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§1. Thinking as a *locus communis* between Kant and Hegel (and Aristotle)

Even before *Thinking and the I*,[39] Alfredo Ferrarin has been well-known for producing a very impressive line of comparative philosophical investigations that combine both illuminating conceptual analyses with comprehensive textual and historical–contextual scholarship. Two works of special relevance for the current book deserve to be mentioned, works that both embody these virtues to a very high degree: his excellent 2001 study of the Aristotelian roots of Hegel's conception of philosophy and of spirit (*Hegel and Aristotle*, itself the results of more than a decade of research, stemming back from Ferrarin's dissertation in Pisa in 1990), and his more recent 2015 synoptic study of Kant's "critical" conception of philosophy and of reason (*The Powers of Pure Reason*).

In the book we are discussing today (an expanded re-elaboration of a book Ferrarin published in Italian in 2016), Ferrarin builds upon the results of these works and others to organize a conversation between Kant and Hegel on the topic of thinking, and especially its relationship to "the I." That the topic of thinking is of central interest and importance for both philosophers can be seen from the placement of their accounts of thinking within the context of their "logics," understood as a science of thinking: for Kant, a "logic" constitutes what is by far the majority of his *Critique of Pure Reason*; for Hegel, the Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences begins with, and is guided throughout by, the "science of logic" as the first of such sciences. And at least in Kant's hands, there also can seem to be an essential or internal link between thinking and "the I," insofar as a central discussion at the outset of his logic seems to provide an analysis of thinking in general in terms of various conditions for the possibility of "the I think" being able to "accompany" representations in a soul—and thereby might seem to have "the I" itself function as a part of a principle or condition for cognition more generally. In Hegel's own "logic," however, it is altogether less clear what role, if any, the I is supposed to play in specifying the essence of thinking itself. In the *Encyclopedia Logic*, for example, "I" is not an element

[39] Northwestern 2019; unless otherwise marked, all citations will be to this work.

("thought-determination") developed in any of the main paragraphs (as opposed to being, essence, etc.). Rather, the I does not show up officially in the *Encyclopedia* until much later, in the section on "consciousness" in the *Philosophy of Spirit*. Moreover, as Ferrarin's book very nicely brings out (especially in chapter 1), the I turns out, for Hegel, to be something *conditioned* in important respects—more specifically, the I is an achievement or a result of various pre- or un-conscious activities (as partially anticipated by Fichte and Schelling before him). Given the place of the *Logic* in the system, by contrast, thinking would seem to have a better claim to be unconditioned, something "absolute," or perhaps simply to be "the Absolute" itself.

For these reasons, Ferrarin's efforts to choreograph a conversation between Kant and Hegel on thinking and the I have the promise of allowing us insight, first, into how radically Hegel might mean to revise the Kantian understanding of thinking and logic as foundational "elements" in any science of philosophy. Secondly, the book promises at the same time to help clarify "how radically Hegel critiques the ordinary view of thinking that reduces thought to a property of an I" (4), insofar as Kant's views might seem to be paradigmatic for a tradition common throughout modern philosophy and beyond.

Now, one of the many interesting threads of Ferrarin's book (and one taken up in the previous work as well) is a running exploration of whether Kant himself actually does hold a view of thinking according to which it is ultimately interdependent with the I, *or* whether, if we were to take a closer look at Kant's views of *reason* in particular, we might find a conception of thinking that would take us well beyond what might have been surmised from any focus limited, however intensively, only on Kant's dense though ultimately very brief, and relatively quite early, remarks concerning "the I think," apperception, and the understanding. I can only applaud wholeheartedly Ferrarin's consistent championing (and masterful executing) of the hermeneutical principle—which one could be forgiven for thinking was actually fairly infrequently followed by commentators, in the case of both Kant and Hegel—of reading all the way to the end of major works of philosophy, before attempting to render one's interpretive analysis of any given topic or theme. Why one would ever hope to be able to provide an adequate account of thinking in Kant based almost solely on a single 30-page stretch of remarks from the first 200 pages of an 800 page book is not easy to comprehend. Nor is the outsized attention that is typically given in studies of Kant to the contents of these first 200 pages

(the Transcendental Deduction, the account of the possibility (and principle) of experience, etc.), in light of the basic facts that the book is centrally about reason, and that reason itself is not taken up in any substantive way until around page 300 (A293/B359). We have many reasons, then, to be very grateful as well for Ferrarin's insistence that we make a concerted attempt to push back against the tendency in many recent interpretations to diminish what Ferrarin calls (with tongue-in-cheek) the more "esoteric" aspects of Kant's views, especially about reason, that one finds Kant occupied with in the last three-fourths(!) of the *Critique*.[40]

Since Rosefeldt's remarks are to focus on Ferrarin's treatment of Kant, I will unfortunately have to leave Ferrarin's rich and illuminating discussions of Kant on thinking, its power, and its spontaneity almost entirely to one side. My own focus will be almost exclusively on the positive picture of thinking, and its relation to the I, that Ferrarin develops on behalf of Hegel, and my primary aim will be to invite Ferrarin to clarify several points about Hegel's views that I think the book leaves underdeveloped. I will begin (in §2) by asking about what Ferrarin makes of the nature and placement of the first "official" treatment of *thinking itself* that Hegel gives in his *Encyclopedia*, which occurs relatively late, not until in the *Philosophy of Spirit*, and only after the introduction of not just "the soul" and "consciousness" (and "the I") but also "self-consciousness" and "reason." I want to highlight this fact in order to raise questions about Ferrarin's claims about Hegel's acceptance of the possibility of "unconscious thinking" (cf. 11, 53). I will then turn (in §3) to the question of whether and to what extent Ferrarin maintains that thinking is already being treated or is already under discussion—i.e., to what extent it forms part of the subject matter—in the still earlier *Philosophy of Nature* itself, in light of Ferrarin's claims (in chapter 2) about specifically "*non*human thinking" that might be present in things such as the elliptical movements of planets and the behavior of squirrels. This line of examination of Ferrarin's book, organized around the structure of the Encyclopedia itself, will lead us (in §4) fairly directly to the question of in what respect exactly is thinking itself really genuinely a topic (or the subject matter) in the still earlier *Logic*, and if so, when—e.g., already with *being*? or only after the introduction of "the

[40] Here one would do well to skim the handy list of topics that Ferrarin has compiled on pp. 169–170, and then take and read the earlier 2015 book.

concept" (or perhaps: "the idea"?) in the "subjective logic"? In conclusion (§5), I will turn finally to ask after Ferrarin's thoughts on the significance of the last sections of the Encyclopedia, on the relation between thinking and *Absolute* Spirit, and what sort of thinking Absolute Spirit will itself engage in as "philosophical science."

§2. The place of thinking in the Philosophy of Spirit

As noted above, Hegel begins the Encyclopedia with the *Science of Logic*,[41] and though he suggests, in a remark [*Anmerkung*] to an early section, that logic might well be characterized as "the science of *thinking*, of its determinations and laws" (EL §19), the official characterization he himself gives at the outset, in the main body of the text, is that logic is the science of "*the Idea*," considered in a certain way or respect that will differentiate it from the way in which it will be considered in the other parts of philosophical science, and with philosophy as a whole only capable of presenting "the Idea" wholly or adequately:

> Only the *whole* of [philosophical] science is the presentation [*Darstellung*] of the idea.... [T]he science falls into three parts: I. Logic, i.e., the science of the idea in and for itself. (EL §18)

> Logic is the science of the pure *Idea*, i.e., the *Idea* in the abstract element of thinking. (EL §19)

It is true that the second formulation indicates that the way in which logic will "present" the idea is "in the abstract element of thinking," and yet it is unclear that this means that the logic will give a doctrine of *thinking itself*, rather than present how *the idea* exists "in the abstract element of thinking." On the second interpretation, thinking will function in

[41] I will cite Hegel's Encyclopedia according to the paragraph numbers of the 3rd 1830 edition, using the abbreviations "EL" for the *Logic*, "EN" for the *Philosophy of Nature*, and "EG" for the *Philosophy of Spirit* (Geist). I will refer to Hegel's *Wissenschaft der Logik* by "WL," and give the pagination from the Suhrkamp edition of *Hegels Werke in 20 Bände*, along with the pagination of the Cambridge Edition English translation by Giovanni as *Science of Logic* ("SL").

the *Logic* only as "the element" in which the idea exists qua logical, i.e., the element within which the Idea will first be considered—with the nature of this element (thinking) not *itself* yet being articulated. To collapse the two topics, we would need some initial indication that "the Idea" just was (identical with) thinking, or that thinking was all and only "the Idea" itself. The suggestion here, however, would seem to be that thinking is instead only "the element" in which "the Idea" exists in a certain fashion or manner. This in turn might be taken to suggest that "the Idea" might have *other* "elements" in which it can exist besides that of thinking; what is more, we also have not heard anything, at least as yet, as to whether anything *else* might exist "in" thinking besides "the Idea."

In fact, when we turn to the divisions of the Encyclopedia itself, the official entry on *thinking* itself does not occur until quite late, not within the *Logic* at all, but rather not until the third part, the *Philosophy of Spirit*, at EG §465. What is more, it is introduced only after quite a bit of ground has been covered concerning other, presumably more elementary, forms or shapes of *Spirit*. More specifically, Hegel has already indicated that Spirit in general has Nature as its "presupposition," and also that Spirit has "come forth as the Idea that has reached its being-for-itself" (EG §381)—note, again, "the idea" and not "thinking" (compare as well the summary of the division of the *Philosophy of Spirit*, which consistently speaks of "the Idea"). The first and earliest manifestation of Spirit is as "natural spirit [*Naturgeist*]," which has not yet "awoken" to "consciousness," nor has it "posited itself as reason," nor has it become "subject for itself" (EG §387). It does undergo alterations, sensations, and feelings, but it is not yet until there is consciousness that Spirit takes a form in which it even "has an object as such," let alone "for which I [*Ich*] is the object," i.e., self-consciousness (EG §417). But even a being that achieves the "unity of consciousness and self-consciousness," and so involves "reason" (EG §438), is only said initially to have this unity as an act of "intuiting [*anschauen*]" (EG §417).[42] It is only once reason not only engages in intuiting qua "finding" (EG §446), and also various forms of "representing [*vorstellen*]"—viz., a holding onto or "recollecting" of what is found (EG §452), and an active imaginative associative combination of what is found (EG §455), and

[42] In contrast to Kant, "intuiting," as Hegel understands it, is subsequent to both the "perception [*Wahrnehmung*]" of what is sensory (EG §420) and to "understanding [*Verstand*]" (EG §422)—though he agrees with Kant that intuiting precedes "thinking [*denken*]."

a recording of this in signs within a memory (EG §461)—that it is finally ready to make "the transition into the activity of the thought" or "thinking," an activity that is distinguished by (among other things) having "the genuine [*wahrhafte*] universal" for itself (EG §465).

In light of these features of Hegel's system, I want to raise two concerns, then, about Ferrarin's own discussion of thinking. The first concerns the relation between the specific determination that is entitled "thinking" at EG §465 and all of the preceding determinations that have come before. What we have just sketched of Hegel's exposition suggests that thinking is *only here* being considered directly for the first time—i.e., suggests that no stage that has been considered thus far in the *Philosophy of Spirit*, let alone earlier in the Encyclopedia, should be counted as itself "thinking," despite the fact that there have been stages of spirit under discussion in which there is consciousness, self-consciousness, understanding, even reason.[43]

The second concern pertains to the more specific relation between thinking and "the I." In the sketch of the progression of the *Philosophy of Spirit* we have given above, the emergence of "the I" was given as occurring first with the introduction of

[43] Hegel himself seems to recognize, at this point in the text, that the reader might need some direction or clarification here, since certain remarks from the *Logic* in particular might have been taken to suggest something to the contrary. For he adds the following note before transitioning out of this discussion of what is distinctive of "theoretical spirit" to what is distinctive of "practical spirit":

> In *logic*, thinking is as it is first in itself and as reason develops itself in this oppositionless element. In *consciousness*, thinking also occurs [*kommt vor*] as a stage (cf. §437 Anm). Here reason is the truth of the opposition, as it had determined itself within spirit itself.—Thinking emerges [*tritt hervor*] again and again in these different parts of science, because these parts differ only in the element and the form of opposition; while thinking is this one, self-same center, to which, as to their truth, the oppositions return. (EG §467 Anm)

Note that though thinking is said to be present "in" logic, it is present only as it is "in itself" and as "an oppositionless element" in which reason develops itself—rather than being present in any way "for itself," as a topic or object of scientific cognition. (This is so, even if thinking will ultimately show itself to be that "center" toward which "oppositions return.")

consciousness. If (as the foregoing suggests) thinking in its technical sense (of EG §465) depends not only on the existence of representation, imagination, reason, self-consciousness, understanding, but also specifically consciousness itself, in order for thinking itself to be really possible, then it would seem that, at least in this technical sense, thinking does depend essentially on the prior existence of the I—first as a correlate of "the object" of consciousness, then as "the object of consciousness" itself (in self-consciousness), etc.

Now, even if this were so, Ferrarin is also concerned with a separate point in the neighborhood of this one, albeit that must be kept separate from any thesis about specifically unconscious thinking, or thinking without an I. For it might well also be true that thinking is not dependent on any determinations that are still *further* on in the Encyclopedia—and in particular, determinations that arise only in the context of "objective spirit," such as "the person" (EG §488) or "person as subject" (EG §503), let alone any of the particular configurations of "ethical life [*Sittlichkeit*]" such as being (or being "in") a family or civil society or a state. On this separate point, Ferrarin himself makes several incisive criticisms (cf. chapter 1 in particular) of traditional readings of the sections in the *Philosophy of Spirit* (and their counterparts in the *Phenomenology*)—sections that technically pertain only to self-consciousness, and more specifically, those pertaining to "recognizant [*anerkennende*] self-consciousness"(EG §430 et seq), but that are often taken not just to provide some of the essentials of a specifically social theory, or a theory of sociality, but to already involve specifically "social" elements (i.e., persons in relation to persons) in their metaphysical composition (so to speak). Ferrarin's cautions against such an inflation of Hegel's topic through such unwarranted presuppositions are entirely appropriate.

Even so, when Ferrarin himself attempts to give his own more positive characterization of what is at stake in these sections on "recognition" in consciousness, he too ultimately seems to appeal to concepts that are nevertheless essentially social in that they involve relations between "people" (viz., work). To be sure, Ferrarin suggests that they are not yet social because they are only being considered "abstractly," i.e., not with reference to facts about their family, standing in civil society, etc. (cf. 42f; 36). Against this, however, it might be stressed, first, that the basic concept of *inter*-personality depends on the concept of *personality,* which is itself not developed until the other

objective spiritual categories are in place. Second, the concepts of personality and inter-personality should be contrasted with the more general concepts of *subjectivity* and *inter-subjectivity*, the latter of which can apply with perfect validity even to the unity of two cases of consciousness (i.e., to two "I"s, when "the I" / "subject" is individuated only across cases of consciousness *intra*-personally, i.e., when both "I"s are in the same "rational being" (reason) or "person" (when, e.g., two "I thinks" are both mine, etc.)).

At times Ferrarin himself seems to emphasize the higher generality of the concept of subjectivity for Hegel, and seems also drawn to an idea of the "self" or "subject" that is active prior to the achievement even of "the I" or "consciousness" in particular (cf. 11, 18), such that there can be subjectivity without yet there being "the I" (cf. 25). This seems completely right to me, and of crucial importance for any understanding of Hegel's more general conception of "the subject" (treated, e.g., in the *Logic*) and how it is distinct from the specific form of "the I" (treated in the *Philosophy of Spirit*). What seems less in line with Hegel's texts, however, is the fact that Ferrarin does not always seem to follow through this differentiation further upwards along the order of later concepts Hegel also distinguishes, each of which might also and often, in someone else's hands, be lumped or run together (so, not just: self, subjectivity, vs. soul, consciousness ("the I"), but also these vs. reason, spirit, person, person as subject, person as citizen, etc.). The unity of "the I" of a single consciousness, with that of a single second consciousness, across cases of self-consciousness, might be sufficient to constitute a form of inter-*subjectivity*, which itself might yield (metaphysically) sufficient conditions for the achievement of reason—but as we have seen, even this is not yet sufficient for personality, inter-personality, sociality, or even Spirit in the technical sense—let alone for thinking in the technical sense.

§3. The place(?) of thinking in the Philosophy of Nature

Returning to Hegel's remarks from the outset of the Logic, concerning the definition of logic as the science of "the Idea" in the "element" of thinking, we can now be on the lookout for a possible distinction between (i) "the idea" as a topic, over and against (ii) the consideration of this topic specifically as to how it shows up in a specific "element"—e.g., as to how it is manifest merely in thinking—and then over and against as well (iii) what it would be to consider a specific element itself (e.g., thinking) as to its own conditions. I have sketched an interpretation according to which the consideration of (iii)

thinking itself, directly, as its own subject matter, does not happen until a decent way into the *Philosophy of Spirit*, even if the consideration of (ii) is already taking place in the *Logic*. Yet if (iii) isn't taking place until the *Philosophy of Spirit*, then it is also not taking place within the *Philosophy of Nature*.

Certain moments in Ferrarin's presentation might be taken to suggest that, to the contrary, the *Philosophy of Nature* (EN) itself is actually "about" thinking. Compare his discussion early on, and running throughout, not just of the elliptical movements of the planets—the topic of sections of the EN (cf. EN §280)—but also the organic structure of the life of squirrels—the topic of later sections of the EN (cf. EN §350). In both contexts, it seems that Ferrarin is trying to draw a suggestive inference from the fact that, early in the *Logic*, Hegel glosses the fact that thinking and thoughts can be *true*, and thereby "objective," by saying that true thoughts "coincide" with "the things grasped in thoughts," and hence that the science of things (metaphysics) "coincides" with the science of thinking (logic) (EL §24). From this fact—along with other explicit claims about nature itself being "the *Idea*", e.g., "the idea in the form of being-other" (cf. EN §247; cf. EN §§251–252, etc.)—Ferrarin seems to want to infer that, for Hegel, nature itself is a case of (an activity of) thinking. But then since squirrels and especially planets do not possess consciousness and are (ex hypothesi) not themselves human, this is meant to support Ferrarin's general thesis that, for Hegel, there can be not only "unconscious thinking" but even "nonhuman thinking" (cf. chapter 2).

Now, I think Ferrarin is right to emphasize that Hegel in no way means to characterize planets and squirrels as conscious or spiritual beings. What is less clear from the text of the *Philosophy of Nature* itself, however, is that Ferrarin is right to think that either nature as a whole, or these individual phenomena, are themselves properly described as either activities or movements of *thinking* or as cases of thought themselves (so, our (iii) above). This is so, even if nature is itself described as (ii) another manner in which "the *Idea*" exists or is realized. Notably, however, at the end of the *Logic*, Hegel highlights the fact that the manner in which the Idea exists as nature is distinct from how "the idea" exists merely in the element of *thinking*: nature is "the idea insofar as it *intuits* [*die anschauende Idee*]" (EL §244).

What is more, the term "thinking" itself only shows up in the *Philosophy of Nature* as a determination of how phenomena are to be "treated" within this science (i.e.,

"physics" will consist in a "*denkende Betrachtung*" of nature, etc.; EN §246)—i.e., not as part of the subject matter itself. To be sure, other terms that were themselves already developed in the *Logic*—such as: "subjectivity," "life," or even "the Idea" itself—and that might otherwise have been associated with thinking, are eventually used to characterize specific phenomena within nature itself.[44] Yet as we saw above, none of these terms is necessarily identical in significance with that of thinking—let alone any of the other terms (soul, consciousness, the I, self-consciousness, etc.) that pick out the other stages or shapes of spirit that obtain only in spirit and yet prior to thinking. Hence, the fact that nature is "the Idea" realizing itself as some form of "subjectivity," and yet does so without consciousness or any obvious relation to "the I," in no way speaks against the fact that it is not yet *thinking* or thought, and that thinking is in every case with consciousness and bears some relation to some I (Ferrarin, p. 59).

§4. The place(?) of thinking in the *Science of Logic*

In several ways—as we ourselves have anticipated above—much of the foregoing line of questioning of Ferrarin's treatment of Hegel on thinking could be telescoped into a question about the subject matter of the science of logic itself. Insofar as one assumes—as I think Ferrarin does—not just that the *Logic* is about the way in which "the *Idea*" manifests itself in pure thinking, but that it is itself about *thinking* as to its subject matter, then it will be completely understandable that one would assume that, any time any of the "determinations" mentioned within the *Logic* show up anywhere else in the Encyclopedia, these signal that thinking is present in the subject matter at hand, whether implicitly or explicitly. This would entail, however, the quite strong conclusion that anytime anything is said, e.g., to "be," to "not be," to "become," etc., we are entitled to assume that we are always already talking or judging *about thinking*, because all being (etc.) is itself thinking, since "being" (etc.) is a determination considered in the *Logic*.

[44] The whole aspect of nature that is "organic," for example, is said to characterize "the idea as nature" specifically "in the determination of subjectivity" (EN §252), and is also highlighted as the moment when "the idea" finally "arrives at existence, first and immediately in life" (EN §337). The specific kinds of "subjectivity" that obtain within various forms of nature are also contrasted with one another (viz., the subjectivity of "vegetable nature" (EN §343) is contrasted with the subjectivity that pertains to the "animal organism" (EN §350)).

Now, an alternative to this interpretive assumption was already suggested above, provided we attend to the distinction between (a) "the *Idea* as manifest in pure thinking" (and the system of determinations that are seen to pertain to "the Idea" in this element) and (b) *thinking* itself. Just because "being" is (necessarily) the first determination of the Idea as it is manifest within thinking itself, in no way entails that everything that is (all *being*) is itself (a case of, or identical with some act of) thinking. Moreover, even if it turns out to be true, conversely—as it should be, since "thinking" itself shows up as a determination whose real actuality will presuppose as its condition all of the determinations that have come before it in the Encyclopedia—that every case of *thinking* itself is or has being, and also is not, and also becomes, and also exists, etc., this fact about thinking itself will only be able to be demonstrated and comprehended on the basis of the understanding of *what thinking itself is*—i.e., as a determination specifically of *Spirit* at a certain stage or shape. This specific "spiritual" determination, however, has not yet been officially introduced at the outset of the *Logic*, or even at the conclusion of the *Logic*—nor have the other "spiritual" determinations prerequisite for thinking, such as "soul," "consciousness," "intuition," "representation," etc., and nor have the "natural" determinations, which are themselves "presupposed" by spirit itself (as we saw above). In fact, Hegel is quite explicit about ruling out the former determinations as not forming a part of the subject matter of the Logic, in remarks such as the following from the "larger" *Science of Logic*:

> [S]uch shapes as *intuition*, *representation*, and the like, belong to the *self-conscious spirit* which, as such, is not treated in logical science. Of course, the pure determinations of being, essence, and the concept, also constitute the substrate and the inner sustaining structure of the forms of spirit; spirit, as intuiting as well as sensuous consciousness, is in the form of immediate being, just as spirit as representing and also perceiving consciousness has risen from being to the stage of essence or reflection. But these concrete shapes are of as little interest to the science of logic as are the concrete forms that logical determinations assume in nature. These last would be space and time, then space and time as filled, as inorganic nature, and then organic nature. Similarly, the concept is also not to be considered here as the act of the self-conscious understanding, not as subjective

> understanding, but as the concept in and for itself which constitutes a *stage* of *nature* as well as of *spirit*. Life, or organic nature, is the stage of nature where the concept comes on the scene, but as a blind concept that does not grasp itself, that is, is not a thinking concept [*nicht denkender Begriff*]; only as such does it belongs to spirit. Its logical form, however, is independent of such shapes, whether unspiritual or spiritual. (WL 6:257; SL 517; my underline)

Later, Hegel explicitly groups "thinking [*Denken*]" together with "spirit" and "self-consciousness" as further "determinations of the idea," beyond those treated within logic itself, determinations that occur only "insofar as the idea has itself and its existence as object" (WL 6:487; SL 689). This is of a piece with the underlined claim in the longer passage, where Hegel explicitly rules out mere life in organic nature as being a "thinking concept," but then also explicitly confers this title only on what belongs to Spirit.

Note, by contrast, that the concept of "the concept" is not itself ruled out as being manifest in nature as well as spirit; this is because "concept" is named explicitly in the title of one of the three main parts of the *Logic*, whereas thinking is not named at all. This seems to speak against Ferrarin's interpretive claim that, already within the *Logic*, *thinking* will be doubled as mere soul or life but also as the understanding or knowing of life (cf. 62–66). Note, finally, that the passage that Ferrarin himself cites as evidence that there is a self-knowing of thinking as thinking that already exists in the *Logic* (cf. 71), is not actually a quote from the *Logic* itself, but from the very end of the Encyclopedia, at the culmination of the *Philosophy of Spirit*. What is more, it is not from a discussion of thinking per se, but rather of *philosophy* itself, as "the self-thinking Idea, the knowing truth" (EG §574). This leads me to the final set of questions, pertaining to Ferrarin's interpretation of the culmination of Hegel's account of Spirit in the discussion of science and philosophy, as manifestations specifically of "*Absolute* spirit."

§5. Thinking as an activity of Absolute Spirit

It is true that at the very end of the Encyclopedia, Hegel presents a reassessment of "the logical [*das Logische*]," in order to show how the logical, which formed the starting-point for philosophy, is itself ultimately to be comprehended as a "result as the spiritual [*das Geistige*]" (EG §574). This suggests, first, that "the logical" is only to be

comprehended as Spiritual at the conclusion of the Encyclopedia, rather than at the outset. Initially, the *Logic* is concerned only with the basic determinations of "the Idea," which are manifest as they arise purely in the element of thinking (again: in contrast with being concerned with the nature of thinking itself as the pure element within which such determinations arise). By the conclusion of the Encyclopedia, by contrast, the very fact that the *Logic* itself is a *science* is sufficient indication that what is transpiring within it will involve specifically *spiritual* movement. This is because science in general can only be the achievement of Spirit, and a very demanding one at that. More specifically, science is a spiritual movement that depends not just on subjective spiritual forms (viz., intuiting, representing, or even thinking), but also objective spiritual forms (viz., family, civil society, the state, world-history), but *also* art and religion as earlier forms of the activity and realization of *Absolute* Spirit. This rich relation of dependencies, however, is in no way manifest at the outset of the Logic—or even at its conclusion—in particular, since none of the requisite "spiritual" determinations have been developed, and hence there is no material with which to comprehend what these dependencies might involve. Rather, as the end of the "larger" *Logic* has it, the concluding result of this science is the Idea as "still *logical*," as still "shut up in pure thought," such that Logic yields "the science only of the divine *concept*" (WL 6:572; SL 752)—rather than effecting the comprehension of either "the Idea" or of thinking itself as something actual, real, as a determination of Spirit, as a substance that is subject, etc.

This is further borne out, it would seem, by the concluding paragraph of the Encyclopedia *Logic* itself, which does not in any way purport to subsume "the Absolute Idea," which it has hitherto developed, under the heading of anything spiritual whatsoever. Rather, it describes a movement that "the Idea" (not: thinking) itself makes to "freely release itself as *nature*" rather than as Spirit; what is more, as we anticipated above, it associates this movement with an "intuiting" (again, not: thinking) (cf. EL §244). Now, it is surely striking that here the Idea is said to be capable of performing an act, which is later introduced as pertaining to spirit, rather than to nature itself. Still, we might read this (as with the introductory sections of the *Logic* itself) as Hegel anticipating the fact that "the Idea" itself can manifest itself in a second spiritual element besides thought, namely, intuition (as it can even manifest in a third spiritual element: representation (qua religion)). Nevertheless, as with the *Logic* itself, and the possibility that consideration of

thinking per se is being bracketed, so too with the *Philosophy of Nature*, it is open to us to intepret Hegel as bracketing *intuiting* per se from that which is being considered, since this, too, will not be a topic until the *Philosophy of Spirit*; rather, it is only *the Idea* as to its manifestation in the element of intuiting that is being considered (cf. eg. EN §258).

This leads us to the question of whether it is possible for the Idea to wholly and adequately manifest itself as actual in either intuiting or in thinking. The structure of the Encyclopedia suggests that nature (idea qua intuiting) is not the culmination of the Idea's realizations. This insufficiency is more fully confirmed by Hegel's later discussions of art as an act of the intuiting of the Idea by an absolute spirit (EG §556), and its overcoming through the activity of religion and its representing (EG §565) and finally by philosophy as an absolute form of the Idea "self-consciously thinking" (EG §572). Bracketing what, precisely, it will mean for the Idea to fully and adequately manifest itself in the "self-conscious thinking" of philosophical science, the main point of interest for our present purposes is that consideration of this possibility does not transpire at the end of the *Logic*. What more will be needed to even formulate this question can be anticipated by our own quick sketch of the progress of the *Philosophy of Spirit* itself: thinking will itself need to be considered not just as the manifestation of spirit in general—as a development beyond self-consciousness and reason, beyond intuiting and representing—but specifically as to its highest possibility.

But can we say anything more about what form this absolute spiritual activity will take? There are moments where it can seem that, for his part, Ferrarin means for absolute spirit to itself be something that takes the form of "the I," and also to include or incorporate—or perhaps even be performed by—the *specifically human* "I" (cf. his remarks about religion and "God in his community," (75–77). It is not clear, however, how Ferrarin means to bring this into line with Hegel's own continual reference to religion in general—and (as Hegel's lectures on the philosophy of religion suggest) Christian trinitarian theology in particular—as the most adequate "representation" of the absolute, i.e., of the same content that is ultimately comprehended in "thinking" within philosophy. Though the human community is one aspect or side of the manifestation of the absolute in religion, it is not the only aspect. In particular, no human community seems capable of manifesting absolute Spirit as not just the "final cause" (77) of existence, but as also self-*productive*, and this not just in the sense of "realizing" *itself* (cf. p105f), but as the realizing

of *all that is*, and on the most cosmic of scales. On each of these fronts, the representing that is manifest in religion—along with the intuiting that is manifest in art, and the thinking that is manifest in philosophy—seems to incorporate the "nonhuman" at least in the sense of involving activity that is—not *below* the human, but decidedly *more*-than-human. This itself seems partially anticipated in the designation of "the absolute Idea" as "the divine [*göttliche*] concept" at the end of the *Logic*, and also signaled in Hegel's infamous remark that logic itself presents God in its eternal essence, before the creation of nature and of finite Spirit (cf. WL 5:44; SL 29).

None of this, of course, gives all that much indication of an alternative substantive answer to the question of how best to understand "absolute Spirit" itself. Nor does it do more than gesture at what "the absolute idea" would be, considered in abstraction from its realization in "the absolute Spirit," considered only as it is manifest "in" the element of thinking, as in the *Logic* itself, without yet a full or complete "self-conscious thinking" of itself. I will be very happy to hear more of Ferrarin's own thoughts about these matters—both in this symposium and in his future work—and I am delighted to have had the chance to think along with him in reading this very rewarding book.