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Helmut Schneider (Hrsg.)

Band 21



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Helmut Schneider (Bochum)

Zur Einführung

Im ersten Beitrag untersucht Giacomo Rinaldi die Interpretation der Religionsphilosophie Hegels durch Iwan Aleksandro-wich Il'in (1883 – 1954). Das Werk des russischen Philosophen erschien 1918 in Moskau und 1946 gekürzt in deutscher Sprache in Bern mit dem Titel: Die Philosophie Hegels als kontemplative Gotteslehre. Rinaldi weist nach, dass die scharfe, ablehnende Hegel-Kritik Il'ins wesentlich auf dem erkenntnistheoretischen Neokantianismus in der Anlehnung an Rickert und N. Hartmann beruht (empirischer Realismus). Der absolute Idealismus Hegels wird von Il'in nur als romantischer Mystizismus verstanden. Die Polemik des Neokantianismus geht, offen oder versteckt, gegen die Vernunft und den Geist, der in Hegels System seinen tiefsten Ausdruck fand. Il'in gehört zum Irrationalismus seiner Zeit, der im Ausgang vom Neokantianismus bei Heidegger und Jaspers seinen Endpunkt fand.

Die Auseinandersetzung mit Il'in und seiner Hegel-Deutung ist von besonderer, aktueller Brisanz, da er nach der Ära des Kommunismus in Russland große Beachtung fand. Er gehört wegen seiner konservativen und nationalen Grundeinstellung zu den Leitfiguren in dem Denken des Staatspräsidenten der Russischen Föderation, Wladimir Wladimirowitsch Putin.

Udo Reinhold Jeck zeigt in seinem Beitrag, wie sich der Einfluss Hegels in seinen letzten Lebensjahren auf das wissenschaftliche Leben in Berlin auswirkte. Unter der Ägide Hegels gründeten seine Schüler ein wissenschaftliches Rezensionsorgan, das sich nicht auf Philosophie beschränkte, die „Jahrbücher für wissenschaftliche Kritik“, 1827 ff., Hegels „Berliner Gegenakademie“. Durch diese Öffnung für die Wissenschaften entstanden durch Carl Friedrich Neumann (1798 – 1870), einem Hegel-Schüler, die ersten Anfänge der Armenologie, der Philosophie und Kultur des alten Armenien. Neumann rezensierte die einschlägigen Schriften und konnte dadurch die Armenologie in die Kulturwissenschaften einführen. Ein großer Gewinn für die

Geschichte der antiken Philosophie waren die zahlreichen Übersetzungen griechischer Philosophen in das Armenische, die jetzt erst bekannt wurden.

Gilbert Gérard will die ersten Schriften Hegels aus seiner Berner Zeit in das Projekt einordnen, das Hegel seit seiner Studienzeit bewegte, nämlich die Frage nach einer „Volksreligion“. Nicht die Philosophie, sondern die christliche Religion steht im Mittelpunkt seines Denkens, wie sie Volksreligion sein kann.

Das griechische Ideal lässt sich in der Moderne nicht mehr verwirklichen. Die christliche Religion, die als eine Privatreligion aufgefasst wurde, ist die Volksreligion der modernen Welt.

In Hegels Schrift „Das Leben Jesu“ (1795) wird Jesus zum Tugendlehrer auf der Basis der moralischen Religion Kants, im Gegensatz zur Positivität der Religion im Judentum.

In der nachfolgenden Zeit Hegels in Frankfurt seit 1797 verschiebt sich der leitende Gesichtspunkt im Verständnis der Religion auf die Frage nach der Einheit von Gott und Mensch und damit auf die Anfänge der Dialektik im Verhältnis von Identität und Differenz.

Geprüft wird der Einfluss Hegels auf die arabische Welt und das arabische Denken von Lorella Ventura. Außer Anklängen an Hegels Religions- und Geschichtsphilosophie erfolgte im 19. Jahrhundert keine deutlich greifbare Hegelrezeption. Untersucht wird das Lehrangebot an zwei westlichen, missionarischen Institutionen im arabischen Bereich: The Syrian Protestant College (später die American University) in Beirut / Libanon und die katholische Université St. Joseph, ebenfalls in Beirut, die von Jesuiten gegründet und geleitet wurde. Das erste Buch über Hegel wurde in der Bibliothek der Protestanten 1909 angeschafft (E. Caird), das erste Buch von Hegel 1914 (Enzyklopädie: Philosophy of Mind). Erst in der 2. Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts setzte eine Rezeption Hegels mit Übersetzungen und Studien ein. Europäischer Ethnozentrismus, Kolonialismus und Historizismus wurden mit Hegel in Verbindung gebracht. Wichtig war die Rezeption des Marxismus auch für die Hegelrezeption. Für den Gegensatz von Orientalismus und Okzidentalismus sind Edward Said und Hasan Hanafi repräsentativ.

Fernando Huesca untersucht die Ökonomik in der Rechtsphilosophie Hegels. Grundlagen seiner Untersuchung sind nicht nur die „Grundlinien“ der Rechtsphilosophie von 1821, sondern die zahlreichen veröffentlichten Vorlesungsnachschriften, die bisher noch nie ausführlich zur Interpretation der Ökonomik Hegels herangezogen wurden. Hegels Auseinandersetzung mit Smith, Ricardo und Say zeigt seine prinzipielle Übereinstimmung mit diesen Ökonomien des Kapitalismus. Hegel sieht jedoch die soziale Problematik des Kapitalismus und die sittliche Verpflichtung des Staates, für eine Teilnahme aller Bürger an den materiellen und geistigen Möglichkeiten der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft zu sorgen. Eine Aufhebung des Kapitalismus oder der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft wird von Hegel nicht vertreten. Der Verfasser charakterisiert Hegels Haltung als „zurückhaltende Akzeptanz der commercial society oder kapitalistischen Gesellschaft.“

Wolfdietrich Schmied-Kowarzik stellt dem Verhältnis von Politik und Ökonomie bei Hegel die Sicht von Karl Marx gegenüber. Gegen Hegels Verankerung der Subjekte im absoluten Geist holte Marx das Subjekt und die Philosophie in den Horizont der gesellschaftlichen handelnden Menschen zurück.

Die kritische Philosophie gesellschaftlicher Praxis ist bei Marx eine praktische Philosophie als Aufklärung der Menschen über die gesellschaftlichen Lebensverhältnisse zur Orientierung ihres politischen Handelns. In den kapitalistischen Produktionsverhältnissen besteht ein grundlegender Widerspruch zwischen dem Kapital und den arbeitenden Menschen, die von dem Kapital beherrscht werden, obwohl die Arbeit der Menschen dessen Grundlage ist. Die arbeitenden Menschen müssen sich der sozialen Ungleichheit bewusst werden. Nur gemeinsam können sich die Menschen in einer revolutionären Bewegung von der Macht des Kapitals befreien.

Diese Bewegung nannte Marx „Kommunismus“.

Die arbeitenden Menschen müssen Subjekte der Geschichte werden. Aristoteles und Hegel waren überzeugt, dass die Politik, d. h. die Staaten, die Ökonomie und den Kapitalismus lenken und beherrschen können. Platon und Marx dagegen glaub-

ten, dass nur eine revolutionäre Umwälzung den Konflikt von Kapital und Arbeit lösen kann und zu einem gerechten und solidarischen Leben führt. Die heutige, globale Vormachtstellung des Kapitals leugnet den Widerspruch von Ökonomie und Gesellschaft nicht, sondern hält ihn für systemimmanent und nicht für aufhebbar. Wie Hegel verweist der Kapitalismus auf Auswege, die den Konflikt abmildern sollen, z. B. die Kolonisation. Marx hält diesen Konflikt für grundsätzlich auflösbar. So ist der Weg von Hegel zu Marx die Lösung:

„Dass einzig und allein die in der Tradition Platons stehende kritische Philosophie gesellschaftlicher Praxis von Marx dem fortschreitenden Destruktionsprozess von Chrematistik und Kapitalismus etwas entgegenzusetzen vermag.“

Die besonders intensive Beachtung der Philosophie Hegels in Japan wird an zwei Beispielen illustriert: An der Zeitschrift der Japanischen Hegelgesellschaft und an der Übersetzung von Hegels Vorlesung über Ästhetik von 1820 / 1821.

Die neueste und bisher gründlichste Biographie Hegels wird von Holger Glinka vorgestellt.

Die zwei Selbstanzeigen stellen die neue Reihe „Hegel Heute“ vor.

Giacomo Rinaldi (Urbino)

Neo-Kantianism versus Hegelianism. Ivan Aleksandrovich Il'in's interpretation and critique of Hegel's Philosophy

§ 1: The Neo-Kantian Reaction to German Idealism

One of the most widespread and influential academic trends of contemporary German philosophy is unquestionably Neo-Kantianism. Initiated about 1860 by scholars such as R. Haym and O. Liebmann, it soon divided into three main tendencies—psychologistic, logicist and historicist—which nevertheless shared a common belief, namely, that the “metaphysical” and “speculative” orientation assumed by post-Kantian philosophy in the three greatest exponents of German Idealism—Fichte, Schelling and Hegel - was nothing but a “degeneration” of Kant's Criticism, to whose original analytic and antimetaphysical perspective one ought therefore to “return”. The fundamental theoretical assumptions shared by all tendencies of Neo-Kantianism are essentially three: (1) the only reality actually knowable is the manifold of empirical facts, which is originally manifested to man's finite consciousness by sensible intuition or perception; (2) there is a radical ontological and axiological difference between the modality of real being and that of value or the “ought-to-be” (*Sollen*); (3) metaphysics, as the alleged science of absolute Reality in which being and value, the real and the ideal, the finite and the Infinite are identified, is nothing other than the deceiving expression of a need of human reason inborn in it but ineluctably destined to remain unsatisfied.

In the psychologistic tendencies of Neo-Kantianism, represented especially by thinkers such as A. Lange and A. Riehl, the anti-metaphysical polemic combines with the working out of an epistemology focusing on the analysis of empirical consciousness, which is mostly regarded as a mere product of nature's

causality. The prospective materialism of Neo-Kantianism's psychologistic tendencies is rejected both by the logicist-physicalistic perspective of the so-called "Marburg school" (E. Cassirer, P. Natorp, H. Cohen) and by the historicist one of the "school of Baden" (W. Windelband, H. Rickert, W. Dilthey). The logicist tendency identifies epistemology's peculiar object with the analysis not of empirical consciousness, but of the *a priori* conditions for the possibility of mathematical physics, and stresses the crucial role played in it by pure concepts, which, in the aftermath of Herbart and Bolzano, it conceives as unreal objectivities subsisting "in themselves", i.e., before, and independently of, any thought-act, be it that of man's finite intelligence or that of God's infinite mind. The historicist tendency equally holds firmly to the "transcendence" of knowing's ideal object, but conceives of it not so much as the aim of a purely theoretical verification as the norm of a practical act, and therefore as a *value*, because the very ideal of truth would not be anything other than a normative exigency of the will. Against the epistemological primacy ascribed by the Marburg school to mathematical physics, the school of Baden therefore sets the vindication of the higher relevance of the "sciences of culture" (*Kulturwissenschaften*) and of the more comprehensive "doctrine of world-views" (*Weltanschauungslehre*)¹, for it is in the historical world created by the human mind, and not in unconscious nature, that the ideal objectivity of values would be manifested. Of the three tendencies of Neo-Kantianism's historical evolution I have pointed out, those which seem to have most strongly influenced the theoretical perspective of the Russian philosopher Ivan Aleksandrovich Il'in (1883–1954) are the psychologistic one (which is confirmed by his interest for the psychoanalysis of Freud², with whom he became personally ac-

1 Cf. H. Rickert, *Kant als Philosoph der modernen Kultur. Ein geschichtsphilosophischer Versuch*, Mohr, Tübingen 1924, pp. 11–22. For a general discussion and critique of Rickert's philosophy, cf. G. Rinaldi, *La filosofia dei valori di Heinrich Rickert e l'autoconfutazione dell'epistemologia neokantiana*, in *Magazzino di filosofia*, Vol. 24/2014, pp. 157–204.

2 Cf. Ph. T. Grier, "Translator's Notes", in I. A. Il'in, *The Philosophy of Hegel as a Doctrine of the Concreteness of God and Humanity*. Vol. 1: *The Doctrine of God*. Vol. 2: *The*

quainted), and the historicist one, as is witnessed, at the end of Vol. 2 of his Hegel-Commentary, by his apologia of empirical historiography against the speculative conception of history³. Far less relevant, to the contrary, appears the influence exerted on him by the physicalism of the Marburg school.

But Neo-Kantianism's anti-metaphysical orientation did not fail to remarkably influence, in the 20th century, also the original philosophical perspectives of thinkers such as E. Husserl and N. Hartmann, and today is still endorsed by epistemologists and historians of science of Marxist origin such as R. Wahsner. Husserl's Phenomenology, in fact, does polemicise against the "mythical constructions" with which Kant would have tried to account for the possibility of sense-experience and the natural sciences, setting against them the "intentional" analysis of the more original "world-of-experience" (*Erfahrungswelt*) or "world-of-life" (*Lebenswelt*), and deeming the contribution offered by Hume's scepticism to be, at least in this regard, more fruitful; but the radical dualism he holds firmly to between the "real facts" (*Tatsachen*) and the "essences" (*eide*), or between logical thought's ideal "meanings" and the "facts of consciousness" or *Erlebnisse*, is of clearly neo-Kantian origin⁴. Nicolai Hartmann's Critical Ontology does reject the subjectivism of

Doctrine of Humanity, transl. from the Russian and edited by Ph. T. Grier, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, IL 2010–2011, Vol. 2, p. 132. Grier has also authored some writings, in English and in Russian, devoted to the interpretation of Il'in's thought. In his paper, as yet unpublished, "Il'in as an Interpreter of Hegel", which he kindly sent me, he outlines an enlightening critique of Il'in's anti-Hegelian polemic, largely coinciding with that which I have set out in § 5 of this essay.

3 Cf. *ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 218.

4 Traces of the influence of Husserl's Phenomenology on the genesis of Il'in's anti-Hegelian polemic are easily to be found in his Commentary. On pp. 11–12 he shows an adherence to the Husserlian invitation to abandon artificial conceptual "constructions" and to come back to the intuitive analysis of "the things themselves" (*die Sache selbst*); and on p. 47 he explicitly counts Husserl, together with Bolzano and Cohen, among the supporters of the "sound" conception of logical thought that he sets against Hegel's "fundamental phenomenological error". On the limits of Husserl's Phenomenology and on the literature related to it (until 1979), cf. G. Rinaldi, *Critica della gnoseologia fenomenologica*, Giannini, Napoli 1979, and Id., *Intentionality & Dialectical Reason*, in *The Monist*, Vol. 69, No. 4, 1989, pp. 568–583; on the influence exerted by it on Il'in's philosophical formation, cf. Ph. T. Grier, "Translator's Introduction", in I. A. Il'in, *The Philosophy of Hegel*, cit., Vol. 1, pp. XXXVIII–LIII.

Kantian epistemology, emphasising the radical “transcendence” of knowing’s real object with respect to man’s finite consciousness, and the need for a “metaphysical” analysis of its “being-thus” (*Sosein*), namely, of its objective essence; but also an absolutely crucial role is played, in the categorial spheres of the transcendent entities described by his ontology, by the typically neo-Kantian dualism between ideal objects (essences, logical principles, values) and real being. Moreover, his analytics of metaphysics’ “eternal problems” comes to an end with the acknowledgement that most antinomies, in which the unfolding of their content becomes ineluctably entangled, are destined to remain unsolved. Not unlike the “ontological” analyses carried out by Rickert, Heidegger and Jaspers, also Hartmann’s “metaphysics” thus comes to an end with the explicit declaration of speculative Reason’s failure, and with the celebration of a cult of the Irrational⁵. Wahsner’s⁶ convinced allegiance to the materialistic conception of history, finally, does not prevent her, too, from endorsing the neo-Kantian principle of the essential difference between logical thought’s objects and empirical reality, and, consequently, from denying the possibility of reducing the former to a mere mechanical product of the empirical association of sense-data⁷.

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- 5 For a summary critique of Hartmann’s ontology, cf. G. Rinaldi, *Carattere e limiti della “filosofia sistematica” di Nicolai Hartmann*, in *Magazzino di filosofia*, No. 23/2014, pp. 146–178; and for a discussion of his Ethics, cf. Id., *L’etica dell’Idealismo moderno*, Aracne Editrice, Roma 2016, Part III, Ch. 22, §§ 58–59, pp. 545–570.
 - 6 About the critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Nature carried out by Wahsner from the viewpoint of dialectical materialism, cf. Id., *Über das Verhältnis der dialektischen Methode zu den Naturwissenschaften in Hegels absolutem Idealismus*, in *Naturwissenschaft und Methode in Hegels Naturphilosophie*, ed. by W. Neuser, Königshausen und Neumann, Würzburg 2009, pp. 38–57; reprinted in G. Rinaldi, *Absoluter Idealismus und zeitgenössische Philosophie. Bedeutung und Aktualität von Hegels Denken*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt a. M. 2012, Erster Teil, Kap. 4, pp. 103–122.
 - 7 Less direct, but no less easily perceivable, is the influence of neo-Kantian epistemology on the existential ontology worked out by M. Heidegger and K. Jaspers, in which, as was already the case with Kant’s Criticism, the “transcendental” statement of the problem of “the meaning of Being”, which already Aristotle had identified with metaphysics’ peculiar problem, makes impossible, from the very beginning, a positive solution of it, and on Weber’s methodology of the historical-social sciences, especially with respect to his identification of the “objective possibility” of historical knowing with the causal connection of empirical facts and to his conception of values as a specific condition for the pos-

In such a theoretical perspective it is clear what could be the destiny reserved for a philosophy, such as German Idealism, that refuses to acknowledge the truth of all the above-mentioned fundamental assumptions of Neo-Kantianism—and, in particular, for Hegelianism. For with a greater consistency, intransigence, and systematic breath than was the case with Fichte and Schelling, Hegel (1) denies the actual reality of the sensible world, of finite existence and of contingent facts; (2) raises the identity of thought and being to a fundamental principle of speculative Logic, vindicating the objective validity of the ontological argument for God's existence; and, finally, (3) identifies the highest form of knowing neither with mathematical physics nor with empirical historiography or the sciences of culture, but with the "absolute knowing" of speculative philosophy. This differs from the traditional metaphysics once criticised by Kant and rejected also by Neo-Kantianism, not because it restricts the ambit of its competences, but, on the contrary, because it widens and strengthens them. For whereas "old metaphysics" confined itself to working out a more or less extrinsic—or, as Thomas Aquinas said, "analogical"—knowing of the Absolute from the finite viewpoint of the human "intellect", Hegel's speculative philosophy purports, instead, to unfold the Absolute's essence from the infinite viewpoint of the Absolute itself, thus fulfilling the dissolution of the truth and reality of the finite understanding, to whose analytic activity neo-Kantian epistemology, to the contrary, restricts the source of all human knowledge.

Hence it cannot come as a surprise that an often very virulent polemic against the "Romantic mysticism", "idealistic optimism" and "cognitive aristocratism" of Hegel's philosophy, and especially against the political implications of his metaphysics of the State, occupies many pages in the historical writings of the neo-Kantian school, in which one can distinguish

sibility of the historical sciences. One ought not to forget, in this regard, that Weber was a pupil of Rickert. For a general critique of existential ontology, cf. G. Rinaldi, *Due interpreti dell'Etica di Spinoza: Harold H. Joachim e Karl Jaspers*, Aracne Editrice, Roma 2017, Ch. 6: "Critica della filosofia dell'esistenza", pp. 113–128.

two main trends. The first is that of those who, like R. Haym and E. Cassirer, intend to refute and reject *in toto* the philosophy of Absolute Idealism, but to such an end can rely only on an insufficient or second-hand knowledge of Hegel's works, vainly surrogated by mere slogans or empty ideological declamations, or resort to so plain a distortion of the very letter of his writings that could not escape the attention of their neo-Kantian colleagues themselves⁸. The second trend is that of those neo-Kantian thinkers who, having managed to acquire a better knowledge of Hegel's works, try instead—as was the case with Benedetto Croce—to distinguish in his philosophy “what is alive” from “what is dead”. Thus Windelband, although refusing (without, however, putting forward any cogent reason) its “metaphysical” dimension and the dialectical method, deems nevertheless that the “rebirth of Hegelianism” at the beginning of the 20th century gave a positive contribution to contemporary philosophy, owing to the profound “historical sense” enlivening Hegel's conception of reality, and to the rationalistic and optimistic *Weltanschauung* advocated by it⁹. Thus Hartmann, who radically rejects Hegel's idealism, and especially the “omnipotence” wrongly ascribed by him to spirit, maintains nevertheless that “spiritual being”, especially in the sphere of “objectified spirit”, constitutes a specific ontological “stratum” of the “real world”, and that Hegelian dialectic, if it were understood as a mere “*Realdialektik*”—namely, as the interpenetration of opposite determinations in phenomenal reality's temporal becoming—would adequately explicate some of its essential laws¹⁰.

8 Such is remarkably the case with Haym's polemics against Hegel's alleged reactionary sanctification of existing institutions, whose inconsistency was perceived by Il'in himself, who rightfully observed that it is based only on an undue confusion between the logical-essential categories of *Existenz* and of *Wirklichkeit*. Cf. I. A. Il'in, *The Philosophy of Hegel*, cit., Vol. 1, p. 284.

9 Cf. W. Windelband, *Die Erneuerung des Hegelianismus*, in Id., *Präludien. Aufsätze und Reden zur Philosophie und ihrer Geschichte*, Mohr, Tübingen ⁵1915, Erster Band, pp. 273–289.

10 Cf. N. Hartmann, *Die Philosophie des deutschen Idealismus. Zweiter Teil: Hegel*, W. de Gruyter, Berlin und Leipzig 1929; Id., *Aristoteles und Hegel*, in Id., *Kleinere Schriften*, W. de Gruyter, Berlin 1957, Vol. 2; Id., *Hegel und das Problem der Realdialektik*, *ibid.* On the shortcomings of his critique of Hegelian Logic, cf. G. Rinaldi, *A History and In-*

Thus Wahsner, in the aftermath of the famous distinction drawn by Marx in the “Postscript” to the second edition of *Das Kapital*, rejects the “mystical shell” of Hegelianism, but maintains that dialectic, if materialistically understood, is a valid scientific instrument for investigating the process of the real world.

In the survey of the Hegel-literature brought about by Neo-Kantianism I have now summarily outlined, Il'in's extensive Commentary, appearing in Moscow in two volumes in 1918 as *The Philosophy of Hegel as a Doctrine of the Concreteness of God and Humanity*, and then translated into German by the author himself and published in Bern, in only one volume, in 1946 with the title *Die Philosophie Hegels als kontemplative Gotteslehre*, certainly constitutes a *unicum*. Il'in's purpose, explicitly stated by him in the “Preface” to his Work¹¹, is that of avoiding compromising the objective validity of the results of his critique of Hegel's thought by applying to it, in a more or less arbitrary way, theoretical presuppositions or practical exigencies extraneous to it, which it could therefore legitimately reject, and of testing instead its inner consistency by strictly following that method of “immanent critique” which had been theorised and endorsed by Hegel himself in the first of his Jena writings, and which consists in criticising a philosophical doctrine by unfolding the unsolvable contradictions involved in the implications of the very theses maintained by it. But it is obviously impossible to carry out such a critique without having at one's own disposal an adequate understanding, at the historiographical level, of the doctrines one intends to criticise, which can be achieved only through a careful exegesis of the writings in which it is set out by its author. Il'in does not shirk this requirement, and his essay undoubtedly offers one of the most complete and meticulous analyses of the Hegelian texts I have ever happened to read—an analysis, moreover, that is integrated by a philological apparatus of thousands of quotations, mostly

terpretation of the Logic of Hegel, The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, NY 1992, § 46; on the general character of his ontological perspective, cf. *supra*, n. 5.

11 I. A. Il'in, *The Philosophy of Hegel*, cit., Vol. 1, p. 9.

taken from the original edition of Hegel's Works published by his pupils between 1832 and 1845¹², to which he adds further references (1) to the Hegelian texts inserted by K. Rosenkranz in his famous biography, *G. W. F. Hegels Leben* (1844); (2) to the *Theologische Jugendschriften* published by H. Nohl in 1907; and (3) to the manuscript of the *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie des Geistes* (1803–1806) and to the essays *Die Verfassung Deutschlands* and *System der Sittlichkeit* published by G. Lasson in the volume *Hegels Schriften zur Politik und Rechtsphilosophie* (1913). Yet the full knowledge of Hegel's texts that he shows to possess does not induce him to state a critical evaluation of the Hegelian System more benevolent than that generally pronounced by the neo-Kantian thinkers most hostile to Absolute Idealism. He draws from them the theoretical presuppositions that more or less surreptitiously motivate (despite his alleged adoption of the method of immanent critique) his final critical destruction of Hegelianism, which is indeed, not unlike those attempted by Haym, Cassirer and Husserl, total and unconditional. Nothing survives of Hegel's thought in Il'in's book except for the generic acknowledgement that, despite all his phenomenological, metaphysical and ethical errors, he was nevertheless a "profound" and "brilliant" thinker. But in what can the alleged profundity and brilliance of a thinker consist, when *all* the theses, into which the theoretical System unfolded by him in monumental Works is articulated, are rejected as inconsistent, ungrounded, if not even absurd? The entire critical setting and the radically negative results of Il'in's Commentary are perplexing, if only because of the plain incongruity between the chapters in which he expounds the Hegelian doctrines, conferring on them an undeniable persuasiveness which makes it impossible to doubt their truth, and those in which he instead sets out his critique, which mostly avoids taking into consideration

12 *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's Werke*. Vollständige Ausgabe durch einen Verein von Freunden des Verewigten, Verlag von Duncker und Humblot, Berlin 1832–1845. In his quotations Il'in constantly refers to this edition of Hegel's Works, which today is not easily accessible. In this essay I have therefore substituted its pagination with that of the edition that is most easy to be found: G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, ed. by E. Moldenhauer and K. M. Michel, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt a. M. 1969–1971.

those very Hegelian arguments he had previously expounded, which, in truth, offer in advance a convincing reply to his objections. In what follows, I shall go on to prove in detail the substantial failure of his anti-Hegelian polemic, and to bring to light and criticise the hidden epistemological presuppositions of his alleged immanent critique of Hegel's philosophy.

In these introductory considerations it therefore remains only to state the philosophical reasons for my analysis and critique of Il'in's Work, and the motive for which I have preferred to examine the original text of his Commentary, carefully translated into English by Philip T. Grier, rather than the subsequent German edition authored by Il'in himself. In fact, while Grier's translation reproduces the entire Russian text, subdivided into 22 chapters, the German version omits Chs. 13–20, where he analyses Hegel's crucial doctrines of spirit and of ethicality, to which he himself ascribes, for reasons I hold to be erroneous¹³, exclusive philosophical relevance in the ambit of the Philosophy of Spirit. Grier has noticed a second, remarkable difference between the two versions of Il'in's Work¹⁴. While in Ch. 3 of the first version he, under the presumable influence of A. Trendelenburg's anti-Hegelian critique, reproaches Hegel with having committed the "fundamental phenomenological error" of confusing thought's ideal objects with the real self-conscious act of thinking, in the German edition he instead tries to weaken this critical remark by maintaining that, more than a real philosophical error, it would in truth be an "original" conception of the

13 In fact, he excludes from his Commentary the analysis of the Hegelian doctrines concerning the Philosophy of Religion, alleging as a ground for this the fact that Hegel never published it, but outlined only "rough sketches" of its content (cf. I. A. Il'in, *The Philosophy of Hegel*, cit., Vol. 2, p. 41). I instead believe that the texts of the *Nachschriften* and manuscripts, merged with admirable philosophical far-sightedness by Bruno Bauer into a unique, systematic exposition, offers the reader a complete, trustworthy and fully intelligible formulation of such crucial philosophical science. I also believe that, if he had thoroughly gone into Hegel's speculative interpretation of Christianity, he would perhaps have realised that the alleged "absurdity", with which he reproaches the Hegelian doctrine of the Idea's "depotentialisation" in nature and history (cf. *infra*, § 4.4), is in truth shared by the Christian dogma of God's incarnation in the suffering humanity of Christ, subject to pain and death.

14 Cf. Ph. T. Grier, "Translator's Introduction", in I. A. Il'in, *The Philosophy of Hegel*, cit., Vol. 1, pp. LIV–LV.

thought-act that is not shared by contemporary formal logic. In my opinion, such a difference is epistemologically unimportant, because it makes no difference to present Hegel's doctrine of speculative thought as an error or as a personal idiosyncrasy, seeing that the fundamental claim raised by his philosophy is that of universal objective validity, which is invalidated as much by its possible erroneousness as by its degradation to a merely subjective view of the individual Hegel. As a consequence, the analysis and critique of Il'in's anti-Hegelian polemic, which I intend to carry out in this essay, will exclusively refer to the original version of his Commentary in the English translation by Grier. As, then, to the intrinsic philosophical reasons for coping with it in detail, as I shall do in what follows, it suffices here to point out that, on the one hand, the neo-Kantian empiricist and anti-metaphysical mentality still nowadays holds sway in many academic quarters, and that, on the other, just the total, systematic character of his critique of Hegel's philosophy renders its refutation far more significant and fruitful, in view of today's vindication of the truth and up-to-dateness of Absolute Idealism, than a polemic against the partial or occasional objections raised against it by most of its current adversaries.

§ 2: Character and Self-development of Hegel's Philosophy according to I. A. Il'in

The entire interpretation, and a good deal of the critique, of Hegel's philosophy worked out by Il'in is based on the hypothesis that the undeniable continuity in the evolution of his thought does not prevent one from distinguishing in it three fundamental phases, corresponding to as many psychological experiences of its author¹⁵. The first, and the most fundamental and decisive one, Il'in maintains, was the revelation, in the mind of the young Hegel, of the presence and immanence of the Holy, the Divine, the Infinite in nature and in the human spirit. Not unlike Spinoza's and Schelling's "acosmic pantheism", he identifies the task of philosophy with the explication, in the form of logi-

15 Cf. I. A. Il'in, *The Philosophy of Hegel*, cit., Vol. 1, pp. 204 ff.

cal thought and by virtue of purely rational arguments, of the inmost essence of the Absolute, of its internal relation to the real spheres of nature and of history, and of the conditions for its self-comprehension in philosophical knowing, which, not having, in the last resort, any other object than the explication of the Absolute, would therefore take the shape of an “absolute knowing”. Such a knowing would not only constitute the human spirit’s highest cognitive form, superior both to the natural and to the historical sciences, but would even be the unique real self-consciousness of the Absolute itself. The second phase initiates instead with its author’s maturity, when his juvenile “dream of the divinity of the world, of the cosmic organism”¹⁶, as Il’in expresses himself in a language recalling that of the caustic Kantian essay *Die Träume eines Geistersehers, erklärt mit den Träumen der Metaphysik*, is called into question by the experience of the irrationality of nature and of human behaviour, in which blind arbitrariness and particular interests seem constantly to prevail upon the rational will and the universality of the ethical ideal. Il’in quotes *in extenso* numerous passages of Hegel’s Philosophy of Nature in which the German philosopher seems to admit the real presence of the irrational in it—e.g., in the form of illness, of the birth of deformed individuals, of earthquakes, of volcanic eruptions, of the chaotic manifoldness, irreducible to any rational necessity, of the species of living beings—which plainly contradict his “pantheistic” conviction that, regarded in its essence, nature is nothing other than a perfect manifestation of the divine Idea. In a similar way, the fundamental theses on which his original conception of the divinity of objective spirit is based—namely, that the manifold categorical forms distinguishable in it (i.e., private right, morality, family, and civil society) are all sublated and concentrated in the ethicality of the political State, which thus constitutes the adequate manifestation of the Absolute in the human spirit, “God’s entrance into the world”—are more and more strongly called into question by the concrete experience of the historical world in which he happened to live. For in it the alleged universality

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 209.

and infinity of the State's action is actually limited by more or less irrational factors such as natural impulses (in the family), particular and egoistic interests of the individuals and of social classes (in civil society), the privileges attributed to aristocracy by virtue of birthright (in the State's political structure), and finally the resort to compulsion, if not even to violence, in the case of the administration of penal justice and of war, which, moreover, presupposes the existence of a contingent multiplicity of independent States—which of itself contradicts the essential infinity, and then unity and universality, of the idea of the State. The third phase of the evolution of Hegel's thought is that which is stated in the definitive versions of his System, and which is characterised by the attempt to reconcile his juvenile metaphysical dream with the hard experience of the external and contingent reality of the sensible world. The solution suggested by him, Il'in maintains, consists in holding firmly to the truth and necessity of both horns of the dilemma—namely, the immanent rationality of the Universe and the irrational positivity of natural and historical facts—and in trying to solve it by working out a series of “compromises”¹⁷, whose explication and justification constitutes the theoretical substance and the ultimate aim of his Philosophy of Spirit¹⁸. Yet such compromises—and this is the crucial objection raised by Il'in against Hegel's philosophy—do not consist in anything other than the contrivance of a series of extrinsic syntheses between conceptual elements whose radical ontological difference, in truth, makes any attempt at reconciliation fruitless. Il'in maintains that Hegel somehow manages to conceal—from the others but especially from himself—the real inconsistency of such compromises by resorting to a methodological instrument, dialectic, to which he not only ascribes objective validity, but even identifies with the essential form of the absolute Idea, namely, with the very prin-

17 Cf. *ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 225 ff.; Vol. 2, p. 200.

18 As to the lower metaphysical sphere of nature, Hegel explicitly admits that the irrational element present in it cannot be done away with, and therefore repeatedly emphasises the “impotence” (*Ohnmacht*) of nature to realise the Idea, which is nevertheless immanent in it. Cf. G. W. F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, in Id., *Werke in 20 Bänden*, cit., Bd. II, § 250.

ciple of his entire System, but which, in truth, is nothing other than an “art”, i.e., a subjective ability, worked out with the aim of conferring a seeming plausibility upon merely illusory theories and solutions.

Before setting out in detail the objections raised by Il'in against Hegel's philosophy on the basis of his reconstruction of its genesis (cf. *infra*, § 4), and then going on to refute them (cf. *infra*, § 5), it is indispensable to state the essential characters he attributes to Hegel's juvenile metaphysical vision, and then to try to decide whether the reasons for its transformation into the systematic perspective of Absolute Idealism are just the psychological ones alleged by Il'in or whether they have instead a strictly philosophical nature, and their theoretical result, far from being the mere product of a series of more or less artificial compromises, is in truth the articulation of a position of thought that is higher and more adequate, because more consistent and comprehensive, than that “acosmic pantheism” which the young Hegel would have unconditionally endorsed. In § 3 I shall try to show that the second alternative is the more plausible, and that just the misunderstanding of the real reasons for the evolution of Hegel's philosophy lies at the root of the objections with which Il'in—not unlike the other neo-Kantian thinkers—flatters himself that he has definitively demolished the theoretical content and the foundations of Absolute Idealism.

The fundamental assumption of Hegel's original conception is the identification of philosophy with the rational knowledge of the Absolute, which sets itself against traditional theistic metaphysics owing to the fact that, while this identifies the Absolute with a transcendent Entity possessing its perfect reality and its self-consciousness before, and independently of, the reflection of the self-conscious human subject, Hegel instead conceives of it as the original, absolute identity of subject and object, of the human and the Divine, so that the consciousness man has of himself is, in truth, nothing other than the essential form or mediation of God's self-consciousness itself, and, consequently, the knowing produced by the human mind is not condemned to be an imperfect image of a more original and perfect

divine Truth, but, coinciding with this Truth, can legitimately aspire, once purified from its immediate immersion in sensible existence, to that very perfection which by definition belongs to the knowing God has of Himself. Now, such a purification involves not only—as was already the case with Plato—the negation of the truth of sensible intuition, but also the overcoming of the reflection of the finite understanding, and even of the individual's moral will, because both hold firmly to an insuperable dualism (although essentially different from that on which “old metaphysics” is based) between the subject and the object of spiritual life, which only at the end of an unrealisable, and therefore false and illusory, *progressus in infinitum* could—as Kant and Fichte wrongly maintained—be identified.

The actual identity of subject and object must therefore be grounded on a different faculty of the human mind, which the young Hegel, in the aftermath of Schelling, identifies with *intellectual intuition*. It is conceived by both as a spiritual gift with which only few individuals, privileged by nature, are endowed, and which enables them to achieve a full metaphysical knowledge of the Absolute. As any other kind of intuition, intellectual intuition, unlike the finite understanding, is not mediated by the relation to givens external to it, but is a purely *immediate*, and therefore *absolute*, form of knowledge. Furthermore, unlike the Platonic νοῦς, it does not confine itself to passively reproducing an ideal objectivity transcendent to it, from which it therefore would be radically different, but is an infinite productive activity that originally posits the object intuited by it, and therefore identifies it with itself: the “Divinity”, as Il'in often says, is immanent in the human mind as its “living essence”, while the latter is immanent in the divine Mind as a “living part” of it¹⁹. He therefore rightfully observes that Hegel, in diametrical opposition to any form of traditional metaphysics whatsoever, “was completely ignorant of and did not accept transcendence as such”²⁰. For the Absolute, according to Hegel, is not a particular Being, set against the multiplicity of finite

19 Cf., e.g., I. A. Il'in, *The Philosophy of Hegel*, cit., Vol. 2, p. 126.

20 *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 64.

entities somehow created by it, but is the whole Reality, which, as such, contains in itself also the entire series of natural and spiritual beings: *God is all and all is in God*. As a consequence, since, in the act of intellectual intuition, the human mind identifies itself with God's very self-consciousness, it *eo ipso* knows the totality of reality, so that it becomes possible, at least in principle, to conceive philosophy as the perfect science of the Universe, as a real "absolute knowing", and not as a knowing eternally destined to remain a rough copy of real knowing, as Plato, and after him not only traditional theistic metaphysics, but also Kantian-Fichtean idealism itself, asserted. Far, then, from involving—as some recent false interpretations of Hegel's philosophy maintain—something like an "empiricist" critique of traditional metaphysics, it instead supports, Il'in rightfully observes, a sort of "ontological maximalism"²¹.

Il'in designates with the term "pantheism" the radically immanent conception of the Absolute stated by Hegel; but he is also fully aware of the essential difference between his idealistic metaphysics and those pre-philosophical forms of "pantheism" which have an unambiguously naturalistic character, because the Absolute, the Infinite, in which they see the ultimate principle of all reality, is nevertheless immediately identified by them with particular, finite entities, thus giving rise to a plain contradiction—that of an *infinite* God who is nothing other than a *finite* (material) thing—which undermines the plausibility of their conception. As was already the case with Spinoza and Schelling, Hegel's pantheism would instead have an "acosmic" character²²: since natural finite entities are the components of the

21 Cf. *ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 74.

22 Contrary to what Il'in affirms, the definition of Hegel's philosophy in terms of "acosmic pantheism" can have some plausibility only if referring to his writings preceding 1803, as it is explicitly refused by Hegel in the subsequent ones (cf., e.g., G. W. F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, cit., Bd. III, § 573, *Anm.*). The Hegelian conception of the Absolute as Idea, in fact, excludes *eo ipso* the dissolution of any finite determination, and thus of the "cosmos", into the "night" of the Absolute's indifferent identity, because this is just the peculiar and insuperable shortcoming of Schelling's metaphysics criticised by him, and because the concept of the Idea is that of an act of thinking which absolutely *determines* itself. To its essence, then, the determination, the essential, internal difference—but not the inessential, external one—is as necessary as its self-

sensible world, whose true being he denies, his negation of the reality of the latter necessarily involves the rejection of that of the former. Hence they, too, are nothing but a more or less illusory appearance, which *is* in God, because all is in God and God contains in Himself all, but only as an unreal, subjective phe-

identity: otherwise the Idea would be a static, indeterminate entity, and not, as Hegel instead wants, a process of “self-determination” (*Selbstbestimmung*) or a “self-movement” (*Selbstbewegung*). The definition of Hegel’s philosophy as “idealistic pantheism”, held by Il’in himself to be “entirely correct” (cf. I. A. Il’in, *The Philosophy of Hegel*, cit., Vol. 1, p. 281), does appear more appropriate, because, not unlike the other kinds of pantheism, also for Hegel the absolute Idea is the Whole; but his is an idealistic, and not a naturalistic, pantheism because the Absolute that is the Whole coincides, at the same time, with the Idea, in which, as an act of pure thought, the immediacy of sensible facts and phenomena is sublated; but it is not even an acosmic pantheism, for, as a self-differentiating Totality, difference is not simply annulled in it, but also conserved as the “absolute form” of the Idea. In my philosophy of religion I have therefore defined the Hegelian conception of the Divine, shared by me, as “idealistic pantheism”. Cf. G. Rinaldi, *Ragione e Verità. Filosofia della religione e metafisica dell’essere*, Aracne Editrice, Roma 2010, Part I, Ch. 7, § 4, pp. 192–195. I regard such a definition as wholly equivalent to that of “panentheism”, originally coined by K. Ch. F. Krause and today revived by Robert Williams. Cf. G. Rinaldi, *Tragedia, riconoscimento e morte di Dio nel pensiero di Robert Williams*, in *Magazzino di filosofia*, Vol. 23/2014, p. 127 and n. 23.

To the definition of Hegel’s metaphysics in terms of acosmic pantheism Il’in also adds those of “panlogism” and of “panepistemism”, which are certainly more plausible, because for Hegel the Idea, which is “the Truth that is the Whole”, does coincide with the λόγος = logos, at least insofar as in Greek philosophy and in Christian theology it designates the pure act of thinking (νοῦς) or the divine intelligence (one should recall, in this regard, the famous *incipit* of the Gospel according to St. John); and, on the other hand, as essentially self-conscious, it is also a form of “ἐπιστήμη”, i.e., of a knowing: just that “absolute knowing” which, as Hegel maintains, is the result and the τέλος of consciousness’s entire phenomenological itinerary. However, Il’in unqualifiedly accepts the negative, if not even derogatory, meaning assumed in a good deal of Hegel-literature by the terms “pantheism” and “panlogism”, whose attribution to his philosophy is generally held to be of itself a valid and unappealable argument against its truth. As far as the accusation of pantheism is concerned, I have already explained above why I think he is wrong. As to the reproach of panlogism (once raised against Absolute Idealism even by the fundamentally Hegelian thinker J. E. Erdmann: cf. Id., *A History and Interpretation of the Logic of Hegel*, cit., § 42), I can here confine myself to observing that it becomes plausible only if—as is mostly the case, and as Il’in himself does—one attributes to the term λόγος = logos the meaning of “concept or judgement stated by the finite understanding”, or of “transcendent ideal object or meaning”, which are just the meanings Hegel rejects in the most explicit and peremptory way, as Il’in himself, on the other hand, with his usual inconsistency, does not fail to notice in his Commentary (cf. I. A. Il’in, *The Philosophy of Hegel*, cit., Vol. 1, pp. 32–45 and 163–179).

nomenon, which, as such, cannot in any way limit, or even annihilate, the Divine's infinite reality.

In the "indifferent" identity of the Divine, then, any empirical, finite difference, just as the immediate difference between subject and object, is sublated. Yet the annihilating power of the Absolute does not stop here: also all the differences established by traditional logic and metaphysics between the concepts of the finite and the infinite, the universal and the particular, thought and being, nature and spirit, the conscious and the unconscious, and between spiritual acts or forms such as concept and imagination, art and philosophy, are without exception thrown, according to Il'in, by Hegel's acosmic pantheism into the "abyss" of the Absolute, which, having thus dissolved any possible determinations of being and of the finite understanding other than itself, would turn out to be the only true Reality. The fundamental assumption of what Il'in describes as Hegel's original philosophical conception, then, is that there is a *unique* Reality, the Absolute (metaphysical "monism"), and that in its "invariable" identity with itself all the infinite differences and oppositions manifested by human experience and reflection are "neutralised", i.e., dissolved. One could try to sum up the gist of such a conception by saying that the Absolute is *neither A nor non-A* (as real entities), but is *both A and non-A* (as mere phenomena)²³.

A crucial role in Il'in's Hegel-interpretation is played by the identification, attributed to Hegel on the basis of the quotation of some passages of *Faith and Knowledge* and of the essay on *Natural Right*²⁴, of the act of thinking (or intellectual intuition)

23 Cf. *ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 142–146.

24 Cf. G. W. F. Hegel, *Glauben und Wissen oder Reflexionsphilosophie der Subjektivität in der Vollständigkeit ihrer Formen als Kantische, Jacobische und Fichtesche Philosophie*, in Id., *Jenaer Schriften 1801–1807*, in Id., *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, cit., p. 325: "die Idee dieses urbildlichen, intuitiven Verstandes ist im Grunde durchaus nicht anderes als dieselbe Idee der transzendentalen Einbildungskraft"; *ibid.*, p. 329: "Dies Plus war als produktive Einbildungskraft vernünftig erkannt worden"; *ibid.*, p. 371–372: "Wir sagen dagegen, da transzendente Einbildungskraft und Vernunftkenntnis etwas ganz anderes ist, als Jacobi begreift, daß sie weder die Natur analysiert, noch Gegebenes in analytische Einheit und Mannigfaltigkeit auseinanderreißt, sondern, selbst organisch und lebendig und /Totalität, die Idee der Totalität erschafft, und konstruiert"; *ibid.*, p. 430: "wir die un-

with imagination, because this is one of the main theses on which a good deal of his critique of Absolute Idealism hinges. “[S]peculative thought”, he maintains, “is the coincidence of *human imaginative thinking and objective meaning*”²⁵; and such a coincidence is rendered necessary, on the one hand, by the fact that such a thought, insofar as it unfolds the immediate content of intellectual intuition, moves just in that element of immediacy which is typical of imagination; and, on the other, because the “power of imagination”²⁶ can, by virtue of the “suprasensuous images”²⁷ produced by it, raise the human spirit—just as is the case with speculative thought—above the finitude and caducity of the sensible world. Far, then, from applying its own categories to the independent reality of empirical facts, Hegel’s idealism creates from itself, not unlike mythology, an imaginary world, which it regards as the adequate manifestation of the Absolute. But thus the real character of Hegel’s entire philosophy becomes, according to Il’in, evident: it is nothing other than the outcome of a sort of “*thinking clairvoyance or mystical thinking*”²⁸, and therefore its deepest inspiration coincides, in substance, with that of *Romantic irrationalism*.

tergeordnete Sphäre, worin Spekulation zu finden ist, nämlich die Idee der transzendentalen Einbildungskraft, bei der Kantischen Philosophie beleuchtet haben”; and Id., *Über die wissenschaftlichen Behandlungsarten des Naturrechts, seine Stelle in der praktischen Philosophie und sein Verhältnis zu den positiven Rechtswissenschaften*, in Id., *Jenaer Schriften 1801–1807*, cit., p. 435: “Die Vollendung der Wissenschaft aber erfordert, daß eben sowohl die Anschauung und das Bild mit dem Logischen vereinigt, und in das rein Ideelle aufgenommen sei”. In the same footnote, Il’in quotes also a passage from Hegel’s *Philosophische Propädeutik*, which instead stems from a somewhat later period of his philosophical activity: “Die höhere Einbildungskraft, die *dichtende* Phantasie, steht nicht in Dienst zufälliger Zustände und Bestimmungen des Gemüts, sondern im Dienste der *Ideen* und der Wahrheit des Geistes überhaupt” (“Philosophische Enzyklopädie für die Oberklasse” [1808 ff.], in Id., *Nürnberger Schriften*, in Id., *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, cit., § 154, p. 70). Il’in surprisingly fails to realise that the subservient role Hegel here assigns to imagination with respect to the Ideas is something quite different from the unconditional identity of the concept (which is the creative principle of the Ideas) and imagination, which in his Jena writings, in the aftermath of Schelling, he had instead asserted.

25 I. A. Il’in, *The Philosophy of Hegel*, cit., Vol. 1, p. 236.

26 *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 119.

27 *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 63.

28 *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 64.