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**DOCTORAL SCHOOL „CRITICAL ARGUMENTATION AND  
PHILOSOPHICAL RECONSTRUCTION”**

**The Identity and the Difference of Thought and Being in Hegel.  
The Speculative Turn and Its Origin**

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**2013**

# Thesis summary

List of Bibliographic Abbreviations

Preliminary Considerations About Today's Metaphysics, and About Philosophy's Relations Towards Science

Introduction

Chapter I. Beginning and Being

I.1. Immediacy and mediacy. Or Through What Should Science Begin

a. Knowledge's contradiction

b. Beginning's Contradiction

c. Criticism's Contradiction

I.2. Immediate Negativity

a. Perception's Development

b. Suprasensible's Apparition

I.3. Being and Nothing

a. Identity of Being and Nothing as Origin's prior

b. Identity of Being and Nothing as Passing. Becoming

I.4. The Speculative Drive

a. *Aufhebung* and Negativity

Chapter II. Substance, Subject, Essence

II.1. The Speculative Reflection

a. Doubt and Ground

- b. Speculative Circularity
- c. Beginning's solution
- d. „Two” Identity Principles
- e. The Principle of non-contradiction
- f. What is Difference

## II.2. Force of the Intellect **Eroare! Marcaj în document nedefinit.**

- a. Exterior and interior or active and passive
- b. The Law and the supersensible

## II.3. Self-consciousness

- a. Speculative Thought

## II.4. Phenomenon and essence

- a. What Remains To Be Thought
- b. Thought's articulation
- c. How Do We Think the Unthinkable

## Chapter III. The Pass and the Spirit

### III.1. The Fundamental Principle of Hegelian Thought

- a. The Self-differentiation of Immediacy
- b. A Language Issue

### III.2. The Concept

- a. The Reversed Relation of Being and Thought

### III.3. The Absolute Idea

- a. The Speculative Subject

c. The Hegelian Theology

Conclusions

Bibliography

**Key words:** *Hegel, speculative, indeterminacy, absolute, contradiction, origin, German idealism, Spirit.*

Hegel understood that science begins with itself. Then the first step that science has to take is towards and within itself. Thus there is a distance that knowledge takes towards itself in order to become science, for any knowledge has a prior distance from that which it knows; for as to know that something is or what and how it should be, first, one has to find it, and that is impossible without knowing that it is different, distinct. This already makes science putting itself in the dual position of identity and difference with itself.

Is science, then, its own distance in relation to itself? Hegel's answer is yes. For only the point of differentiation is the one that unifies and because of that only that which is different makes knowledge possible and therefore science and thinking. But then, as thinking, by the knowledge that achieves through this state of self-division, also shows what is in the sense of being, it follows that thinking's destiny will be shared also by Being who, in order to give all that is must be completely different from everything that is and, therefore, only in this way in identity with itself. Hegel is the one who saw to the end the *initium* point of fundamental differentiation, he understood that Being, therefore the real, is only as divided and as its own division.

Hegel has developed this issue following a few guiding ideas: 1) The negative is inscribed within the real by its own definition, hence it is effective; 2) because of that inscription, identity and difference, affirmation and negation coincide in their fundamental origin that self-differentiates itself in its own absolute by this coincidence; 3) this inscription of the negative also means simultaneously that the world itself is in unity with the indeterminacy or that the world is the development of the absolute and unfolded identity of the indeterminacy.

The objections that have been brought against Hegel beginning with Schelling from his Berlin period and ending with Heidegger in his *Sein und Zeit* or other latter texts all essentially concern precisely Hegel's basic postulate: the inscription of the negative in the real, hence the effectiveness of the unity of the ideal and the real. — Unity that particularly Schelling relegated in regard to Hegel to a mere prose of flattened determination at the level of a local inflammation and inflation of aporetic thinking.

But, if consequently, all human life is dependent on this appeal to the basics, and if the foundation cannot be developed otherwise but only by taking into account the problem of the negative; finally, if Hegel, as we anticipate, is the one thinker who effectively takes into discussion in the most irreducible way the problem of the negative and that of the metaphysical foundation in its indeterminacy, then we have here, in this succession of premises, the justification of our choice for this thesis. And hereupon particularly justifies the specific issue of this paper: namely, *the identity and difference of thought and Being in Hegel*, but developed in accord with the very problem of absolute negation supposed by the very pure presuppositionless thinking of metaphysics. We identified this issue of the absolute negative in two Hegelian occurrences: the first, concerning the speculative movement itself; the second, in relation to the object and, which is the same with the object of this movement, the spring or the assumption of the speculative motion: *the undetermined immediacy*.

Of course, about the thought's speculative movement in general and about the Hegelian speculative thought in particular numerous rich and revelatory pages have already been written. — Even though in an incomplete manner, given the infinite that such effort implies. However, this incompleteness concerns the present paper too in that it will not stop at simply making assertions about the speculative in Hegel's thought in general, but is intended precisely to consider how this speculative flows and returns to the *undetermined immediate*, but not as it was in the beginning, but in order to properly determine the speculative identity, identity, then, which is an identity-difference where difference itself is exhaustively identity and where identity itself is exhaustively and immediately its own division.

For these reasons, our paper will not consider the entire Hegelian work, but we preferred to particularly focus on the problem of the beginning of science and speculation in the Hegelian speculative development, beginning where it arises, as we believe, like within a genuine *Ereignis* of knowledge's grounding, the non-place of the place, the indeterminacy of determinacy in its very principle of fundamental division. Of course, this beginning can also be literally located at the actual beginning of Hegel's writings. We are referring in this respect to the first chapters of the *Phenomenology of the Spirit* and of *The Science of Logic*. But this beginning doesn't have a univocal correlation to these bibliographical points — on the contrary, it resurfaces dispersedly, but with a striking thoroughness practically over the course of each new speculative development in the Hegelian doctrine. However, we focused our

efforts just upon a series of injunction and joint development points of the Hegelian doctrine. Thus, we targeted key stages of the "Doctrine of Essence" and the transition from Essence to Concept through subjective logic in the *Science of Logic*. Finally, other points that we referred to, not with the same insistence, are those relating to the Hegelian criticism towards Kantianism, against the concept of Kantian self-consciousness.

Naturally, many other points could have held our attention — practically the entire development contained in the texts of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the *Science of Logic*; but they are to be referred to with other occasions. At least in this respect, if not in others, in this work, we tried to follow the Hegelian position in assuming the determination precisely in order to not be left in the vacuum of indeterminacy, but in order to choose for the safer ground of a result, no matter how determined or finite.

Because we spoke about results, the purpose of this paper should impose itself by its own evidence. It is quite clear that any changes in the origin of a thing have endless effects on its subsequent determinations. In this regard, we expect that, to the extent that it will be possible, to achieve with success the reforming of traditional positions held in what concerns Hegelian philosophy — reform that started and runs with the insistence of several decades in French Hegelian exegesis — and thus the Hegelian philosophy would be revisited not only by phenomenology or political science, but by natural sciences as well or, why not?, even by math. Of course, our enterprise will not extend here to such reviews. But the result of our work has as a determined target precisely the problem of the origin of the immediate indeterminacy, its absolute self-differentiation precisely because of its obvious nuclear posture of this fundamental premise of the Hegelian discourse. Thus, although the immediate unity of the primordial that self-differentiates itself has already been treated in various studies, however, the very issue of the primordial *differentiation* of undetermined immediacy has not been treated anywhere in particular, from what has come to our knowledge. In any case, it has not been investigated from the viewpoint that constitutes the backbone of this paper.

When referring to the object of our work, we should say that it also started from the fairly clear conscience of the significance that Hegel had in shaping modernity and postmodernity. Most of these results are, however, effects of a distorted reading of Hegel's work that lasted and lasts even today since 180 years ago. Only in the last 40 years studies about Hegelian thought have succeeded to detach themselves from the avalanche of

theological, philosophical, political and scientific criticism to which the work of the great German thinker was a subject, in order to pass in the horizon of some more neutral and faithful hermeneutics. And only in the last 20-30 years can we say that Hegel began to be increasingly detached from the ballast that his image has worn by association with some of the most monstrous events that humanity has known especially in the Eastern areas of Europe and most of Asia. For these reasons we believe that the results of a real reevaluation of the nucleus of the Hegelian thinking are carriers of effects that we are not able to anticipate due to their potential vastness. Or, in the wake of this reassessment we also understand to place the present paper.

The basic idea of this thesis is that the Hegelian doctrine is not a self-indulgent panlogism, neither a systematic megalomania of all human knowledge, neither an undertaking that drowns itself in the vicious circle of the self-presuming thought. Instead, we believe that it represents the most serious philosophical attempt to penetrate with the speculative eye to the core of the ontological constitution of the real and its meaning: trying to attest *how and why the absolute division of the undetermined immediacy occurs*. In the abundant multitude of studies that treated about the ultimate unity of the Hegelian system, none dealt specifically *this* issue. Nobody else treated convincingly about what holds together and simultaneously divides Being and Nothingness in the "Doctrine of Being" chapter of the *Science of Logic*. As no one has exhaustively treated about the spring that makes the negative to be inscribed in the real in Hegel's work with such irreducibility as to be the initial and final point of all speculation.

The work plan had to be adapted accordingly. We thought that it was a proper method going through the problem of identity of Being and thought by following broadly the Hegelian structure of science: being, essence, concept.

As for Being, we thought it necessary to show in what manner the speculative method is imposed, precisely in order to let the internal inference of science to require such a procedure by the inherent shortcomings that affect knowledge itself by its simple existence. And we continued then with a brief presentation of the division of knowledge during its development in the first three chapters of the *Phenomenology of the Spirit* to culminate with the question of the Origin's self-division in Hegel such as we believe that this occurs in the identity of Being and Nothing within the *Science of Logic*.



Concerning the essence, we did not insist upon the manner which makes that the phenomena are essentialized and the essence becomes phenomena in the determinations of reflection as studies of this aspect of Hegelian thought have already been written — among the most astute being those of Philippe Soual, Bernard Mabilie, Gwendoline Jarczyk and the group coalesced around the Parisian professors J. Biard, D. Buvat, J.-F. Kervegan. Hence, what we tried was to treat the problem of the thought's absolute relation to the ineffable. It was here that it seemed to us to occur the opening of the fundamental principle of Hegelian thought.

Concerning the concept, we dedicated to this part the issue of the revealing of the fundamental source of the Hegelian thought's principle as well as a brief summary of the effects related to the human knowledge system that speculative thinking and assuming the principle of Hegelian thought may have. Finally, given the explicit and very consistent theological influence and lineage that Hegel had in his thought, it seemed natural to us to present in the closing part some aspects of the significance of this system to Christian theology — the more so as this relation is not quite resolved yet and it may still be a source of dispute. In particular, we focused on the question of how Hegelian philosophy substantially clarifies the ontological argument.

The problem of the identity of Being and thought, that is, through the absolute difference, appears, then, in all its acuteness. Just as well as the possibility and properties of conceiving the infinite, of an absolute difference and of an absolute identity, that is, our access to transcendental — to the transcendent itself, in Hegel's own words — has to be priorly investigated because the two issues are interlaced: the possibility of our own thinking and knowledge of having themselves as objects cannot be developed but in the horizon of a thought that contains itself as object, of a being that contains its own difference into an immovable abyss. But since we are dealing with an abyss, the fundamental problem of thinking begins to be that of questioning to what extent is it able to achieve this transcendence, in other words to what extent the overcoming of thought can still be reached by thought.

If our original premise is true, that of the absolute identity and absolute difference of Being and thought, that which will reveal to us could only be something of the purview that concerns the idea that alleges that the Beginning and the End are the same, identity gives its

own differentiation and contains it exhaustively, as the exhaustive difference reveals itself as identity. Furthermore, we understand then that by necessity the absolute enters in relation, the indeterminacy determines itself and the infinite joins the finitude.

If speculative thinking is responsible for the investigation of the Absolute, what it must imperatively follow is precisely the clarification of the possibility or of the impossibility of having a complete comprehension of the Unconditioned, but also to avoid sticking to the idea that there would never be a final term of knowledge. From this point of view, what has been intended is to clarify the approach through which the speculations assumed by Hegelian thought manage to overcome the fundamental crisis of thought to what should be in relation to the speculative unity.

We believe, therefore, that the response is that which affirms that the total transcendent unity of Being was absolute from the beginning and that the privative development that the spirit engages through the determinacy that is correlated to us, determined subjects, cannot find its overcoming but only through such an assumption.

In this regard, the postulate of the principle's differentiating must be adopted — the Absolute is not only substance, but also subject, Hegel said — but in terms of the Absolute, that of the exhaustion which only certifies the unfathomable mystery of an eternal and unnatural *coincidentia oppositorum*. Through these conclusions only is possible to envision a natural dialogue between theology and philosophy, and secondly, between religion and science. One issue that will need a reopening from less than usual or popular perspectives than we were used to before.