

## LIFE AND ACTUALITY: ON PLACING POSSIBILITY IN HEGEL'S MODAL METAPHYSICS

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper looks at dialectical inferences as they relate to Hegel's modal metaphysics, closely examining the Actuality section of Hegel's *Science of Logic* and positing a reading of Hegel's modal actualism that engages with two strains of secondary commentary. Responding to commentators, we make the case that Hegel's 'das Logische' avoids presupposing possibility's being prior to actuality insofar as actuality and the derivation of possibility is considered as the in-itselfness of actuality, an implicit inner moment whereby actuality further determines itself. Actuality is immediate yet derived as an identity from the logic of *inner and outer*. If actuality as immediacy is explicit/outer, then its opposition, its implicitness/innerness, has to be possibility in the logic of modality. In order to conceive of actuality *as existence*, and particularly as an emerging process, we must already conceive the problem of presupposing an alien form within the logic of actuality.

**KEYWORDS:** Transcendental Logic; Modal Logic; Science of Logic; Hegel; Kant; Actuality

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In this paper, we will first place Hegel's 'das Logische'—and, in particular, Hegel's modal metaphysics as they relate to it—as per his mature system, via exegetical discussion, situating Hegel qua Kant and Aristotle in particular. We will then, in subsequent sections, be able to move forwards by heeding these lessons and seeing what they offer insofar as recent secondary literature is concerned. We will also heed how Hegel's a priori schema of life is related to Hegel's logic of actuality.

I

As demonstrated by the Introduction of the *Logic*, Hegel takes up the

consideration of *objective thinking*, the content of pure science, wherein the *content* that corresponds to absolute truth is not external to the form. Rather, absolute truth judges objectively and determines external objectivity absolutely. Thus, the content of pure logical science takes as matter that “the form is nothing external, because this matter is rather pure thought and hence the absolute form itself.”<sup>1</sup> For Hegel change itself is the true reality of thinking in its actuality. Kant’s transcendental constructivist turn is radicalized by Hegel, for once the object is thought its content is transformed, with the thought-object’s content made distinct in and by thought.<sup>2</sup> Contra immediacy’s givenness—where a static object is reflected from the outside world and putatively reproduced as an exact mental representation in the thought-object—Hegel theorizes thought as necessarily transforming what it thinks; accordingly, truth is that which results from a fundamental alteration. Logical forms are not discrete, static entities but correspond to the continual movement of history and social reality.<sup>3</sup>

For Kant, the rules of logic derive their necessary character via their relation to the original synthetic unity of apperception—in §16 of the Transcendental Deduction, Kant remarks that “[t]he synthetic unity of apperception is therefore the highest point to which we must ascribe all use of the understanding, even the whole of logic, and conformably therewith, transcendental philosophy” (B133n).<sup>4</sup> Hegel praised Kant’s transcendental unity of apperception as the source of both the unity of intuition, i.e., the transcendental imagination, and the unity of concept, i.e., the unity of consciousness that accompanies all general concepts (or the analytic unity of apperception) as “one of the profoundest and truest insights”

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<sup>1</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic* [hereafter: *SL*], ed. and trans. George di Giovanni (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 29/21.34.

<sup>2</sup> Angelica Nuzzo, “Dialectical Reason and Necessary Conflict: Understanding and the Nature of Terror,” *Cosmos and History* vol. 3, no. 2-3 (2007): 292.

<sup>3</sup> Nuzzo thus underscores that Hegel’s logical forms “are, objectively, a historical reality—that is, a reality characterized by processuality and continuous transformation; and they are, subjectively, the functions or activities that institute our historical and social reality.” See: “Vagueness and Meaning Variance in Hegel’s Logic” in *Hegel and the Analytic Tradition*, ed. Angelica Nuzzo (New York: Continuum, 2010), 64.

<sup>4</sup> References to Kant’s texts are made by citing the volume and page numbers of the so-called “Akademie- Ausgabe” of *Kant’s gesammelte Schriften* [AA] (Berlin, Germany: De Gruyter, 1902 ff.). References to the Critique of Pure Reason use the pagination of the original first [A] and second [B] editions. Translations are taken from *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*, edited by P. Guyer and A. Wood (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1992 ff.). I occasionally modify the translations.

of the first *Critique* (*SL* 515).<sup>5</sup> However, Hegel's revision offers an a priori determination of the categories as necessary for determining any possible object, these objects grounded in the Concept (*der Begriff*). Shedding the first-person "I" behind Kant's "I think"—Kant's condition for cognition, or Transcendental Unity of Apperception, which, via the Synthetic Unity of Apperception, accompanies all representations—Hegel's objective logic opens the aperture of the cognition of thought so as to delegate considerations regarding the formal side of consciousness. Thinking, for Hegel, neither correspond to the "I think's" transcendental function nor a "psychological instance of subjectivity or consciousness."<sup>6</sup> Thus, "the finite determinateness in which that form is as 'I,' as consciousness, must be shed" and "the form, when thought out in its purity, will then have within itself the capacity to determine itself, that is to give itself a content, and to give it as a necessary content—as a system of thought-determinations" (*SL* 42). Contra Kant, Hegel theorizes the Concept as not something merely represented in thought or constructed on the basis of the reception of sense-data but an activity of self-determination immanently present to the self, wherein the subject/object ontological divide recedes.

Examining the necessary structure of thought-determinations, Hegel thereby recalls the project of Aristotle's categories, which deal with being qua thoughts about being, carrying forward a categorial investigation that could subsist independently from considerations regarding the logic of judgments and the logic of inferences. Hegel's logic, unlike Kant's preceding transcendental logic—which deals with the "isolated" occupation of thought-determinations—brings to bear a logic that "takes the place rather of the former metaphysics which was supposed to be the scientific edifice of the world as constructed by thoughts alone" (*SL* 42). For Kant, deducing the categories can solely be carried out by investigating the forms of judgments we make about the world (A79–80/B105). Indeed, Kant's categories are subjective in the first instance, for Kant had rescinded the possibility of conceiving the world in structural terms of the "in itself," therein transmogrifying the Aristotelian project of the categories by presenting thought abstracted from being and ultimately concerned with thought requisite to

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<sup>5</sup> *Science of Logic*, trans. George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> Nuzzo, "Vagueness and Meaning Variance," 63.

objective knowledge, where the latter is canalized by subject-relative appearances. Analyzing thought-determinations by tracing the conceptual structure inherent to being, Hegel's project conceives of any inquiry into judgment's conceptual form as inextricably linked to questions of a judgment's content. Hegel illuminates a structure that "would be there regardless of whether or not we were there to think about it."<sup>7</sup>

Hegel conceives of the lineage containing traditional formal logic—spanning from Aristotelian syllogistic logic to Leibniz's logical calculi—and Kant's transcendental logic to Hegel's own dialectic-speculative logic as a progression, with Hegel's system directed at the same fundamental issue(s) as those prior to him while also inaugurating a break with the logical manuals of his day. Hegel's logic, in comparison to the logic and metaphysics of his times, aims to proffer a truly scientific treatment, restoring natural life to logic. As Angelica Nuzzo notes, "as much as the overcoming of formal logic indicates the stance of leaving its abstract formality and formalism behind, it also implies a crucial inheritance that remains at the basis of such new projects [...] Hegel's logic [...] may somehow even share the notion of formality with general logic *against* Kant."<sup>8</sup> Hegel's dialectical-speculative logic, framed from its outset as a logic of transformation and process "in which contradiction plays a fundamental role in the pursuit of *truth*,"<sup>9</sup> has a shared interest in objectivity with those traditional formal logics while overcoming the fixations of the *Verstandeslogik*, i.e., "logic of the understanding" (traditional formal logic and Kant's transcendental logic) and its flaws in grasping change. Consequently, Hegel motivates the dialectical idea of contradiction against traditional and Kantian *Verstandeslogik*—as a first philosophy, Hegel's *das Logische* galvanizes the linguistic, logico-natural elements in which we already live and speak.<sup>10</sup>

Method thus takes center stage, and, in logical content and logical presentation (*Darstellung*), Hegel's dialectical-speculative method evinces that

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<sup>7</sup> Paul Redding, "Actualist versus Naturalist and Conceptual Realist Interpretations of Hegel's Metaphysics" (forthcoming).

<sup>8</sup> Nuzzo, "Method in Hegel's Dialectic-Speculative Logic" in *The Palgrave Hegel Handbook*, eds. Kenneth Westphal and Marina Bykova (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 153 [my emphasis].

<sup>9</sup> Angelica Nuzzo, *Approaching Hegel's Logic Obliquely* (Albany, SUNY Press: 2018), 30 [my emphasis].

<sup>10</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Hegel's Dialectics: Five Hermeneutical Studies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976) 78. In using "*das Logische*," I take up Nuzzo's Hegel's distinction between "logic" and "the logical."

neither content nor method can be assumed as given at the beginning of the logical science's investigation. This is enumerated by the presuppositionless opening of the *Logic*, where Hegel deals with the question of being and nothingness. Hegel argues that being is the presuppositionless and indeterminate foundation for the development of determinate meaning. Being makes indeterminacy prior to contradiction and is completely inclusive, at once all comprehensive and empty—thus it is presuppositionless: “[O]ne should say that the beginning is to be made, not with the beginning, but directly with the fact itself, well then, this subject matter is nothing else than that empty being [which] .... science ... cannot presuppose to know in advance.” (SL 53)

Consequently, being, “considered as irreducible to pure thought” and “the absolute self-relation which is also pure thought,” is *irreducible* being, a mere self-relation—it is not that thought *lacks* being but, rather, that it “lacks determination.”<sup>11</sup> On the one hand, being contains no difference, since to contain difference would mean to generate determinateness and exclusion. On the other hand, being cannot be differentiated from that which does contain difference within it. Thus, we can describe being as that which all things indiscriminately are—as their most basic qualification and that which is so full that nothing can exceed it. Hegel remarks that “that which begins already *is*, but *is* also just as much *not* yet. The opposites, being and non-being, are therefore in immediate union in it; or the beginning is their *undifferentiated unity*” (SL 51).

In turn, Hegel's conception of pure being fails to be meaningful—and, thus, is presuppositionless—since meaning requires distinction and difference. However, being vanishes (or, as Hegel puts it, has already vanished) into nothing (*Nichts*) due to its pure indeterminacy (SL 81). Being does not become nothing, it is already nothing. Becoming is the movement of thought that swings from being to nothing and from nothing to being. If becoming were the mediating term between being and nothing, then Hegel should have taken up becoming prior to his consideration of nothing and immediately after being. But, in reading Hegel's Introduction chronologically, and thus adhering to the immanent flow of his presuppositionless science, becoming comes *after* nothing, with Hegel indicating that becoming is not a mediation for or of being and nothing. Being and nothing

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<sup>11</sup> Jean Hyppolite, *Logic and Existence* (Albany, SUNY Press: 1997), 187.

prove themselves to *be* becoming, for the former lacks content and determinacy—that is, it is *indeterminate* being. It is not that the concept "nothing" is the opposite, exterior, and external contrast of being, but merely equal to it: “[n]othing is therefore the same determination or rather absence of determination, and thus altogether the same as what pure *being* is” (SL 59). Being and nothing demonstrate that they are not external to one another but “ineliminable,” and therefore “dialectically immanent,” precisely because each one “vanishes” into, and thereby “revives,” the other—as the truth (*Wahrheit*) of being and nothing themselves, “becoming” is what each logically proves to be “as their truth” (SL 80).<sup>12</sup>

How do we get the inner self-movement of content from this presuppositionless Introduction? Hegel writes:

“As yet there is nothing, and something is supposed to become. The beginning is not pure nothing but a nothing, rather, from which something is to proceed; also being, therefore, is already contained in the beginning. Therefore, the beginning contains both, being and nothing; it is the unity of being and nothing, or is non-being which is at the same time being, and being which is at the same time non-being” (SL 51).

Vis-a-vis the compound concept “becoming,” which serves as both the derivative and starting point of being and nothing, Hegel changes emphasis from the *positive* concepts being and nothing to the process of transition between the two. Being and nothing form totality through negation, where the exhaustion and completion of all determinate possibilities is the result of otherness. By containing being and nothing in their “moments,” becoming retains the distinction between the while simultaneously relating them to one another—as a unique category, becoming unites the first two, proffering a new processual cycle that commences through an internally articulated mode where what starts as the seemingly “simple” concept being, by the end of the complete work, unspools as “the Idea,” which, given its mobility, is “the adequate concept, the objectively true, or the true as such” (SL 670). Contra the “simple idea,” which is but a “subjective representation devoid of any content of reality,” the Hegelian Idea designates the rational makeup of objectivity, “for the externality has being only as determined by the concept and as taken up into its negativity” (SL 674). Reason thus

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<sup>12</sup> Stephen Houlgate, *The Opening of Hegel's Logic* (West Lafayette: Purdue, 2005), 284.

presented is couched into materiality, deracinated from any subjective faculty or anthropological determination, designating the “process by which subjectivity and objectivity, thought and worldly reality, infinitely overlap without ever being completely identical, which would be the death of all thought.”<sup>13</sup>

With immediacy as its first causality and presupposing neither its method nor concept, Hegel *Logic* must remain presuppositionless and when moving forward take only that which its previous moments internally necessitated. Hegel’s absolute method and its own inner necessity, in overcoming the modalities of skepticism via the Idea, finds its strength as a product of its necessity; the internal determinations of the method of the *Logic* being without presupposition proceed according to that which is internally necessitated. Accordingly, the *Logic* is guided by a deeper purposiveness at work, which is necessarily prior to the Idea as its logical ground—constituting itself from the very outset of the logic—and by which it allows the Idea to emerge as intensive infinite, embracing nature’s radical exteriority as the “final result and completion of its whole treatment” (SL, 31).

On the Teleology section, Hegel remarks on Kant’s conception of internal purposiveness:

“One of Kant’s greatest services to philosophy was in drawing the distinction between relative or external purposiveness and internal purposiveness; in the latter he opened up the concept of life, the idea, and with that he positively raised philosophy above the determinations of reflection and the relative world of metaphysics, something that the Critique of Reason does only imperfectly, ambiguously, and only negatively.... the opposition of teleology and mechanism is first of all the general opposition of freedom and necessity.” (SL 654)

What Kant calls “transcendental logic” is not an account of the formal rules of thinking regardless of the content—i.e., general logic—but an account of “the rules of the pure thought of an object” (A55/B80). Hegel’s overcoming of the Kantian distinction between transcendental and general logic is achieved wherein Hegel shows that there can be no coherent account of the pure forms of thought (general logic) that is not already an account of the pure forms of things (transcendental logic); consequently, Hegel links Kant’s distinction between transcendental and general logic to his subjectivism (SL 40). In the *Logic*, Hegel is not simply running transcendental logic and general logic together and

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<sup>13</sup> Jean-Francois Kervegan, *The Actual and the Rational* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 20.

attempting to derive things themselves from thought, as in the rationalist tradition—Hegel’s radicalization is of Kant’s strategy in the metaphysical deduction, whereby we do not just derive our “conceptual scheme” but the categorial form of being itself, in light of which any empirical being is in principle thinkable. Hegel’s rewriting of the metaphysical deduction is an “immanent deduction” of the concept, which provides the constitutive character of inner purposiveness for any account of self-conscious conceptual activity vis-a-vis the content and determination of the Concept, which is provided on the basis of the metaphysical deduction, i.e., via the determinate content of being itself (SL 514).

As seen above, Hegel conceives of the logical concept of life (*Lebensformtätigkeit*) as a presupposition of self-conscious cognition wherein life is a necessary condition of self-consciousness, not as a matter of empirical, causal, or natural necessity, but as a matter of a priori necessity (SL 676). Hegel’s project of the purposiveness of nature theorizes the reciprocal relation between causes and effects internal to an object, a form of self-organization distinctly characteristic of living organisms.<sup>14</sup> Consequently Hegel models his concept of spirit along internal purposiveness by identifying reason with purposive activity rather than ideas of design or intentionality (PN §245Z). Contra the teleologically-determined and instrumentally-fixed principle of external purposiveness, which is modeled on artifact creation, internal purposiveness, modeled on organic activity and form, distinguishes between the mechanical law-laden order and that which is characteristic of life but precedes normative inference: self-maintenance, self-reproduction, and the reproduction of kind. Consequently, inner purposiveness is the engine which actualizes a species-concept (*Gattung*). Insofar as Hegel’s dialectical-speculative program culls to “life” an absolute system that follows thought’s immanent and self-moving process, working against those “empty, dead forms” that speak nothing to normativity and the content of life, the immediate Idea as “life” imbues “metaphysical significance” to Hegel’s project (SL, 27). Logical forms necessary permeate our reasoning, patterning our “concrete talking with each other,” and our “understanding each other,” which are laden with “concrete integuments” such that the task of Hegel’s logic, as theory and science, is to make those unconscious, implicit, and impure uses of

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<sup>14</sup> Karen Ng, *Hegel’s Concept of Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 68.



the forms “conscious, explicit and pure.”<sup>15</sup>

## II

There are varied interpretations regarding Hegel’s idea of the necessity of contingency. Let us briefly review some of these interpretations, which will inform how existence and actuality unfold *vide actuality* when approaching Hegel’s modal metaphysics.

There are those who claim that the presupposition Hegel coheres to is internally self-referencing, whereby the opening of the *Logic* is not *entirely* presuppositionless, i.e., is partially presupposed. Dieter Henrich reasons that Hegel’s transition lies in conceptions of Essence and the Concept—for Henrich, the movement from being to nothing can take place solely if the categories and ways of being that take place in the doctrine of being presuppose difference, which is retrofitted from the doctrine of essence, and integration, *vis-à-vis* the doctrine of the concept. That negation negates itself means not only that negation requires content in order to be negation but that it is, in some fundamental sense, “autonomous.”<sup>16</sup> William Maker’s *Philosophy without Foundations* describes Hegel’s *Phenomenology* and the deduction of the Concept as a self-sublating mediation or presupposition for the *Logic*, whereby “[o]nly if the *Phenomenology* as the presupposition for the *Logic* is understood to have a radically negative outcome can we reconcile ... and also understand Hegel’s description of the *Phenomenology* as a self-sublating mediation or presupposition for science.”<sup>17</sup> Maker makes the case that the *Phenomenology* razes assumptions of consciousness and subject-object dualism, motivating the putative “transition” from being to nothing.

Others read Hegel as heralding a pre-conceived conception of becoming, citing becoming as the source of the “transition” and part of a triad, insofar as it is what results from the dual transformations of being-into-nothing (ceasing-to-be) and of nothing-into-being (coming-to-be). Becoming thus is regarded as the key in the triad and the *Logic* writ large—rather than a self-determined object that demonstrates what thought requires, this reading affirms “a Heraclitean

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<sup>15</sup> Elena Ficara, “Hegel on the Naturalness of Logic,” *Argumenta* 4, no. 2 (2019): 54.

<sup>16</sup> Dieter Henrich, “Anfang und Methode der Logik,” in *Hegel im Kontext*, ed. Dieter Henrich (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1971), 73–94.

<sup>17</sup> William Maker, *Philosophy Without Foundations* (Albany: SUNY, 1994), 76.

vision of a ceaselessly changing reality” of being that is made necessary from Parmenides’ conception of pure being, “refined” via the immediacy of being itself—determinate being is consequently considered an *examination* of what it means to become.<sup>18</sup> Yet, such a reading elides that becoming appears sequentially after the transition from being to nothing—becoming is not a mediating or antecedent term.<sup>19</sup> This reading argues that becoming relies on being and nothing as its internal source, eluding how being transitions into nothing *prior* to its subsequent transition into becoming.

On the other hand are those who argue that Hegel is misguided to remark that the *Logic* is truly presuppositionless because all movement whatsoever requires an external source or cause. Those interlocutors who look beyond the *Logic*’s internal movements include Schelling, Trendelenburg and Kierkegaard—they argue that the movement from being to nothing is artificial because it requires a presupposition in a thinking subject who does the work of moving concepts along. In charging Hegel with artificially couching a subject into the *Logic*—one who attempts to think being and who finds only empty thoughts from this intuition, and who ultimately does the work of synthesizing being and nothing into the higher concept of becoming—such interpreters claim that Hegel is wrong to assert that the opening of the *Logic* is truly presuppositionless, for this necessarily posits the external reflection of a thinking subject. Yet this interpretation similarly elides one of the *Logic*’s most important insights: the “logical character” of Hegel’s categories investigate themselves “not because of the way we think of them or experience them.”<sup>20</sup> This is precisely why Hegel presents us with an “I think” devoid of an intermediating “I.”

Houlgate’s formulation is valuable for considering Hegel’s modal metaphysics. Houlgate notes that “[t]he real beginning of Hegel’s *Logic*—that is to say, its

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<sup>18</sup> Robert Pippin, *Hegel’s Idealism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 189.

<sup>19</sup> Likewise, those interpreters who make the case that Hegel presupposes *Aufhebung* make a similar mistake, for it is not until “*Sublation of Becoming*,” where we see *Aufhebung* emerge as the opposite of nothing: “What is sublated does not thereby turn into nothing. Nothing is the *immediate*; something sublated is on the contrary something *mediated*; it is something non-existent but as a result that has proceeded from a being; it still *has in itself*, therefore, the *determination from which it derives* .... That which is sublated is thus something at the same time preserved, something that has lost its immediacy but has not come to nothing for that” (SL 81-82).

<sup>20</sup> Houlgate, *Opening*, 274.

principle or ‘supporting ground’—is thus not the concept of pure being but that of becoming (as actuality).”<sup>21</sup> In regarding pure being without internal diversity and reading Hegel without presuppositions, we—contra Schelling, Feuerbach, Gadamer, etc.—recall the immediacy of *das Logische*, insofar as language “does, indeed, enable us to bring to mind an utterly presuppositionless conception of being (and to think the purely autonomous, logical development of that conception into further categories).”<sup>22</sup> Self-critical philosophy begins by suspending all presuppositions about, and determinate conceptions of, thought and being so as to demonstrate how categories both determine their own limits and their own inadequacies, making themselves subject to autonomous, immanent critique. Speculative critique, as a process of cognition, unfurls “the activity of the forms of thinking, and the critique of them, [which] must be united within the process of cognition...forms of thinking must be considered in and for themselves” (EL 82/§4).<sup>23</sup>

We have considered the *Logic*’s opening with local and global regard as it will be critical as we proceed to actuality. Actuality *exhibits* the essential form of self-determination and is separate from mere existence. While what merely exists has the essential form of contingency and exhibits an external relation between form and content, what is actual displays a necessary connection between form and content, making what is actual grounded and rational. Actuality, for Hegel, is meant to describe the essential relation that obtains between essence and appearance in the determination of anything actual (SL 464; EL §142). In turn, the identification of something as actual indicates the presence of rational form—if form constitutes what is actual, then to understand actuality we must understand the process and activity of actualization. Hegel’s Aristotelian approach—indeed, Hegel’s conception of purposiveness is highly indebted to Aristotle’s *ἐνέργεια*—to actuality leads him to tether problems of form and activity together such that neither can be understood without reference to the other, whereby actuality represents the unity of essence and appearance, bringing us from the doctrine of essence to the doctrine of the Concept.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>23</sup> Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic, Part I of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze*, Trans. T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1991).

## III

Insofar as traditional readings of Hegel's Actuality chapter are concerned—chiefly in the works of Burbidge, di Giovanni, Henrich, and Houlgate—the conclusion argues for the necessity of contingency in Hegel's system. Recently, interlocutors such as Paul Redding, Franca D'Agostina, Elena Ficara, Gregory S. Moss, and Nahum Brown, amongst others, have taken up the question of Hegel's logic and its relationship to contemporary nontraditional logics such as alethic realism, dialethism, and para-consistent logics. Both traditions take seriously the self-reflexive and dialectical nature of thought, seeing *Aufhebung* as overcoming, maintaining, and unifying two opposites, while heralding the life that Hegel breathes into the “dead forms” that preceded him, regarding *das Logische* as motivated by the genuine form of truth that the Concept prods. Despite sundry positions, with the latter group it is Hegel's engagement with Aristotle's Principle of Non-Contradiction that takes center stage. Due to the limited space of this article, we will hone in on Brown's reading, offer a critique that heralds the lessons of the traditional reading, and ultimately gesture towards a corrective that, in the spirit of Hegel's *Aufhebung*, overcomes, maintains, and unifies the best of both. Brown's thought is interesting as he argues that the process of dialectical thinking amounts to thinking the genuine existence of contradiction. For Brown, it is thought that actualizes both (the negative and positive) sides of possibility at once, raising the status of unactualized possibility to the status of actuality.

Insofar as Hegel's immanent deduction of the Concept as presented in the transition from the Doctrine of Essence to the Doctrine of the Concept is concerned, the Actuality chapter draws forth the necessity of contingency and can be read within a framework of modal actuality—this immanent deduction brings forth the constitutive character of inner purposiveness for *any* account of self-conscious conceptual activity whereby determinations of thinking have the power to determine actuality, but within the register of form. That is, one might read the Actuality chapter as drawing forth the immanent transformation from substance to subject, and from necessity to freedom and self-determination. Rather than commit to the immanent totality of the possible where thought actualizes mere possibilities, actuality's determining itself through negativity engages with a transformation that takes place by means of an investigation into the concept of actuality, where the process of actualization is conceived of in

terms of *self-actualization*.<sup>24</sup>

In understanding the activity of form in terms of purposiveness, the genesis of the Concept arises from and is an actualization of purposive activity, demonstrating the reciprocity and speculative identity between life and the self-conscious Concept. Hegel's Concept thus continues to develop and transform Kant's purposiveness thesis by introducing a distinctive notion of actuality (*Wirklichkeit*), which finds its most complete treatment in the transition from Objective to Subjective Logic. Key to this transition is the "activity of form" (*Formtätigkeit*), which prompts the genesis of the Concept—the activity of form is Hegel's take on the purposiveness of form. Notably, Hegel develops this by critically engaging with Spinoza's infinite, self-causing, and necessary absolute substance—which constitutes the essence and existence of all reality. Here we have Hegel's substance-as-reflection, or reflection-as-substance, where freedom of the self-developing Concept results from the reflection of necessity *as it is thought*—this is manifest in Hegel's conception of reciprocity/reciprocal action (*Wechselwirkung*). Perhaps most critical is Hegel's engagement with Aristotle's conception of actuality. Pace Aristotle's modal priority, potentiality and actuality exist via the same plane but are distinguished in regards to priority—this is a consequence of Aristotle grounding Plato's *eidos* and collapsing the two-world model into a one-world model, Plato's forms now essences of scientific investigation. Hegel's critical engagements proffer actuality as activity and movement, and the priority of modes over substance; a constitutive alternative to Kant's idea of a natural purpose (*Naturzweck*), the purposiveness of the Concept reflects self-organizing form, unifying the three moments of Hegel's Concept (universality, particularity, individuality). Consequently, the process of actualization can be understood as being a cause and effect of itself, displaying the activity and unity of self-determination. Combining causal necessity with the logical independence of cause and effect, Hegel presents causality as a relation or proportion (*Verhältnis*) that maps logically independent substances within a world-order.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ng, *Concept of Life*, 127.

<sup>25</sup> Terry Pinkard describes the self-positing system wherein self-reflexivity depends on referring to categories other than itself, and thus universal transpire as categories of conceptual thought. *Hegel's Dialectic* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), 77—78.

In considering being as all that is, existence is distinct from its essence—the “actual,” as Burbidge describes it vis-à-vis considerations on reflection, “includes the sense that its essence has been actualized,” wherein this essence is now deemed “possibility.”<sup>26</sup> When considered by itself, an isolated condition or possibility cannot produce a concrete actual but must be combined, becoming *really* possible—once this happens, the actual *must* become actual and cannot persist as possibility. Relative to these particular conditions, the actual has become necessary, a relative necessity, contingent on the peculiar circumstances of a distinctive situation. It follows that the absolutely actual is the total interplay of real actualities and real possibilities, which are taken as components of a whole. Taken under reflection, the self-constituting dynamic mode that characterizes the actual, which determines itself, unfolds as “absolutely necessary,” i.e., “its own ground.”<sup>27</sup> Reflecting on this reflection, however, we see that the realm of the accident inheres in substance—the power of this movement, revealed in this dynamic flux between absolute necessity and accidentality, is due to how substance “can only be substance to the extent that it does acquire the *form* of accidentality.”<sup>28</sup> Accidents disappear and are replaced by others, as substance obtains by acquiring the *form* of accidentality, with reciprocal interaction between causes and events pushing along existence and appearance in actuality, just as being and nothing interacted in the process of becoming:

“The actual is what realizes its essence, having transcended the distinction between the essential and the inessential, between essence and existence, between appearance and the thing in itself. Now the actual has turned out to be a dynamic of mutual interaction in which each of its moments is both active and passive with respect to each other moment. And that reciprocity binds the whole together into a distinctive unity.”<sup>29</sup>

There are three moments comprising actuality: i) formal modality, or contingency; ii) real modality, or relative necessity; iii) and absolute necessity (SL 478).<sup>30</sup> Insofar as the result of modal actuality is concerned, absolute necessity, as

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<sup>26</sup> John Burbidge, *The Logic of Hegel's Logic* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2006), 76.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 77 [emphasis added].

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>30</sup> “Actuality, as itself immediate form-unity of inner and outer, is thus in the determination of immediacy as against the determination of immanent reflection; or it is an actuality as against a possibility.

the transparency of being-to-itself, reveals being as absolute contradiction with itself without invalidating the prior two moments—of formal modality, “dominated by contingency”; and of real modality, “dominated by relative necessity”—but, instead, subsuming them in revealing their truth.<sup>31</sup> Relative necessity, which displays itself in “real” actuality, possibility, and necessity, reflects the “stable-instability,” or “unstable-stability,” of a being that presents itself insofar as it is taken up by the critical activity in which it is thought. Contingency is constitutive of the process of actualization but real modality extinguishes what formal modality can not—“the complete determination of possibility and actuality in accordance with sheer chance.”<sup>32</sup> Longuenesse describes the processual relation of the possible to the actual, delineating the unity of some “thing and its conditions as the fundamental structure in which all things are thought” while warning against any temporal conceptualization.<sup>33</sup>

“In the back-and-forth movement between actuality and possibility, what we have is not the mere flip-flop between determinate existence and formal ground, but a dissection and reconstitution of the object. Possibility is nothing other than actuality itself, dissociated into its elements, the ‘manifold of determinate being,’ and actuality is nothing other than possibility returned to determinate unity.”<sup>34</sup>

Transitioning from the moments of *formal modality* into *real modality* (real actuality, possibility, necessity) we see that, in order to be considered actual, the Concept for Hegel need not depend on intuitions given external to thought. Hegel does not dismiss the empirical element and lapse into rationalist thought either, however, as he underscores that real actuality is actuality that “has a *content*,” and is “the thing of many properties, the concretely existing world ... an in-itself and immanent reflection ... its externality is an inner relating only to

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The connection of the two to each other is the third, the actual determined both as being reflected into itself and as this being immediately existing. This third is necessity. But first, since the actual and the possible are formal distinctions, their connection is likewise only formal, and consists only in this, that the one just like the other is a positedness, or in contingency. Second, because in contingency the actual as well as the possible are a positedness, because they have retained their determination, real actuality now arises, and with it also real possibility and relative necessity. Third, the reflection of relative necessity into itself yields absolute necessity, which is absolute possibility and actuality.” (SL 478)

<sup>31</sup> Béatrice Longuenesse, “Actuality in Hegel's Logic,” *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 13, no. 1 (1998): 121.

<sup>32</sup> Ng, *Life*, 162.

<sup>33</sup> Longuenesse, *Hegel's Critique of Metaphysics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 137.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

itself” (SL 482). The empirical, taken up by reflection without remainder, is always *determined* by thought but *committed* to concrete empirical existence. Real possibility, consequently, presents the totality of actual circumstances and actual conditions which bring about some event or thing, such that one may only look towards actuality in order to find real possibility. For Hegel, it is only once all the conditions of something are completely manifest/present that it proceeds into actuality (SL 483). Hegel states that “[w]hat is actual *can act*” (SL 482). Formal actuality is immediate, unreflected actuality, which *cannot act* because its determinations determine things as solely possible, and thus tethered to the realm of contingency. Real actuality expresses the thing it-self as thought (*Sache selbst*), as existence that is reflected—the unity of the inner and outer—i.e., existence that *can act* because its relationship(s) with other things have the status of concrete thought-determinations, these relationships determined as actual by thought. Real actuality contains the empirical as a moment within itself, it is empirical existence as reflected existence where the empirical and reflected are brought together.

Insofar as conditions, i.e., conditioned ground, plays a role, it is one wherein the conditions correspond to completeness:

“the completeness of the conditions is the totality as in the content, and the fact is itself this content determined as being equally actual as possible. In the sphere of the conditioned ground, the conditions have the form (that is, the ground or the reflection that stands on its own) outside them, and it is this form that makes them moments of the fact and elicits concrete existence in them . . . immediate actuality is not determined to be condition by virtue of a presupposing reflection, but the supposition is rather that the immediate actuality is itself the possibility” (SL 483).

Similarly, in the *Encyclopedia*, Hegel notes that: “[w]hen all conditions are present, the matter must become actual” (E §147). Given a certain set of conditions, a certain actuality necessarily follows—real possibility is *already* real necessity, for the totality of conditions is identical with realized actuality. Hegel heeds the role of contingency in the determination of the actual. Necessity as such remains, “[f]or it has a presupposition from which it begins; it takes its start from the contingent” (SL 549).

Per Hegel’s modal metaphysics, actuality generates a concept of identity from recognition that the negativity of essence is at the same time the being of essence. Essence (*Wesen*) is an identity-relation; as that which being is not, essence reveals



what being is via apophatic alterity. This movement against being takes the form of ‘A is A’—the immediacy of being is reflected into itself.

Following Brown’s formulation, a subject is only understood to be identical with itself if it posits difference alongside the identity of itself in the predicate position. ‘A’ is equal to itself ( $A=A$ ) because it does not require anything other than itself—yet the form that ‘A’ must take as the confirmation of its own identity requires reflection, which necessitates absolute difference. Thus, identity self-subsists but also depends on its own negativity. Difference is more comprehensive than identity because it contains the form of identity and the identity of the negation.

Hegel’s Actuality offers that possibility is as much about non-actuality as it is about actuality. Contra the dominant aforementioned readings, Brown notes that, “[i]f Hegel means that contingency is only one of many necessary concepts, necessity turns out to be more primary than contingency, in the sense that all concepts are of necessity and come from necessary developments. In contrast to necessity, contingency plays only a marginal role as merely one of these necessary concepts.”<sup>35</sup> Brown presents his account as “robustly dialectical,” designating it the “Dialectical Totality Interpretation,” which extols the mutually transitive aspect of necessity and contingency. Seeing his framework as a kindred spirit to the good infinite, Brown’s Dialectical Totality affirms contradiction as the most inclusive relation possible, reifying what Hegel terms the “true infinite”—the “self-sublation of this infinite and of the finite in one process” (SL 109), i.e., the process in which the finite passes turns into its other. As the true infinite starts from the self-sublating finite, therein starting from itself, its power is manifest from “sustaining contingent finitude above and despite its possible non-being.”<sup>36</sup> Here we are reminded of Hegel’s presuppositionless opening, as this formulation heralds how being and nothing form totality through negation, where the exhaustion and completion of all determinate possibilities is the result of alterity. The question thus becomes how to conceive of finitude/the limit along a modal register—Brown takes this up, noting that “[t]he reason why the good infinite is truly limitless is not because it succeeds at divorcing itself from the finite, but

<sup>35</sup> Nahum Brown, *Hegel’s Actuality Chapter of the Science of Logic* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2019), 79.

<sup>36</sup> Robert Williams, “Hegel’s Recasting of the Theological Proofs” in *The Palgrave Hegel Handbook*, ed. Kenneth Westphal and Marina Bykova (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2020), 360.

because by including the genuinely finite, there is no other position that could possibly stand against it in exterior contrast [...] it includes the finite as an exterior which is and is not an exterior."<sup>37</sup> This conception of Dialectical Totality affirms that, since contradiction always includes the other, to be other than the relation that includes the positive and negative together is already included within it.

Brown argues that when we talk about the necessity of contingency, we should also discuss the contingency of necessity favoring possibility and, accordingly, emphasizes the mutually transitive aspect of necessity and contingency. Brown believes that the traditional reading overemphasizes the necessity of contingency and, by this, the traditional reading comes is ignorant to the mutual transitional movement from contingency to necessity and vice versa, because the traditional reading prioritizes necessity and reads contingency as one of the other necessary concepts of the *Logic*. Brown argues that recognizing the mutual transition complements the incomplete argument of these traditional readings by adding that not only is contingency necessary in Hegel's system, but also *necessity is contingent*. For Brown, such a robust dialectic between contingency and necessity completes the conclusions given in the traditional readings.

Brown's intervention finds its culmination in a two-fold conception of possibility: *a positive side*, where that which is possible can become actual; *a negative side*, where something can remain merely possible as the possibility *not to be*. Brown argues that "the negative side of possibility—that what is possible can also *not be*—plays a significant role in Hegel's modal argument" and "[t]he actualization of possibility leads to a productive contradiction" for, since this contradiction cannot be sustained, Hegel's modal reality takes on a developmental structure in which actuality expands to include the concrete existence of the totality of possibility.<sup>38</sup> The argument that "actuality expands to include the totality of possibility" is, for Brown, the grounding for a one-world vision of modality.<sup>39</sup> This implicitly call to mind an alternate to David Lewis' modal realism, according to which the world we are part of is but one of a plurality of (possible) worlds, with each world actual to itself and merely possible to all other worlds, such that

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<sup>37</sup> Brown, *Actuality*, 69.

<sup>38</sup> Brown, *Hegel on Possibility*, 105.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

actuality is relative. Grafting the instrumentalization of facts and laws into our world, Brown's tripartite model illustrates how thought *attempts* to realize the actuality of the possible:

- 1) Formal contingency—actuality includes its opposite through the strategy of indifference; this is the negative side of possibility, the “what could have been.”<sup>40</sup>
- 2) Real or conditional actualization—actuality eventually realizes itself by making use of conditions, which are both actuality and possibility at the same time; due to the law of non-contradiction, actualization is unable to sustain both contraries of possibility, and, “[b]ecause what is actual is possible, actuality cannot only be one side or the other of the possible, but must come to form itself as the totality of possibility.”<sup>41</sup>
- 3) Absolute actuality—explores the modal ramifications of substance, which is simultaneously actuality and possibility, or substance as an actuality that is explicitly both sides of possibility together, i.e., both this *particular* and its *universal* instantiation. This is related to Hegel's relation of substantiality, the relation of absolute conversion between actuality and possibility as “actuality” (*Actuosität*). What is actualized “is the absolute conversion of actuality and possibility into each other, an actuality that completely sustains itself in possibility [...] but only by becoming the other of itself.”<sup>42</sup>

All three models fail to completely present an actuality of the possible itself but succeed in partially expressing the inherent contradictions riddling modal reality. For Brown, Hegel's groundbreaking and controversial conclusion about modality is that actuality must be able to express both sides of possibility at once ( $A \wedge \neg A$ ). Despite the actuality of both sides of possibility leads to an unresolvable modal paradox at first glance, the conflicting sides of possibility stand together through the division of *what is* and *what could have been*.

Formal actuality is the starting point of modal reality in analogous fashion to how *being* is the presuppositionless and indeterminate foundation for the development of determinate meaning. Reality here requires the existence of unactualized possibilities as part of the constitution of what makes it true

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 129.

(actuality), but it is thought-determination that does the heavy metaphysical lifting. For Brown, possibility functions as the reflection of actuality itself. Brown's Hegel here recalls Aristotle's book *Theta* of the *Metaphysics*, where actuality is conceptually prior and more primary than the possible. Beginning his modal analysis with actuality, Brown sees possibility as the *in-itself* and the reflection of actuality.

Brown implicitly theorizes actualization out of possibilities—this reading emphasizes *possibility over actuality*, a position that Hegel simply cannot hold because actuality is always prior to possibility and possibilities are but moments in actuality. The priority of actuality over possibility, when taken not only as an argumentative aspect of Hegel's text but also as the metaphysical makeup of actuality, prohibits the idea of actualization out of possibilities. If actuality emerges out of possibilities, the actual had to presuppose its possibilities, i.e. possibilities had to be prior to actuality. This does not fit Hegel's position. Even (charitably) reading Brown's interpretation of actualization as producing a modal version of Hegel's arguments for real actuality, this would still not amount to actualization out of possibilities. Real actuality emerges from conditions, which are themselves actuals but recognized by the conditioned actual as *its own* possibilities.

Brown outlines a notion of possibility as a degree of quantity: "possibilities are at first dispersed in others and are actualized through conditions."<sup>43</sup> This presentation of Hegel's modal priority offers a dialectical co-primacy between actuality and possibility, where both are in different respects prior to the other.<sup>44</sup> Moving from thought to substance, Brown takes Hegel's conception of substance as an actuality that explicitly assumes both sides of possibility—e.g., both *this* particular rose and the *universal instantiation* of 'rose.' It follows, interpreting Brown, that possibilities necessarily exist as part of substance but, because of the movement inherent to inclusive necessity with the concrete universal, Hegel's notion of unactualized possibility is not relegated to some static category but mobile, wherein actuality and possibility become unified.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 166.

<sup>44</sup> Traditional, non-dialectical accounts of modality (e.g., Leibniz' logical conception of the nature of substance) avoid this contradiction by lowering the ontological status of unactualized possibility to non-actuality while categorically separating actuality and possibility from each other.

The traditional reading of Hegel's dialectic between absolute necessity and contingency affirms that Hegel ultimately recognizes the concept of contingency as a necessary element of his system. Brown pushes for a more radical conclusion that draws from the being-to-nothingness transition to contradiction and from this to Hegel's modal argument. For Brown, Hegel's absolute necessity proposes a reasoning of why things cannot be otherwise, because everything has already been included in absolute contingency: the inclusive nature of contradiction is captured in the modal theory of the Actuality chapter wherein to include the negative ( $\neg A$ ) alongside the positive ( $A$ ) is of absolute necessity because 'A is non-A' anticipates every possible permutation in every which way of 'A.'

Brown's program is emblematic of the error that accompanies conflating Hegel's account as conclusively Aristotelian. This results in a confusion regarding the relation of actuality to possibility. How could it be the case that thought actualizes possibilities if actuality is prior to possibility? Such a reading trades on a fallacy of equivocation—to actualize possibilities inevitably presupposes the prior presence of possibility to actuality. That is, there must be at least a possibility before being actual that thought actualizes it. Brown's program indeed belongs to Aristotle. For Aristotle, actuality is prior to potentialities yet Aristotle also argues that actuality is always actualized potentialities.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, insofar as Hegel's modal treatment (formal, real, absolute) is concerned, he consistently argues for the priority of actuality over possibility. Consequently, Hegel does not use the term "actualization" and "actualization of possibility," because there is no such thing for Hegel. Actuality simply determines itself *through* its negativity (i.e., possibility) and this is the self-determining "life-blood" from which its movement unspools.

Hegel's logic avoids presupposing possibility's being prior to actuality insofar as actuality and the derivation of possibility is considered as the in-itselfness of actuality, an implicit inner moment whereby actuality further determines itself. Actuality is immediate yet derived as an identity from the logic of *inner and outer* (SL 464). If actuality as immediacy is explicit/outer, then its opposition, its implicitness/innerness, has to be possibility in the logic of modality. In order to

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<sup>45</sup> Giorgio Agamben is one of the philosophers who identifies this as an ambiguity, yet a productive one. *Homo Sacer*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 42.

conceive of actuality *as existence*, and particularly as an emerging process, we must already conceive the problem of presupposing an alien form within the logic of actuality.

Remarking on the distinction between actuality and existence clarified at the beginning of the section, Hegel, in the *Zusatz* to §6 of the “Introduction” of the *Encyclopedia Logic* remarks: “I dealt with actuality too in a quite elaborate Logic, and I distinguished it . . . from being-there [*Dasein*], from existence, and from other determinations.” Actuality, by virtue of containing in-itselfness and reflection-within-itself, is not existence as such; this “containing” allows an actual to be self-subsistent. As enumerated in the logic of existence, an existent thing subsists solely in its properties. This produces a conceptual difference between actuality and existence. What Brown eludes is that the actual operates as a possible in another actual insofar as an actual can only be possible in relation to another actual—the actual thereby plays a constitutive role in the emergence of another actual; “[t]his actuality, therefore, which constitutes the possibility of a fact, is not its own possibility but the in-itself of an other actual” (SL 483). The relation of actuals formulate a conditioning relation where the possibilities of an actual are taken as the conditions out of which the actual comes to be.

In short, *the actual actualizes itself*.<sup>46</sup> That is, the only thing an actual does is to manifest itself. Its manifestation is its actualization, for it “just manifests itself, and this means that in its externality, and only in it, it is itself, that is to say, only as a self-differentiating and self-determining movement” (SL 478). There is but a fine line between absolute possibility and formal possibility—Brown's conception risks collapsing absolute possibility with formal possibility (the possibility of A and non-A). Absolute possibility for Hegel is the emptiness in the determinations of absolute actuality, and not only the possibility of  $A \wedge \neg A$ . Hegel remarks that “[t]his emptiness of its determination makes it into a mere possibility, one which can just as well be an other and is determined as possibility” (SL 486). Although this evokes the thought that formal possibility is the possibility of A and  $\neg A$ , Hegel further notes: “[b]ut this possibility is itself absolute possibility, for it is precisely the possibility of being equally determined as possibility and actuality” (ibid). It

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<sup>46</sup> This may sound like a tautology but, for Hegel, there exists no such thought as there does in Leibniz, where possibilities are concealed potentialities of the actuals and the inner is the necessary ground of the outer, i.e., of all external relations.

is here that Hegel differentiates formal possibility from absolute possibility, for formal possibility ( $A \wedge \neg A$ ) is *not* an actuality.

Hegel further remarks that “[i]t is necessity itself, therefore, that determines itself as contingency: in its being it repels itself from itself, in this very repelling has only returned to itself, and in this turning back which is its being has repelled itself from itself” (SL 487). Here, it is explicit that absolute possibility is that which *mediates* absolute actuality and makes it contingency. That is, absolute possibility turns immediacy (absolute actuality) into a positedness of the immediacy (actuality) and in-itselfness (possibility), or into *contingency*. This occurs precisely in the same way that necessity turns immediacy into a positedness, the positedness of immediacy (actuality) and in-itselfness (possibility). What makes something absolutely necessary is not only its inclusive nature of  $A$  and  $\neg A$  but its mediating force, which makes actuality explicit as the unity of itself and possibility or contingency. Consequently, Hegel claims that absolute necessity determines itself as contingency, for it operates over actuality precisely as contingency does. Nonetheless, formal possibility *is not* necessity and it cannot even transition into necessity—for it is but so radically indeterminate that it is itself indifferent to the distinction between  $A$  and  $\neg A$ . Indeed, contingency accounts for their difference and to necessity accounts for their identity.

This is precisely why, unlike contingency and necessity, absolute necessity “barely leaves any independent meaning to the determinations of actuality and possibility.”<sup>47</sup> The concept of absolute necessity reflects the thing itself, completely described under the unity of its determinations—i.e., *real wirklich*, the unity of a totality of determinations—and the unity of its own conditions, which is, at once, also constituted by the unity of conditions. Absolute necessity absorbs itself in the previous categories of contingency and necessity and its prior modes of modal reflection—actuality and possibility—caught in its process of “tarrying.” The contingency that real necessity contains “in itself” is that of immediate existence, of conditions. That which becomes in it is that of the *unity of conditions*, or absolute actuality. Indeed, these two contingencies are actually one, as they reflect the dependence of reflection with respect to a presupposition/exteriority. The diametric opposition of formal actuality and possibility break down in the

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<sup>47</sup> Longuenesse, *Hegel's Critique*, 148.

determination of the contingent, as actuality and possibility become equipollent: the actual determining the range of the possible such that what is actual is possible and what is possible is the actual.

Dialectical inferences are distinct from paradoxical deductions and being and nothing, which pass into each other, are not the true Concept/the Idea—the true Concept, i.e., the truth about being and nothing, is becoming, which is the *movement* between the two and their unity, and is distinct from them. Insofar as absolute actuality deals with embedded conditions, we must take into account that “the many is not many, it is one” and that the concept of the many “*turns round into*” the concept of the one, “being into non-being”, “identity into non-identity” such that what is true must always take into consideration the simultaneous reciprocal—what Ficara terms, the “turning round into each other” of contradictory conceptual determinations.<sup>48</sup> Real actuality is the determination of the real *as thought*, of the real as reflected existence—the empirical and the reflected are no longer held in isolation. More broadly, given Hegel’s view on life as an a priori schema, this picture of actuality corresponds to how cognitive capacities are fundamentally shaped by corporeal reality and the relation to the environment actualized in particular species.

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<sup>48</sup> Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy vol. 2*, trans. E.S. Haldane and Frances Simson (London: Kegan Paul), 59-60. Ficara emphasizes that contradictory conceptual determinations can be seen as figures of the biconditional, such that what is true is not A or  $\neg A$ , but only  $A \leftrightarrow \neg A$ . “Hegel and the Consequentia Mirabilis,” *History and Philosophy of Logic* 39, no. 4 (2018): 360.



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