint work of philosophy and empirical sciences that gives rise to new natural categories. The empirical sciences alone are not capable of attaining the level of conceptual concreteness that philosophy makes possible, and for this reason a common work of the two is needed.

This movement is also emphasized in paragraph 12, where Hegel shows how philosophy, which initially denies the value of the empirical, is torn away from this abstraction precisely thanks to the sciences themselves. The sciences, for their part, strive to give necessary form to what is given in an immediate way. In this sense, as a result, we arrive at a philosophy that takes the determinations produced by the sciences and reorganizes them according to necessity, in line with the concept:

Such development consists on the one hand merely in taking up the content and its given determinations and at the same time bestowing upon them, on the other hand, the shape of a content that emerges purely in accordance with the necessity of the subject matter itself, i.e. a shape that emerges freely in the sense of original thinking (Hegel, 2010, p.40, §12)¹⁵

Precisely in this paragraph, Hegel mentions the *a priori* and the *a posteriori*. He first addresses the relationship between immediacy and mediation, showing how “although both moments *appear* to be distinct, *neither of them* may be absent and they form an *inseparable* combination” (Hegel, 2010, p.40, §12R). This is also valid for the relationship between *a priori* and *a posteriori*, which need to work together and operate speculatively. This is reflected in the relationship between philosophy and empirical sciences. Hegel emphasises how the claim that philosophy begins with experience implies something deeper than merely distancing itself from it in order to become formal and abstract thought. On the contrary, philosophy must begin with experience (and so, operating *a posteriori*) to elaborate it according to the *a priori* principle of freedom:

¹⁵ See also: “The Philosophy of Nature takes up the material which physics has prepared for it empirically, at the point to which physics has brought it, and reconstitutes it, so that experience is not its final warrant and base. Physics must therefore work into the hands of philosophy, in order that the latter may translate into the Notion the abstract universal transmitted to it, by showing how this universal, as an intrinsically necessary whole, proceeds from the Notion” (Hegel, 2004, p.10, §246R).

On the one hand, the empirical sciences do not stand still with the perception of the details of the appearances; instead, by thinking, they have readied this material for philosophy by discovering its universal determinations, genera, and laws. In this way, they prepare this particularized content so that it can be taken up into philosophy. On the other hand, they thus make it necessary for thinking to proceed to these concrete determinations by itself. The process of taking up this content, in which thinking sublates its mere givenness and the immediacy that still clings to it, is at the same time a process of thinking *developing* out of itself. Insofar as philosophy owes its development to the empirical sciences, it bestows upon their contents the most essential shape of the *freedom* of thought (i.e. the shape of the *a priori*) and, instead of relying on the testimony of their findings and the experienced fact, provides their contents with the *corroboration of being necessary*, such that the fact becomes the depiction and the replication of the original and completely independent activity of thinking (Hegel, 2010, p.41, §12R)

To conclude, let me clarify how the issues relating to the *a priori* and the *a posteriori* positions are resolved. First, the problem posed by strong *a priori*ism is solved, as the empirical sciences no longer have the task of simply filling in a set of logical categories already developed *a priori*. On the contrary, there is no longer a dualistic and hierarchical logic of form and content: the task of philosophy is to leave the sciences – which are already highly rational – free to develop, without getting in the way of their work with *a priori* categorizations. Second, the problem posed by *a posteriori*ism is also solved. As already underlined, we need to avoid considering the contingency of nature as already proven *a priori* in the logical treatment of necessity and contingency: rather, the contingency of nature appears distinct to the logical one, since it has to do with the unpredictability of natural phenomena. The reading supported here can guarantee this: philosophy does not try to grasp or prove *a priori* the contingency of nature – this is left to the study of the empirical sciences.

What remains to be understood is how the interpretation supported here can account for an exhaustive relationship between philosophy and empirical sciences. Hegel states that both disciplines have a commonality of nature, insofar as both deal with the process of thinking.¹⁶ Their difference lies in the fact that philosophy only has thought as an instrument, while the sciences, aiming to create universals, take the empirical fact as a basis or starting point. The form of philosophy, thus, is a form of its own, the concept.¹⁷ For Hegel,

16 In fact, Hegel himself states that the laws of the empirical sciences aim to produce “the *thoughts* of what there is” (Hegel 2010, p.35, §7R) and that physics is “a *theoretical* and indeed a *thinking* consideration of Nature” (Hegel 2004, p.6, §246).

17 “The process of thinking over that is directed towards satisfying this need is genuinely philosophical thinking, *speculative thinking*. This process of thinking things over is both the *same* as and *different* from the former process of thinking them over and, as such, it possesses in addition to the shared forms of thinking *its own peculiar forms*, of which the *concept* is the general form (Hegel, 2010, p.37, §9).

this does not mean that philosophy denies empirical discoveries: on the contrary, it is precisely from these that it starts – and so, in this way, it is *a posteriori* – and then organically organizes them into a systematic whole – thanks to an *a priori* principle of necessary unity. What does this mean? It means that philosophy succeeds, thanks to the form of the concept – which is derived from the pure thought that takes place *a priori*, without reference to experience – to do what science does only in part, that is to give organic and systematic form to nature. Philosophy, which starts from the result of empirical sciences, can give a conceptual unity to the empirical scientific laws thanks to the principle of systematic unity, based on pure thought alone.

To conclude, according to this perspective, philosophy does not play a fixed role with respect to the empirical sciences, but an active one, since this systematic union of scientific laws consists in a constant and dynamic work: every single law, we could say, “counts” and when one of these changes, then the systematic order must reorganize itself. This has an important implication for the *Philosophy of Nature*: following each new scientific discovery, it always needs to be modified and adjusted, to ensure the organic union of the laws currently valid in the scientific field. This means that the *Philosophy of Nature*, and Hegelian philosophy in general, is not a static and definitive system, but a constant work in process.

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HARALD BLUHM, *LAS FORMAS DEL SABER EN TORNO A LA COMUNICABILIDAD UNIVERSAL: APROXIMACIONES DESDE KANT Y JEAN PAUL*, VALPARAÍSO, EDICIONES UNIVERSITARIAS DE VALPARAÍSO PUCV, 2021, 508 PÁGS., ISBN: 978-956-17-0952-2

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En el marco de la Red Germano-Latinoamericana de Investigación y Doctorado en Filosofía, FILORED, fue publicada la tesis doctoral en forma de libro del Dr. phil. Harald Bluhm (PUCV/Hagen). A lo largo de sus cuatro partes, contenidas por la introducción y la conclusión, la investigación expone su tesis principal, anunciada desde el prefacio redactado por el profesor Hardy Neumann (PUCV). Se trata de la tesis de la comunicabilidad universal “como elemento indispensable del saber” (p. 15). La introducción comienza la elucidación de esta tesis mediante la definición del concepto de comunicabilidad universal como la “condición esencial de la posibilidad del saber” (p. 33), y por lo tanto como la “función transcendental” de todo juicio (p. 35). El saber viene a ser así un “fenómeno [interiormente] comunicativo” (p. 43), cuestión que constituye a su vez la comunicabilidad como tal en patrimonio universal de todo conocer (*vid.* p. 232).

A este respecto, la parte uno desarrolla los modos de relación entre las formas del saber y la comunicabilidad. Al cabo del itinerario histórico-filosófico de tales modos, la tesis de la reducción comunicacional del saber decanta en la crítica a la metafísica del saber absoluto (*cf.* p. 114 s). Dicho itinerario cumple la función de preparar la comprensión del enfoque kantiano de aquella relación. De este modo, la investigación repara el tejido de los debates que sirven de contexto a la querella entre Kant y Jean Paul. De las variantes sugeridas, el destino de la investigación dependió específicamente de la tematización del punto diez, la controversia del panteísmo, y sus consecuencias para la relación entre razón y sensibilidad. Despunta allí la primera mañana del carácter comunicativo de las formas del saber y el creer (*vid.* p. 125).

La parte dos se divide a su tiempo en tres subpartes dedicadas a Kant. La primera subparte se encarga de mostrar la presencia del objeto de estudio en la trama de la filosofía crítica. Ante todo importa retener aquí el concepto basal de las formas del saber. Estas formas van desde el saber matemático, el saber empírico, el saber estético, el saber del juicio

del gusto, el saber de lo sublime hasta llegar al saber práctico. Todas ellas llegan a ser como tales únicamente luego de acreditar su carácter de universalidad comunicable hacia un otro. Pues bien, precisamente cuando el otro es la piedra miliar, se vuelve posible en Kant llevar a cabo la superación crítica del escepticismo (*vid.* pp. 140-144).

La segunda subparte centra el foco en el concepto de Dios. La pregunta del autor se expresa aquí de la siguiente manera, “¿cómo se deja pensar algo que es desconocido y que se encuentra en el límite de algo que es para nosotros conocido?” (p. 184). A tal efecto, es formulada la respuesta de lo simbólico como única forma antropomórfica de saber celebrada por la Crítica. Incluso en su modalidad indirecta de representar a Dios, solo ella permitiría resolver el problema interpuesto por el antropomorfismo dogmático.

La tercera subparte concentra su interés en la comunicabilidad kantiana de lo bello. El juicio del gusto es, como dice el texto, “un juicio subjetivo y a la vez universalmente válido” (p. 217). Esta simultaneidad de lo subjetivo y lo universal faculta que semejante juicio sea comunicable de suyo. La comunicabilidad es con ello lo que acredita la validez universal y subjetiva de estos juicios, o, lo que es lo mismo, lo que permite comprobar la legitimidad exterior e interior del juicio del gusto. En este punto, ética y estética son exhibidas como doctrinas confluyentes del proyecto crítico de transformación de la naturaleza en libertad. Esto implica que tanto el sentimiento de lo bello como el de lo sublime, en tanto formas del saber, deben participar de lo universal. Tal formulación funda el eje de transición hacia el segundo estudio de la investigación.

Dicho segundo estudio comienza con la parte tres, dedicada a la comunicabilidad universal de las formas del saber en Jean Paul. La tesis de Harald Bluhm se adentra a explorar el concepto de la comunicabilidad en Jean Paul, a pesar de no haber registro de una explicación temática de tal concepto en su obra. Su novedad principal radica, no obstante, en la consideración manifiesta del humor como la forma de saber denominada lo “sublime invertido [...], toda vez que] destruye [...] lo finito a través del contraste con la idea” (p. 282). Veamos esto con mayor detalle.

Al humor subyace la comprensión del todo basada en la generación de un “contraste entre la finitud y la infinitud” (p. 330). Semejante comprensión surge de la visión del humor como un modo principal de la inteligencia, o, como dice Jean Paul, como el “fruto de una larga cultura de la razón” (p. 345). El humor deja al descubierto con ello el carácter constitutivo de la necedad, el error y la finitud del ser humano. En el humor, como afirma el argumento, “reconocemos la pequeñez e insignificancia de nuestra propia existencia finita” (p. 287). Gracias al humor nos es dada consecuentemente la posibilidad de hacer frente a “las incongruencias, contradicciones y torpezas del mundo” (p. 349). De ahí la seriedad de la misión del humor, a saber, la de producir “la reconciliación con la finitud de nuestra existencia” (p. 288). El humor es por lo tanto el arte serio por excelencia, en la medida en que vuelve necesario respetar la fragilidad constitutiva de lo humano. Este sentimiento de respeto, concebido como lo universalmente comunicable, es aquello que convierte ulteriormente al humor en una forma de saber.

La parte final de la exposición está consagrada a la poesía como forma de saber en Kant y Jean Paul. El arte es, en este recodo, la apertura de un camino de la vida que participa del bien. El interés en lo bueno es allí el fundamento de predisposición al interés por lo bello. En el maestro de Königsberg la poesía deviene genial, si acaso pone de manifiesto el mundo suprasensible en medio del mundo sensible. De ahí que el genio sea una creación de la naturaleza que acaba dando “reglas al arte” (p. 384). En Jean Paul, en cambio, el genio poeta revela más bien lo divino de la humanidad. De modo análogo, el genio filósofo tiene a su cargo la actividad de transferir al ser humano “una conexión con el poder creativo incierto y suprasensible” (p. 411). En ambos casos, sin embargo, la constante consiste en la facultad de dar lo suprasensible al ser sensible.

Por esta vía, la presentación se hace cargo de un problema consubstancial a las derivas del pensamiento estético contemporáneo. La premisa de la poesía como saber de lo suprasensible encuentra su fundamento en el programa jeanpauleano del “realismo de los sentimientos” (p. 444). La poesía logra exhibir lo suprasensible justamente como aquello que (nos) falta. En efecto, lo suprasensible aparece para ello figurado en el texto bajo la noción de *lo demás*. Aquí yace explícitamente el sentido de la cita escogida para guiar la investigación, “cuando hemos concluido, por qué nos gustan los poetas: entonces sabemos también lo demás (*das Übrige*)” (p. 435). En la poesía nos es dada la gracia de sentir lo suprasensible. En esto consiste exactamente la defensa de la poesía como forma de saber lo incognoscible. Se produce así la variación poética de lo indecible. Allí donde enmudece la filosofía, habla la poesía, puesto que su hablar dice, al fin, lo indecible. En esto el saber poético que defiende la tesis de Bluhm acompaña la lógica del saber humorístico como sublime invertido. Desde otro punto de apoyo, María del Rosario Acosta (2012, p. 93) ha dado a leer lo sublime en Pseudo-Longino justamente como la experiencia de la existencia indecible, en tanto lo no comunicable, y que, sin embargo, es.

En suma, con una pluma afable que reseña cada cierto trazo para quien lee los resultados de la exposición, además de un sistema bibliográfico impecable, que permite cotejar cada cita en el original, el trabajo del profesor Bluhm cumple cabalmente la exigencia definitiva del pluralismo comunicativo de la investigación filosófica. El autor ingresa cada vez a los textos hasta poner en acto la tesis principal de la comunicabilidad del conocimiento. En buenas cuentas, temo que esta seguirá siendo la discusión contemporánea por antonomasia, a saber, la movilidad del límite de la (in)comunicabilidad del (no)saber de lo suprasensible.

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