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Rickert's Heterology in the Mirror of Hegel's Logic: External Reflection

[*A Heterologia de Rickert no Espelho da Lógica de Hegel: Reflexão Externa*]

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Abstract

With his heterology, the southwest German neo-Kantian Heinrich Rickert developed a doctrine that proved to be groundbreaking not only for neo-Kantianism, but also for the theory of subjectivity in postwar transcendental philosophy in the broad sense. Rickert's heterology is primarily concerned with the original structure of thought. Since the discussion of Hegel plays an important role for Rickert, heterology simultaneously concerns the relationship between Hegel's speculative idealism and (advanced) Kantian transcendental philosophy. However, on the whole, the debate has until now been far from unanimous with regard to the validity of Rickert's critique of Hegel. This study develops a new interpretative perspective, focusing on the issue of formalism as a methodological problem. It turns out that Rickert's heterology is a case of, in Hegel's words, mere external reflection. Rickert hastily moves from the beginning of philosophy to the origin of thinking. Thus, unlike Hegel, Rickert provides an insufficient account of the very concepts with which he determines the origin of thought—the Achilles' heel of transcendental philosophy.

Keywords: heterology; dialectics; Hegel; Rickert; formalism; external reflection; origin.

Resumo

Com sua heterologia, o neokantiano do sudoeste da Alemanha, Heinrich Rickert, desenvolveu uma doutrina que se revelou inovadora não apenas para o neokantismo, mas também para a teoria da subjetividade na filosofia transcendental do pós-guerra em sentido amplo. A heterologia de Rickert preocupa-se principalmente com a estrutura original do pensamento. Como a discussão de Hegel desempenha um papel importante para Rickert, a heterologia diz respeito simultaneamente à relação entre o idealismo especulativo de Hegel e (avança) a filosofia transcendental kantiana. No entanto, em geral, o debate até agora está longe de ser unânime no que diz respeito à validade da crítica de Rickert a Hegel. Este estudo desenvolve uma nova perspectiva interpretativa, centrando-se na questão do formalismo como um problema metodológico. O caso é que a heterologia de Rickert é um caso, nas palavras de Hegel, de mera reflexão externa. Rickert se move apressadamente desde o início da filosofia até a origem do pensamento. Assim, ao contrário de Hegel, Rickert fornece uma descrição insuficiente dos próprios conceitos com os quais ele determina a origem do pensamento – o calcanhar de Aquiles da filosofia transcendental.

Palavras-chave: heterologia; dialética; Hegel; Rickert; formalismo; reflexão externa; origem.

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1. Heterology or Dialectics?

Rickert, a main figure of southwest neo-Kantianism, developed with his heterology a doctrinal piece which proved to be groundbreaking not only for the southwest German neo-Kantians, but also for the subjectivity-oriented transcendental philosophy of the postwar period. His heterology radiates into many problem areas of philosophy. In Rickert's treatise on *Das Eine, die Einheit und die Eins* (1924), first published in 1911, he discusses quite fundamental relations that have been formative for Rickert's thought since his early writings. This concerns not least, for example, the relation of act and object, which is decisive for Rickert's entire philosophy, and thus also the relationship between the emerging philosophical school of Phenomenology and that of Criticism (*Kritizismus*). Moreover it also concerns the original structure of thought and with that the relation between negation and otherness, no less significant for the system of philosophy, and thus for understanding the relationship of Hegel's speculative idealism and a Kantian type of transcendental idealism.

It is precisely the debate with Hegel that has inspired the philosophical minds, leading to a so-called Hegel renaissance in neo-Kantianism.² In his late years, Wilhelm Windelband, the leading figure of the Southwest German school of neo-Kantianism concerning its philosophical program, virtually advocated a "renewal of Hegelianism" (1915a)³ and thus prepared the way for Rickert, the leading systematic figure of the Southwest German school of neo-Kantianism. Titles like Siegfried Marck's *Dialektik in der Philosophie der Gegenwart* (1929-31), Heinrich Levy's *Die Hegel-Renaissance in der deutschen Philosophie* (1927), and Carl Emge's *Hegels Logik und die Gegenwart* (1927) give a characteristic impression. The southwest German neo-Kantian Jonas Cohn even wrote a fundamental philosophical book calling it *Theorie der Dialektik* (1923). Hegel scholars like Hermann Glockner and Richard Kroner were pupils and assistants of Rickert. The studies of the early Werner Flach, especially *Negation und Andersheit* (1959), which are based on Hans Wagner's doctrine of reflection as developed in *Philosophie und Reflexion* (1959, 3th. ed. 1980), then pointed the way for the debate on Rickert's heterology after 1945.⁴ This debate also reveals how the principle of dialectics is tied back to a transcendental philosophical framework, taking into account, so to speak, Windelband's critical dictum that despite all renewal of Hegel, "dialectics as a whole" could not constitute the "method of philosophy" (1915a, 288).

Although in his conception of transcendental philosophy, Wagner integrates essential aspects of Hegel's philosophy, the perspective of Kantian philosophy serves as the guideline. Thus it comes to a transcendental form of idealism, not to a Hegelian, speculative form. The principle of dialectics therefore receives a different function and a different significance in Wagner, and subsequently also in Flach, than in Hegel. It does not function as the method of philosophy par excellence but is methodically narrowed to that principle which is responsible for the "relations of justification in the realm of concepts" (*Begründungsverhältnisse im Bereich der Begriffe*) (Wagner),⁵ i.e. for the "justification in determination" (*Fundierung in der Bestimmung*) (Flach)⁶.

The debate thus concerns not least the method of philosophy and therefore the peculiarity of idealism, i.e., philosophy as transcendental or speculative idealism. Researchers usually treat this problem in such a way that the structure of the origin of thought is in question: is the origin to be conceived of heterothetically, as in Rickert, or negation-theoretically, as in Hegel?

² See for this the exposition of the respective literature in Krijnen (2008, Kap. 5.1).

³ All translations of German texts are mine, ck.

⁴ Richard Kroner too dealt intensively with Flach's elaborations. See for the discussion between Kroner and Flach: Kroner, 1963; Flach, 1958; 1959, 20 ff. Kroner (1924/25) himself once criticized Rickert's heterology for not doing justice to its dialectical nature.

⁵ Wagner, 1980, 118. In Flach's formulation (1959, 56), dialectics is the "methodical principle of justification".

⁶ Flach, 1994, 285, 288 f. See the whole chapter 3.1 about the principles that constitute cognition: identity, contradiction, and dialectics.

Hegel's *Logik* is a doctrine of comprehending thought. Its concept is to be generated within the framework of a process of self-determination. The moving force of this process is the dialectic which the concept has in itself (GW 21: 38), whereas "thought in its very nature is dialectical" (GW 20: § 11 N). If it is about the "very nature of thought", then thought in its (logically) original determinacy is at issue. In its original determinacy it has to comprehend all need of justification from itself as the ultimate reason. Objectivity as such is originally constituted by thought originally constituting itself. With this, undoubtedly, the structure of implications of the ultimate moments of thought has to become thematic.

Hegel conceives of the structure of this implication, roughly speaking, in such a way that determinacy is conceived of as a whole of opposites. Negation or negativity thus has, implicitly or explicitly, a constitutive function for the meaning of determinacy. In this respect, the meaning-constitutive function of negativity is total. For the purpose of the self-determination of thought, in Hegel, if I formulate it in terms of the theory of judgement typical of transcendental idealism and thus from the perspective of transcendental philosophy, the concept of the subject as the concept to be determined takes the place of the concept of the predicate as the determining concept. The first sequence of Hegel's *Logik*, which begins with being as pure indeterminate immediacy, has exactly the determination-logical meaning of establishing a subject (substratum) of possible determinations. The question about the origin, as it has arisen in the scholarly debate, would then amount to whether negation is conceivable as a principle of positing, i.e., of establishing a (thought-immanent) substratum of determination. Rickert denies this. The 'nature of thought' is determined here in terms of a purely heterogeneous approach to the whole of relations thought is, in contrast to a homogeneous approach to the inner structure of thought. Accordingly, the original relation is a pure *relation of correlation*, not a relation of negative self-reference as according to Hegel's dialectical (more precisely: speculative) method; it is not a *relation of negation*. While Hegel advocates a quasi-monism of the (self-referential) negation, Rickert argues for a quasi-monism of the correlation.

However, research is not unanimous with regard to the validity of Rickert's criticism. While Wagner and Flach as well as,⁷ for example, Wolfgang Marx (1996; 1998, 43 ff.) or, despite all reservations, initially me too (Krijnen, 2008, Ch. 1-3) have spoken out in favor of Rickert, Hegel scholars such as Klaus Hartmann, Michael Theunissen, and Manfred Wetzel also discuss Rickert's criticism of dialectics, but come to a positive conclusion in favor of Hegel.⁸ Recently, Faustino Fabbianelli (2018) has tried to bring Fichte's late *Wissenschaftslehre* into play as an alternative to Hegel's dialectic of negation, with Flach's *Negation und Andersheit* providing assistance; Fabbianelli tries to interpret Fichte's transcendental philosophy as heterology in Rickert's sense. Finally, Wagner's doctrine of a primary-constitutive apriority, a doctrine that transposes Rickert's heterology into the subjectivity-oriented transcendental philosophy of the postwar period, has recently attracted the interest of numerous scholars (cf. Krijnen & Zeidler, 2017).

In view of this deadlocked state of the discourse, one should be on the lookout for another perspective of interpretation. In fact, the perspective of formalism associated critically with the type of reflection transcendental philosophy offers, has proved to be very fruitful in my recent work on the relationship between transcendental and speculative idealism – provided, of course, that formalism, as in Hegel, is taken seriously as a *methodical* problem concerning the correlation-theoretical profile of transcendental philosophy, a philosophy that addresses the conditions of the possibility of the concrete. Thus, formalism is not understood here in a crude sense, which would be completely contrary to the idea of 'making the concrete possible'; rather, it concerns a sublimated formalism that concerns the correlation-theoretical constitution of transcendental philosophy itself (Krijnen, 2016; 2017a; 2017b; 2022).

⁷ Also see Flach 1963 or e.g. Flach 2002.

⁸ Hartmann, 1973, 226 ff.; 1976, 8 ff.; 1999, 8 ff.; Theunissen, 1978, 246; Wetzel, 2017, 577 ff.

In the following, I shall sketch the problem of formalism (II), examine Rickert's heterology for its formalism (III), make clear that Rickert's heterology, as Hegel put it, is the result of an external reflection (IV), with the consequence that it lacks what in Hegel would be a logic of being: Rickert moves too quickly from the beginning of philosophy to the origin of thought (V). As a consequence, unlike Hegel, Rickert gives an insufficient account of those very concepts with the help of which he himself determines the relation of origin. This seems to be the Achilles' heel of transcendental philosophy in general, from Kant to the postwar versions of it.

2. Formalism in Rickert's Heterology

[i] After Hegel has philosophically and historically passed through Rationalism and Empiricism at the end of his logic of essence (*Wesenslogik*), at the beginning of his logic of the concept (*Begriffslogik*) he expresses himself very positively about Kant's conception of the "original-synthetic unity of apperception" (GW 12: 18). Far from being a mere "external relation", Kant had thought of the "unity which constitutes the essence of the concept" as the original synthetic unity of apperception, "I think, or of self-consciousness".

Nevertheless, Hegel considers Kant's return to the unity of self-consciousness as an absolute basis to be insufficient, since "reality" qua "objectivity" remains "opposed" to the concept as "subjectivity" (GW 12: 19, cf. 19 ff.). The relation between intuition and concept, understanding and sensuality, form and content, at the end of the day, is understood as a merely abstract relation ("formalism"). Kant lacks the "principle of determination," as Hegel understands it (GW 20: § 508), i.e. the realization of the concept through its own moments of the general, the particular and the singular. This principle annihilates any externality. Hegel notes that we have to transcend the mere "representation" of the relation of the "I", the "understanding", or the "concept", to a "thing and its properties or accidents", and advance to "thought" (GW 12: 18). – With respect to Kant's practical philosophy, the matter is not different for Hegel. Kant's conception of the good also lacks a "principle of determination", i.e. the methodic structure of the 'realization of the concept'; it suffers from formalism too. 'Form' and 'content' ('matter') remain externally opposed to each other. Thus, formalism here does not mean – as it is commonly presented in Kant scholarship's attempts to defend Kant – a lack of reference of the Categorical Imperative to content, but a methodical deficiency in the relation between form and content (Krijnen, 2022).

This formalism is also characteristic of the fundamental axiotic relation of the later transcendental philosophy, i.e. for that fundamental relation of valid values and the evaluating subject, developed not least by Rickert, from which transcendental philosophy, in continuation of Kant, tries to understand culture as the world of humans. It is a world founded in a whole of values, principles of validity, ideas, or the like. The said formalism is not less characteristic for the determinacy of the respective spheres of validity principled by them, thus also for the sphere of cognition.⁹

With regard to the foundations of cognition, Flach (1959, 72 f.) once determined the relationship between transcendental philosophy and speculative idealism in such a way that in Hegel negativity becomes total. Here, the concept is conceived of as the mediation that accomplishes itself in its totality; mediation therefore takes over the function of the original synthetic unity. As a consequence, Hegel unites analytics and dialectics, and hence two validity functions that remain strictly separated in Kant and Rickert: constitutivity and regulativity (Flach, 2002, 18 f.). In contrast to Hegel, Criticism, i.e. transcendental idealism, conceives of radical foundation (*Letztbegründung*) only in the fashion of a validity-reflective determination

⁹ See on the fundamental axiotic relation: Krijnen, 2001, Ch. 2.3, 6.3, 7.2 f.; 2008, Ch. 4.2.2; 5.4; 2015, Ch. 3 f.; 2017a.

of the logical functions of the unity of determination, which is at the same time the unity of justification. In this philosophical perspective, there is no “methodical absoluteness”, to speak with Flach. Heterology, that is Rickert's sublimated Kantianism, determines the moments of determination ultimately in terms of the “correlation” of these moments, but cannot gain any “dynamics” from this relation. The dynamics of the function of determination is no feasible option for the reflection-analytical penetration of the ultimate implication or correlation, as typical of transcendental idealism (cf. too Flach, 1994, 289, 374).

With the issue of the dynamics of determination, a systematically important thought is emphasized. As far as in transcendental idealism a dynamics of principles can be brought into play, it lies in the correlative connection of different ‘stages of apriority’, like e.g. the constitutive and regulative principles mentioned. More precisely, the stages of apriority reach from the original synthesis of the heterothesis via the logic of judgement to the concrete determination of the object by methodical principles. Thus, the ultimate or radical foundational moments themselves of thought form only one moment in the whole of the determination of the object. In order to adequately qualify thought as a principle of objectivity, a structure of principles ordered according to their respective validity functions is necessary.

Obviously, this transcendental philosophical dynamics of determination is distinguished from the speculative conceptual development as a self-determination of the general over the particular to the singular: it has not a negation-theoretical profile but a heterothetical. The question is, however, does it overcome the formalism that Hegel noted concerning Kant?

[ii] In the context of the question about the origin of cognition, Rickert develops his so-called model of the object. This doctrine of the theoretical object in general thematizes the fundamental theoretical principles of validity.¹⁰ At the same time, the constitutive meaning of thought for, so to speak, ‘being’, is originally grasped. By philosophically thinking of thought with regard to its content, the object is founded, namely on the level of the origins of thought. On this level it is determined what it means that something ‘is’ at all.

The origin proves to be heterothetic in nature. According to the heterothetic principle, the minimum of any logical objectivity consists of the moments of the one and the other. Thinking is relating one to the other, anything thought is a relation. Pure heterogeneity constitutes thought purely as a relation. The sphere of pure heterogeneity logically precedes the sphere of determining thought, that is to say of thought that determines something. The latter sphere, for Rickert and transcendental philosophy in general, concerns the sphere of judgement. With regard to Wagner and the early Flach, one could call the sphere of the origin that of primary-constitutive apriority, the sphere of the original synthesis. Due to it there is anything at all in a logical sense. Rickert makes this logical primordial constellation explicit as a correlation of form and content. Content thus does not come to thought externally but belongs to the formal factors of the theoretical object in general. Thought involves a self-relation to content. The moments of objectivity as such are the non-predicative, non-judgement type forms ‘form in general’, ‘and’, ‘content in general’.

As the foundation of object determination, primary-constitutive apriority furthermore enables object determination. Although it enables determination of objects in conformity with the logic of judgement, it is itself not object-determining, i.e. judgmental thought. In the whole of the issue of the determination of objects, primary-constitutive apriority concerns the origin as well as the beginning of a series of determinations. On this origin of thought rests the, in the parlance of Wagner and the early Flach, secondary-constitutive apriority of object constitution. The logical development of thought reaches, as Rickert puts it, from something thought at all – the object in general – to a determined object and hence to the structure of predication.

Therefore it is not surprising that Rickert does not present his heterology in a

¹⁰ Rickert, 1924, 8 ff., 1921, 50 ff. See on this model: Flach, 1959; Krijnen, 2001, Ch. 5, 2008; Ch. 2-3.

judgement-theoretical context of the ‘production’ of objectivity. He discusses it either in the context of a logic of numbers (Rickert, 1924, 8) or in that of the development of the concept of the ‘world as a whole’ (*Weltganze*) (Rickert, 1921, 50; 1934, 39). As the “general principle of knowledge of the world” (Rickert, 1934, 46), heterothesis is indeed effective in all thought. Nevertheless, just as for Hegel being as the beginning of logic and thus of the system of philosophy does not coincide with the absolute idea as the nature of thought, so for Rickert, heterology does not coincide with the problem of the “beginning of the system of philosophy” (cf. Krijnen, 2008, Ch. 2-3). Basic disjunctive alternatives to think the world, like the correlations ‘form and content’ or ‘subject and object’ – which are themselves heterothetically (noematically and noetically) related to each other – are special cases of the heterothesis.

[iii] Since the usual approach to the relationship between Rickertian heterology and Hegelian dialectics is directed toward a discussion of the heterothetic or negation-theoretical structure of the original synthetic unity of thought, it tends to go unnoticed that Rickert himself develops a differentiated criticism of Hegel’s conception of the beginning of philosophy (GW 21: 53 ff.). Like Hegel, Rickert thereby recognizes that the problem of ‘beginning’ is complex in itself. As is common in Hegel criticism, Rickert too considers the constitution of Hegel’s beginning to be unsatisfactory, and hence, as Hegel expresses it himself, the “self-preserving foundation of all subsequent developments” (GW 21: 58) fails.¹¹ Interestingly enough, Rickert’s criticism reveals a philosophical-methodical point that is important for formalism and typical of transcendental philosophy concerning its profile of reflection.

Admittedly, despite Rickert’s urge to systematize, the fragmentation of his foundational approaches is striking. There is no continuous constitutional doctrine encompassing all aspects of the foundation of objectivity, integrating heterology as well as the doctrine of judgement and method, the objective-logical (validity-noematic) and subjective-logical (validity-noetic) dimensions. This observation is accompanied by the fact, significant in a reflection-logical sense, that Rickert is not able to justify concepts such as form and content, subject and object, the one and the other – concepts of fundamental relevance for the entire system of philosophy – in the course of a validity-functional deduction. They are not the result of a reflective-constitutive determination of cognition, i.e. of cognition constituting itself. Rather, they have more an *operative* than a deductive status.

This is all the more astonishing since, Rickert in particular endeavors to determine the beginning of philosophy while acknowledging its richness of meaning. Against the background of Hegel, however, it becomes clear that Rickert conceives of the logical beginning of philosophy as the *origin* and does not specifically consider the beginning *as the beginning of the determination of this origin*. Precisely by this, Rickert keeps alive – and this is consistently the case in transcendental philosophy – a difference between the *thing* (*Sache*) and the *representation* of the thing (its cognition) that is incompatible with the program of conceiving of cognition in terms of its self-constitution. Accordingly, Rickert must introduce states of affairs beyond a strictly validity-functional deduction. Since the unity of representation and thing is broken, the claim of philosophy to cognize the ‘world as a whole’ just remains unfulfilled.

Rickert’s reflections on the ‘beginning of philosophy’, which are also intended as a criticism of Hegel, may be seen as indicative of this (1939b; 1934, §§ 31, 25). On the one hand, Rickert, like Hegel, distinguishes different meanings of ‘beginning’: the real, temporally primary beginning of concrete philosophical thought and a logical (conceptual, principled) beginning of thought, which in turn can be an ontological or an epistemological beginning.

¹¹ See on Rickert’s criticism of Hegel’s beginning Krijnen (2008, Ch. 2). In my 2008 treatment, however, the profile of the reflection of transcendental philosophy itself does not play a role yet concerning the assessment, whereas now it is of the essence.

It becomes apparent that the epistemological beginning is something immediate insofar as it concerns a determinacy that is presupposed by all other determinacies. As an immediacy of thought, Rickert conceives of the beginning as the “universal minimum of thought” (Rickert, 1939b, 14 ff.; 1934, 133 f.).

The immediate qua fundamental structure of thought is exactly what Rickert discusses in his heterology. The *beginning* in its content, as the immediate in an epistemological sense, is thus conceived of as *origin*. Accordingly, Rickert begins to distinguish pairs of concepts that are meant to cover the beginning qua minimum of what constitutes objective thought as such. In his essay on the beginning of philosophy, Rickert conceives of it as a subject-object relation (Rickert, 1939b, 31). This results from a (historically saturated) reflection on the meaning of the immediate and, to that extent, from a reflection on pre-existing claims to validity (‘cultural facta’). While Rickert argues from the meaning of ‘beginning’, he thinks of this beginning as the origin of all determinacy. Accordingly, he immediately emphasizes that the logical beginning as a whole is a “double” (Rickert 1939b, 19), a duality. That is to say, he stresses the heterothetic structure of the beginning. Rickert explicitly refers to his heterology to explain the implicative nature of radical foundational concepts, i.e. their “correlation” (Rickert, 1939b, 23, vgl. 31, 35 f., 38 f.). He also characterizes the I as the “form” of the I, as “I-form” (I-ness) in distinction from the content of consciousness qua entirety of all contents, from the “I-content.” (Rickert, 1939b, 32) With this he uses another pair of concepts, quite decisive for his heterology: form and content.

Although Rickert knows that the duality of the beginning of the system of philosophy is effective in every step of the elaboration of the system, that is of the concept of the world as a whole, he does not gain the determining dynamics of the advance from the concept of *the beginning itself*. The relation of beginning of thought and the cognition of the beginning of thought remains external. In conformity with this, Rickert operates with concepts that do not arise from the meaning of ‘beginning’; to that extent, they are merely claimed in their validity. Alluding to a criticism by Hegel of the traditional doctrine of powers or faculties – especially having Kant in mind – to come up with a “sack full of faculties” (GW 4: 237), Rickert apparently has at his disposal a sack of fundamental philosophical terms that can qualify the beginning, although it is precisely the beginning that is supposed to be the immediate, the non-mediated, that is, the still undetermined. Expressed differently and with regard to the form of reflection authoritative in transcendental philosophy, reflection is reflection on something present; it is not self-reflection of the determination of the beginning but external reflection. In his essay on the beginning, Rickert gains the main pairs of concepts through an analysis of the concept of the ‘given’ (Rickert, 1939b, 18). Moreover, on the one hand he repeatedly argues for a primacy of epistemology (logic) in the system of philosophy, but in his reflections on the beginning of philosophy he tries to argue that the initial concept of philosophy is not that of a theoretical beginning but has a universal content preceding it (Rickert, 1939b, 39 f., 42 f., 46 f.). Undoubtedly, the beginning is not the beginning of cognizing the whole as the subject matter of philosophy. It is at most its origin, the universal minimum of thought.

Rickert’s book *Grundprobleme der Philosophie* confirms this result (1934, § 31). At the same time, Rickert connects here the world of the beginning with his doctrine of the so-called prophysics, the “prophysical sphere of being” (Rickert, 1934, § 31, cf. §§ 21 ff.). This sphere concerns the dimension of the subject or agent as the principle of objectifying (performing synthesis) that is, the subject as distinct from the object world as that which is mediated (Rickert, 1934, § 25). As a cognizing agent, the subject thereby proves to be synthesis (Rickert, 1934, § 26): it thinks the content and thus forms it conceptually (Rickert, 1934, § 29). For cognition, this content is first of all a “state” (*Zuständliche*), that is to say content brought to a standstill by the form of “identity” (cf. too Rickert, 1939a, 107 f.). Subsequently this content as a state becomes something objective by further forms of cognition. Thus, beyond heterology it also becomes visible that the philosophical reflection does not determine itself but takes the shape of ontological grades. Rickert’s study on the *Logik des Prädikats* (1930) shows how this

gradation takes place, namely in such a way that the heterothetic relation of origin enters into the relation of judgement, so that the synthesis of form and content through a multiplicity of forms of cognition becomes the constitution of concrete-objective meaning. According to its foundational function, the origin is at the same time the beginning of a continuation too.

This continuation, however, does not result from the advance of the self-constitution of the origin. In this respect, as Hegel put it, the advance of the determination is not at the same time a return to its ground. It is rather an advance from it to relations of objective meaning that are logically subordinated. The thing of thought (*Sache des Denkens*, *ratio essendi*, correlation of origin as immediate presupposition) and the thinking of the thing of thought (*Denken der Sache*, *ratio cognoscendi*, mediated cognition of the origin) fall apart. A self-constitution of thought as the ground of all determinacy is not present.

Rickert's heterothesis as the principle of all principles has the right thing in itself to qualify thought and thus also that what is thought in its fundamental structure as a "*relation of relata*" (Rickert, 1921, 56; 1924, 18). The problem, however, is that while Rickert rightly holds that the cognition of the fundamental structure of thought is mediated in multiple ways, he insufficiently considers that the concepts with which he qualifies the logical beginning must follow from the thought of the beginning itself. The agreement between Rickert and Hegel therefore ends with the fact that for both the logical beginning is the immediate. For Hegel, it is precisely the indeterminate immediacy of the beginning as a beginning that makes up its determinacy; Rickert, in contrast, begins to qualify the beginning by concepts that are not such of the concept of beginning itself. Obviously, Rickert's heterology is primarily concerned with the completeness of the concepts of the origin, which can only be achieved disjunctively (i.e. heterothetically). However, it is not possible at all to "easily make the basic alternatives of logic in ten different ways", as Schelling (1861, 143) once erroneously asserted influentially against Hegel. This idea of possible multiplicity and disjunctive completeness of basic alternatives to qualify thought has persisted up to the transcendental philosophy of our days (Wagner, 1980, 135 f.). However, the beginning is characterized by an entanglement that prevents its analysis, as in Rickert, from being carried out in such a way that its synthesis is included in one and at the same time. For Hegel, against this, the advance is, as it is said, analytic and synthetic at the same time (GW 20: § 239 A; GW 12: 242): the logical beginning can be made in only one way, generating its own dynamic of determination.

3. Transcendental Reflection as External Reflection

[i] Hegel, in his logic of essence and seen from a systematic perspective, qualified the Rickertian model of graded (layered) apriority, typical of transcendental philosophy, as an "external reflection". In fact, Hegel's description of the concept of reflection is immensely helpful in understanding fundamental problems of transcendental philosophy.

Hegel's *Logik* is a theory of comprehending thought (and in this respect a logic of the concept). For both transcendental and speculative idealism, logic (in neo-Kantian terms also called epistemology) is the first science in the system of philosophy. But only for speculative idealism is it the last science of the system too. Instead of conceiving of its determinations as determinations of "substrata" taken from the "representation", (*Vorstellung*) Hegel's logic thematizes the determinations of thought free from being such and considers the "nature" of the determinations of thought and their "value" "in and for themselves" (GW 21: 49). In this context, Hegel also immediately indicates what is important to him methodically, namely that in philosophical comprehension it is the "nature of the content" itself that is responsible for the advance or "movement"; the content itself, the content's own reflection, "posits and generates" its determination (GW 21: 7 f.). Such a logic is neither a pre-Kantian metaphysics nor a

Kantian transcendental logic but a logic of the absolute idea (GW 12: 236 f.) as the “concept that *comprehends itself*” (GW 12: 252) and thus of the “*absolute and all truth*” (GW 20: § 236, vgl. GW 12: 236). It evolves in an immanent process of determination from the beginning of thought as the indeterminate immediate, which is thought qua ‘being’, to the completion of this self-movement in the comprehension of its movement, which is thought qua ‘absolute idea’.

By letting the logic of essence emerge from the logic of being, Hegel copes with the problem of the externality of fundamental logical determinations introduced. Already the beginning of the logic of being must develop all determinations from itself. The thing (*Sache*) of thought is no longer different from the thought of the thing. A speculative beginning is indifferent with respect to such a distinction, a distinction very important for transcendental philosophy. In Rickert's beginning, articulated from Hegel's perspective, phenomenological and logical aspects are intertwined: Rickert's logical beginning is not developed on the speculative standpoint. Rather, Rickert's conception of beginning, despite its relationism, remains caught in the ‘opposition of consciousness’. Hegel's remarks at the beginning of the logic of concepts that Kant's doctrine of transcendental apperception overcomes the externality of concept and object while leaving it at the same time as an abstract relation (GW 12: 17 ff.) no less apply to Rickert's heterology.

On the one hand, Hegel transfers the logical relations of being into those of the concept; on the other hand he develops them in the course of a process of determination conceived of as a return to its ground. This emerges from the beginning of philosophy with being. The essence is thus conceived of as “being that has gone *into itself*” (GW 20: § 112 A), being that mediates itself with itself through the “negativity of itself” (GW 20: § 112).

With the development from being to essence, Hegel comes to a *new conception of reflection*, fundamentally different from that of transcendental philosophy. In transcendental philosophy, reflection is primarily conceived of as the reflection of a cognizing subject on the principles that determine the objectivity of the concrete on which it reflects. In short, reflection is reflection on something present, on what happens to be coincidentally so or so given. Hegel, however, thematizes the meaning of *reflection as such* that logically precedes the transcendental concept of reflection. Its meaning arises in the course of the foundational determination of being as the immediate, as being that mediates itself with itself through the “negativity of itself”. Reflection turns out to be a pure relation of immediacy and mediation of thought. The logic of essence is virtually a “discussion of the unity of immediacy and mediation positing itself essentially” (GW 20: § 65 A).

The thus conceived concept of “absolute reflection” is then differentiated as positing reflection, external reflection, and determining reflection. The concept of reflection and its own determinacy therefore emerge within the framework of an immanent process of determination. In the concept of reflection, the movement of objective thought itself becomes thematic. It is characterized by a self-referential negativity that develops in the three forms mentioned. The concepts by which reflection is qualified are shown to be intrinsic determinants of this development. The relation of self-relation and negation that is reflection covers the whole spectrum of immediacy and mediation through the three forms of reflection distinguished by Hegel. Here, there are no longer independent substrata of the relation (e.g. contingent things given to reflective thought, which then prove to be constituted by the conditions of their possibility) but a dynamic system of absolute relationality that generates its own determinacy. In contrast to transcendental philosophy, Hegel not only talks *about* self-constitution, but self-constitution is *performed in actu*. Through this reflective-constitutive methodic profile, the heterothesis of thought is logically dynamized in such a way that a self-constitution of thought as the presupposition par excellence is satisfied, at least methodically. Although transcendental philosophy wants to overcome the ‘opposition of consciousness’ (subject-object, form-content or similar) by heterology, it does not think of thinking the thing and the thing of thought

as one. In contrast, seen from a methodic perspective, in Hegel's logic there are no thought determinations that are infiltrated from 'outside'.

In particular in Hegel's elaboration of *external reflection*, the presupposed opposition of consciousness as reflective knowledge, as reflection on something given, is critically discussed. That is to say that this form of reflective knowledge is shown to be an external reflection. An external reflection, however, has its meaning only as a moment of absolute reflection. External reflection is a logical impossibility if it is absolutized; to phrase it differently, if it is reduced to a mere reflection of the understanding (*Verstandesreflexion*). In external reflection, the unity of immediacy and reflection gets into an external relation to itself; it encounters itself as immediacy (GW 11: 252). It presupposes a being, an immediacy, in order to be able to comprehend itself as its immanent reflection, aiming to find the general (rule, principle, law) of this initial fact. Thus it is "only an *external reflection*" (GW 11: 254), reflection "in a subjective sense" (GW 11: 254), not a moment of absolute reflection. The so-called 'philosophy of reflection' (*Reflexionsphilosophie*) is for Hegel the paradigmatic instance of such an absolutized external reflection.

It may be quite surprising to see Rickert's reflection on validity characterized as an external reflection. After all, neo-Kantianism was opposed to Kant's dualisms. Rickert's doctrine of heterology was not least an extremely subtle attempt to show a relatedness of different moments in the origin of thought and to let them become decisive for the whole system of philosophy. Nevertheless, the concept of reflection itself requires a deduction (philosophical justification). This deduction cannot be exhausted in the fact that philosophical thought, in an initial phase of its self-knowledge of reason, has to start with something concrete, as the famous theorem of cultural facts (*Kulturfacta*) of transcendental philosophy, its doctrine of culture as the philosophical *analysandum*, claims:¹² the phenomenological moment of philosophy would be overstretched.

The reflection of transcendental philosophy takes its beginning with an immediate presupposition and unfolds in such a way that with respect to this presupposition it is conceived of as positing it. But not only is this beginning of external reflection with the immediate for Hegel merely an apparent beginning – the initial fact, as said, admittedly also proves for transcendental philosophy to be constituted, and consequently posited – since the presupposed immediacy is regarded as unmediated, as the fact of a validity claim or as an accidental beginning, not as a presupposition. It is thus regarded not as a moment of reflection itself, a moment set by reflection in the function of a presupposition. Consequently, the reflection finds in the given, as Hegel aptly states, only determinations "external to it" (GW 11: 253). Strictly taken, Rickert's concepts qualifying the universal minimum of thought, i.e. the origin, come 'from outside' into the reflection process. Therefore Hegel's reproach of the externality of determinations applied to an immediately given substratum is confirmed, while the original structure of synthesis worked out by Rickert is supposed to be, with Hegel, "not as being external to that which is immediate, but as its actual being". Obviously, the concept of "absolute reflection" is presupposed here, and for any external reflection it even remains so (GW 11: 254). The presupposed being is in its immediacy withdrawn from determination by reflection. However, it is only a substratum that is prior to reflection, because reflection in its activity of presupposing disregards its own role of positing the presupposed. Due to this externality of the given as well as its determinations, the reflection fails in its task of being founded in the origin in a reflective constitutive fashion. Rather, it proves to be the activity of a cognizing subject that refers to an immediately given by means of immediately given determinations.

¹² Windelband has even seen Hegel's brilliant achievement precisely in his orientation of philosophy to history, history supplying the material for critical philosophical reflection: Wilhelm Windelband, 1915b, 133; 1907, 540; 1915a, 280 ff. See on the neo-Kantian theorem of cultural facts Krijnen (2008, Ch. 1.3).

4. Conclusion

Concepts such as form, content, identity, or difference, with which Rickert characterizes the purely logical object, for Hegel basically belong to the logic of essence (GW 11: 291 ff. mit 258 ff.). Hence, they have a prehistory in the logic of being (moreover, they still have to pass through the logic of the concept; only here, Rickert's heterothesis is qualified as the absolute idea).

Such a logic of being is presupposed by heterology. Thus it would be appropriate to present this logical prehistory of the logic of essence, clarifying how the beginning of logic is able to reach its goal: how the continuation of the determination of thought is really a return to the ground and not merely an advance from it. In view of my thesis though, the following conclusion is already possible.

Methodically it is decisive that Hegel develops the determinations of his *Logik* from the idea of the beginning. It is a long way to the absolute idea as Hegel's conception of the origin of everything. In the course of the development of thought, it comes to such concepts that characterize the relation of thought as reflective. Rickert, on the other hand, too rashly turns the beginning into the origin. Accordingly, a logic of being as a logic of being that emerges from making the meaning of thought in its beginning explicit is missing. It is missing for methodic reasons: transcendental philosophy's reflection on validity does not advance from the thought of the beginning but is accomplished by considering the content in its original determinacy. As a consequence, this original determinacy is itself determined by concepts which are not justified by the process of reflection. They are rather subordinated to it, i.e. they are infiltrated into the reflection externally. Despite the claim of transcendental philosophy to develop a radical foundation, such concepts do not emerge from thought that constitutes itself.

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