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**SUMMARY OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS**

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**Abstract:**

This PhD thesis sought to capture the radically transformative potential of the *Logic of Reflection* (or of *Essence*) in Hegel's *Science of Logic* and to use it as a *modus operandi* of intellectual emancipation. And since the paradoxical object investigated by Hegel in *Essence* is thought itself and its dialectical dynamic (i.e., belonging to a self-negating negativity), this emancipatory approach did not prove to be a linear one, but, on the contrary, interwoven with retrojections, projections, turns, ramifications, and conceptual leaps alike. Within this emancipatory-transformative project, the determining relation of reason to reality can be further elaborated and expanded.

The avowed objective of this work was to notice and overcome the inconsistencies and the overall incompleteness inherent in *Being* (the first part of the *Objective Logic*), in order to legitimize the *Essence* (the second part of the *Objective Logic*) and show the new thematic horizon that is opened by it. Our research has mapped an emancipatory world of Hegel's reflection, which is tributary to absolute negativity, a world that is glimpsed once the tyranny and hegemony of the immediacy are ended by the essential mediation that dismantles any claim of a so-called pure, unfathomable, autonomous, and external immediacy. This kind of immediacy is present in the inconsistencies and lacks of *Being*, that is, it represents the blockage and the ultimate shortcoming of the myth of a world of already-given, simply-present objects, objects to which we would have immediate access. We tried to see the epistemological, ontological, metaphysical, and political implications of this Hegelian revolution, and we arrived to a overview of it as a point of convergence of emancipated and emancipatory rationality that gives birth to a new philosophical arena between thought as thought and the object as an object of thought, engaging in fruitful dialogues with other philosophical areas, schools, and programs.

The very evanescence of *Being's* exteriority and radical autonomy is the liberation cultivated by the radical-transformational project of the logic of reflection, or the logic of *Essence*. Self-referentiality, the knowledge about knowledge that cannot be identical to various kinds of empirical knowledge (without annihilating the latter), is the core of Hegel's idealist argument that transforms realism into an integral subspecies of idealism, on the basis of the same logical structure that is exhibited by both *Being* and *Thinking*. Consequently, his idealism is actually a conceptual realism, and the tension within the mutually determining constitution of the Being-Thought tuple, which shows the conceptual conformation of the two (only apparently irreconcilable) poles, was highlighted by two ideas in the present work..

First, we detailed the idea of a conceptual form that is its own content, that has overcome the lack of external confirmation once it aims at questioning the very structure of reality in which (or on the basis of which) experience occurs. Thus, this was not equivalent to the simple confirmation and adequacy of some concepts to reality, because the relationship of speculative science with reality must account for its historical self-localization through the same categories with which thinking wants to encompass the surrounding reality. Second, we showed another inflection point within the type of discourse that still has a remnant of immediacy (and, implicitly, of an already-constituted, given world), namely that of the stabilization and "freezing" of things (and their names) in the abyss of *Intellect/Understanding (Verstand)* in contrast with the fluidity, processuality, and dialectic instilled in them by *Reason (Vernunft)*. This emerged from a duplicated impossibility at both ends of the above-mentioned tuple, namely. a) we cannot say what (any) being (multiplicity, relation-to-other) is without designating it by thought, and vice versa, but equally crucial b) we cannot know what thinking is without acknowledging and evaluating the constraints of reality. The indissociability of the two fundamental metaphysical terms accentuates the impossibility of their coagulation as separate and external moments to each other and calls for another logic that can overcome this impasse, so as to not perpetuate it or externally certify it as implacably fixed.

According to the *Logic of Essence*, nothing can be non-mediated anymore, not even the opposition between phenomena and the thing-in-itself, or that of idealism versus realism. In the same manner, realism is no longer in an opaque and i-mediated oppositional relation with idealism, but the mutual determination of the two terms is occasioned. The realism that can be equated with

a restricted or narrow idealism brings us to an overview of the Hegelian project as that which makes the non-subjective intelligible. And the tension of the fact that this knowledge about knowledge (through the thorough investigation of the categories of self-knowledge) is not like the "classical" epistemological knowledge of the reduction to the relation-with-other, that is, to the mere passing toward something else, does not involve an even more rigid tracing of the domains of the two afore-mentioned types of knowledge, but invites us to a discovery and enrichment of sensitive knowledge through the revision of self-knowledge, precisely by virtue of the osmosis between the two.

In other words, Hegel's strange idealism (as conceptual realism) provides a theoretical edification but also points to an equally emancipatory practical transformation. By understanding the pair of realism and idealism, we can set free their interplay of mutual determination without corroding it through the prism of i-mediated theses. Moreover, the self-definition and self-reflection of the categories of thought must not abstractly rid itself of that which twists thought but domesticate all those usurping and subverting elements for thought, this dynamic being described by the very free course derivation of the categories of thought, purified of any presuppositions whatsoever.

The first chapter, called "**The historical turning point of the Logic of Essence**", comprised the development of the following topics: absolute Hegelian negativity as a fundamental logical-ontological primitive, the emancipation that the revision of the categories of thought itself raises (especially in relation to Kant) and, equally important, the integrative fusion of *Being* and *Thought* and the necessary transformation of the contents of the objects that have become now "objects of thought". The elaboration of these subjects in this first chapter was carried out in a historical-polemical manner, showing how the revolution of the categories of thought in the *Essence* is inescapably connected to several Kantian neuralgic points such as the (self)limitation of epistemology to finite objects, the unquestioned drawing of the boundary between the knowable and the unknowable, and the failure to apply this Kantian philosophical method to the unconditioned through the inflection points called antinomies and paralogisms.

Although in literature we have a plethora of suggestions of this prodigious relation between Kant and Hegel, we have singled out those authors who do not abstractly repudiate the philosopher from Königsberg and see that, in fact, Hegel is deeply indebted to him, although there are places

where a criticism of the limitations of Kant's system has proven itself to be necessary. Although this chapter could not exhaustively cover this immense area of controversy, it nevertheless serves a precise purpose: through it, we compile a genealogy of the problem of radical emancipation of thought as it was enabled by Kant and developed by Hegel. A critical point here was the change of perspective from Kant's negative ontology to Hegel's dialectical integrationism. It was also illustrative to redefine Hegel's concept of infinity, one that essentially reveals the transition from *Being* to *Essence*.

The fundamental relations brought about by the logic of the dual, autonomized, and metaphysical-grounding Hegelian negation were highlighted in relation to the Kantian logic of finite cognition, but they were also understood and analyzed as subjects in their own right. We explained and used the essential formulas of reflection, namely: relation-with-other as an internal and integral aspect of relation-with-self, the integrative coalescence of being and thought (for which there can no longer be any ontological substratum) as the overcoming the opaque cleavage between subject and object, the self-sabotage of the relation of simple reference to something else from which emerges the relationship of being-postited-in-relation-with-the-totality and the metamorphosis of the former two apparently inescapable poles (as members of a so-called irrepressible disjunction) in different moments of the same process that each of them is (or the unity of identity and difference. All these relations of the Essence open coherent and cohesive thematic horizons that can even achieve the capture and historical-philosophical correction of the aforementioned neuralgic points and demonstrate that the complex structure of the Concept alongside the dialectic of absolute negativity represents the force that constitutes "what is" or, simply put, that "being" and "being intelligible" become the same. Hegel is the radical post-Kantian for whom even the last bastion of immediacy and, implicitly, of the idea of a given disappears under the pressure of conceptual plausibility. The firm ground of his metaphysical construction is realized by recapitulating and retrojecting a history, and progressing and projecting philosophically from the ruins necessarily resulting from his obstinacy of not accepting the claims of immediacy and systematically scutinizing them.

After displaying the context and the web of relations of the first chapter, in the second chapter, "**The Instruments of *Essence***", I opted for the immanentist recollection of the first two sections of the text of the *Essence*, in order to see Hegel's ideas not as clippings, but throughout

their circulation and functions. But this reading from the immanence of the text of the *Essence* was not a banal and tedious repetition of Hegel's theses. On the contrary, I have shown how the German philosopher provides the means of a quasi-general repudiation of interpretive one-sidedness and semantic univocity with this sum of instruments of reflection that harbors a radical intellectual emancipation. This is also due to the Hegelian commitment to a positing process, although this construction is a strange one for the non-philosophical consciousness, being infiltrated by the presuppositions and conditioning of the reflexive mechanism that epitomizes the dialectic of absolute negativity. The systematic destruction of the illusion of pure immediacy or simple negativity results in a totally reconstituted being and an opportunity for the radical transformation (emancipation) of rational subjects. Or, as I showed in the first chapter, I showed how the merging pair of being and thought is underlined by the capturing of the movement (or the process) of thought hence, it is tributary to philosophical necessities that transform each immediacy into a result of the process of mediation.

This dialectical dynamic is one that characterizes the *Logic of Reflection* and is, in fact, the vantage point of philosophy for Hegel. Reflection is not an aesthetic mirage but, on the contrary, it is the expression of the metaphysical necessity of negativity and has a praxeological implication within a spiritual community. Being-posited-in-relation-with-the-totality and relation-with-another as an integral part of the relation-with-self are the formulas of this dynamic of thought represented by the *Essence*. By dismantling theories of the substratum and thereby annihilating any quintessential version of Essence, Hegel shows us that this systematic and laborious analysis of the very categories of thought constitutes the "living" character of philosophy. Through contradiction understood as a condition of thought, Hegel actually shows the emancipatory potential of Reason and how it constitutes both a transformation of the objects of thought and of the forms of consciousness that created these objects in the first instance, objects that are the images or reflexions of these forms of consciousness.

Thus, through chapters 1 and 2, we were finally able to construct a conceptual *nexus*: a critique and clarification of reflexive processes are aimed at, as well as their objective (and inevitably intersubjective) validity. The subjective-objective *nexus* is what remains in the wake of the essentialist roll, it is the world after the dissolution of the absolute dichotomy of subject and object, of the myth of the given, and, technically speaking, of the immediate difference between



essence and appearance itself. This new world, resulting from Hegel's critique, still preserves these modulations (of "subjective" and "objective", respectively), but at the same time seeks their mutual determination and the capturing of the movement of thought - in short, we now have the object as object of thought and thought as thought (or the activity of thinking itself) within a conceptual form that reproduces their isomorphic structure and then duplicates it onto itself, although this form (i.e, The *Concept*) is originating both of them. The structuring relation of the *Concept* given by the *Essence* takes place both between the two poles and reverberates within itself towards the two poles – it is relational and self-relational at the same time – it is the complement of the absolute negativity of the reflection. But this new world of *Essence*, underlined by the *nexus*, will in turn be mediated and contain ample epistemic, praxeological, ontological, and, of course, metaphysical realizations and targets. Therefore, the other two chapters of the present work will be a careful analysis of both the subjective pole of this nexus and the objective one.

Chapter 3, "**The Subjective Side of the Conceptual Nexus: The Radicality of Speculative Knowledge**", orbited around the result after the *essential* metamorphosis on the subjective side and has proven itself as inevitably crossed by the spiritual dimension of language. Mediation as a spiritual fact has been shown to be inescapably linked to the idea that language indexes the community of rational agents more than it atomistically designates ontological items. Hence, language presupposes a sociality and an interaction that make it possible in the first instance. The language that makes ontology without being ontology, or the language of speculative propositions, is the result of the radical transformation brought about by the emancipatory logic of reflection, one that must explain even the initial dividing negativity between the members of the subject *versus* object dichotomy and explain itself therein, or, according to the formula from literature, this language develops the subject through predicates within speculative propositions.

This led to a revision and re-explanation of the very structure of explanation, through a radical reconsideration of the basis and foundation of *Objective Logic* – self-reflection has its complement the self-particularization of the universal, and this is the result of a ground that simply cannot be tantamount to a substratum (i.e., something fully posited), but, quite the opposite, it is crossed by the same absolute negativity that had brought essential transformationism. Explanation, fundamental to the act of thinking, is radically reworked by Hegel and brings us a much subtle attention to any con-text that further augments this structure of explanation. But this revolution of

the subjective (and the place of the subject, as Badiou had shown) cannot be confined only to the correction of a standard of truth and of the use of categories; it offers, in addition to the reconsideration of language (especially in the criticism of the supposed hegemony of formal language over the natural one), the possibility of the praxeological commitment of rethinking the relation of theory to practice and of a political emancipation, which is now necessarily seen as a systematic negation of the situation itself.

This simultaneous theoretical-praxeological emancipatory possibility must be pointedly envisioned as being at the opposite end of the illusory seduction of the imaginary, rejecting the compliance and the fictionalization of the status-quo, epitomized by the transhumanist ideas that I have criticized in this chapter. By introspecting our true relationship with reality and, necessarily, our own thinking activity, we stumbled upon new concepts of praxeology and politics, grafted on a new language, because now objectivity is completely absorbed by experience – we are finally having the possibility of going through the error – , although (or especially because) any concept of knowledge is subjectively determined. When self-conceptualization is thematized, we can revise the concept of "truth" that we assumed (unconsciously or not) beforehand. The sublimation of the position of natural consciousness into the philosophical one follows the evanescence of the objectivity of truth, because now the only thing left to be considered objective is its intersubjective validity. Hegelian metaphysical knowledge necessarily implies that the absolute object of this knowledge can only be the cognitive process in which the object is constituted, that is, in other words, it comprises the movement of reflection.

Chapter 4, "**The Objective Part of the Conceptual Nexus: Emancipation and Sociality**", started from the idea that the *Logic of Essence* realizes the transition from things to their constitutive relations, or, more precisely, from the apparently immediate and autonomous determinations of *Being* (which would presumably be present in objects) to their constitutive (essential) relations, which necessarily show the illusory of any kind of immediacy. Therefore, the thought project realized in objects is their reality. As can be easily guessed, my line of reasoning here was complementary to the one in the third chapter.

But even so, our contributions constituted an invitation to comprehend the title of our thesis. We are talking about an intellectual emancipation and not one of the intellect, because it does not only (want to) look at a subject, but, although it is truly essential to the subject, it can find

its evaluation, extension, and legitimization (so recognition – *die Anerkennung* ) only within a spiritual community. That is why the intersubjective validity of the object, based on the Concept's character of being always-already-present even where it only seemed to have a radical exteriority (i.e., the illusion shattered by the *Essence*), was able to show that there is an intellectual emancipation where the erroneous and unjustified presuppositions of the subject are repudiated. Simply put, we just observed the self-transformation of the categories of thought, and we just recorded the results from thought objects without distorting them with any hollow subjectivism. In the subjective part, I analyzed and expanded the project of capturing the movement of thought as a kind of extended communal rational mastery. In the objective part I corrected the non-rational and direct intervention on the objects of thought, simply letting them be or "to develop by themselves". The first approach is orchestral-appropriating; the second one is spectatorial-derogatory.

Therefore, in this chapter dedicated to the objective part of the *nexus*, we were able to complete the vanquishment of the so-called autonomous and radical externalities, this fact being simultaneous with the reiteration of the essential link between reality and achievement. In other words, from the standpoint of the objects of thought, we could observe the necessity with which the project (or movement) of thought in objects is their very reality. The full inscription of a thing in its system of relations (that are also metaphysically constitutive) is an extremely important subject matter in contemporary Hegelianism. First, this is what establishes the horizontality of *Essence* as a dissolution of any "substratum", the disappearance of the ground as the very ground on which we have come to stand (in Cirulli's work). Equally important, it is underpinned by the concept of contradiction as the organizing form of reflection, as the suppression of exteriority itself, and as the very condition of thought that institutes a new way of thinking objectivity (because objects effectively lead us to the recognition of metaphysical contradiction, *pace* Longonuesse). Moreover, this is what enabled a new articulation of the essential distinction between Hegel and extensional logic, since, according to Brandom, Hegelian determinate negativity is a modal notion and, consequently, cannot be a post-factum stipulation, but it is the very bedrock of metaphysics. The idea of expansive topology and Hegelian open sets in Badiou, the critique of the mythology of vitalism in Jameson, the rediscovery of an intrinsic infinity in being by absolutizing the correlation between being and thought in Brassier and the speculative realists – these were valuable suggestions from literature that showed us how *The Logic of Essence* is radically transformative

for its objects, that is, the emancipation aimed at by Hegel necessarily immerses in the studied object of thought.

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