

Actuality: Hegel Amongst the Modal Metaphysicians¹

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My talk will be in three parts. In the first I'll be looking at the question of the reception of Hegel within analytic philosophy throughout its history and thinking about this against the background of the changing terrain of analytic philosophy throughout that period. It's a commonplace that while Hegel tends to be taken seriously in the broadly continental European tradition in philosophy, this for the most part has not been the case in analytic philosophy. This situation, I believe, is changing, but to the extent that it remains true, it reflects, I suggest, a style and self-conception of analytic philosophy more from the earlier part of its history rather than its recent or present state. Moreover, it remains tied to a view of the nature of Hegel's philosophy popularized in those early years of analysis, a view that is very distant from that found in the work of contemporary interpreters. In the second part I'll be drawing on recent work on Hegel and some of my own work in particular to suggest a picture of Hegel's logic and metaphysics that challenges the sorts of commonplace assumptions still commonly found amongst analytic philosophers in general. In the third part I'll be suggesting that a helpful way of thinking of Hegel's metaphysics is to see him as an advocate of a philosophical position that re-emerged in the later twentieth century in analytical metaphysics, *modal actualism*. Final comments are meant to say something very general about what I take Hegel's modal metaphysics to imply for the very activity of metaphysics itself, a name that has meant many different things throughout the history of philosophy. References and quotations can be found in the accompanying handout.

1. From classical logic to modal logic: Some counter-currents to Russell's story of analytic philosophy

In the early days of analytic philosophy Bertrand Russell dismissed Hegel from serious consideration for having a metaphysics based on fundamental logical errors. For example, in *Our Knowledge of the External World* in 1914 (handout (HO) 1.1), Russell gave an account of these errors that he was to repeat in many other places. There he tarred Bradley and Hegel with the same brush—their sin was that of having accepted the traditional subject-predicate conception of the proposition. With only one-placed predicates, they had no way of theorizing relations between individual objects. Ultimately, all predicates had to be referred back to one big subject, “the Absolute”.

Russell's idea was that the revolution in logic originating from the work of Frege in the late 19th century, which had allowed for judgments with *many-placed* predicates, had entirely displaced traditional Aristotelian logic to which Hegel was

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uncritically attached. I'll suggest in the second section of this talk that this view of Hegel in respect to both his logic and the metaphysics is largely false. However, even in these early years of analysis, the picture of the new logic and its philosophical interpretation, the picture with which Russell was dismissing Hegel, was itself coming in for critical evaluation from a direction that would lead to the development of a rich branch of logic within the 20th century, modern *modal* logic, and that this would be a development that would re-instate the sorts of traditional metaphysical problems that many analytic philosophers had believed themselves to have escaped.

Two years before the appearance of *Our Knowledge of the External World*, C. I. Lewis, the American pragmatist, had, in an article in *Mind*, criticized the concept of implication that was at the heart of Russell's new logic – so-called *material* implication (HO 1.2). This notion, according to Lewis, failed to capture the *necessity* implicit in the notion of implication itself. It was this failure in Russell's logic, as perceived by Lewis, that motivated Lewis himself to go on to develop various systems of *propositional modal* logic, a logic of necessary and possible propositions, so as to provide the type of *necessity* needed for what he called "strict implication". While *qua* material implication, "*p* implies *q*" was construed as equivalent to the fact of it's *not being the case* that *p* and *not q* ($\sim (p \cdot \sim q)$), Lewis defined *strict implication* as the *impossibility* of *p* and *not q* (\sim diamond ($p \cdot \sim q$), diamond being the modal operator for possibility).

Lewis himself did not have the antipathy to the idealist movement found in Russell and didn't think that symbolic logic as itself incompatible with the metaphysics of idealism. In fact, Lewis derived a lot of the devices for modal logic from the logic of his teacher, the American "absolute idealist", Josiah Royce. "Much that is best in this book" he writes in the preface of *Systems of Symbolic Logic* of 1918, "is due to him" (Lewis 1918, vi).

The second counter-current to Russell's narrative starts in the 1950s and 60s with the development of the next stage of modal logic, modal *predicate logic*. It was during this time that various logicians, including the very young Saul Kripke, took modal logic to its next stage. From the 1930s onwards, so-called model theory had developed to provide a *semantics* for formal languages. Essentially, a model was a mathematical device for assigning semantic interpretations to propositions. Each model assigned a *truth value* to each proposition in a class of propositions and specified a domain of objects over which the logical quantifiers used in the logic could range. But in extending this device to *modal* logic, Kripke re-introduced an old metaphysical problem.

In relation to classical non-modal logic, to talk of a "domain" of objects to which universal and existential quantifiers apply was relatively unproblematic. One just had to select some domain of *actual objects*: the domain of all humans, of all animals, and so on. But in using such models in relation to modal predicate logic, Kripke had invoked Leibniz's idea of "possible worlds" for the purpose of making sense of truth conditions for necessary and possible propositions: Following Leibniz, one can think of a proposition that is necessarily true as one that is true in *all possible worlds*, and one that is possibly true as one that is true in *some possible worlds* (Kripke 1959, 2). But what, exactly, are we to make of such *possible worlds*? Possible worlds,

presumably, can contain non-actual, merely possible things, but possible things, possibilities, are just that. They are things that *might* exist, but don't. It would be in his response to the question about the ontology of possibility that David Lewis was to become famous (or infamous), and with this, the type of metaphysical questions that had been held at bay during the positivist decades of analytic philosophy came flooding back.

David Lewis bit the bullet and treated thoughts about non-actual possible objects as thoughts made true or false by things in existing *alternate possible worlds*, worlds that are just as real as the *actual* world but spatio-temporally disconnected from it, worlds containing, what for us, are merely possible objects. The actual world, Lewis argued, is only actual for the individuals in it (HO 1.4). For individuals in other possible worlds, their world is the actual world. To think of our world as somehow metaphysically privileged, he argued, is like thinking of one's *temporal* location, one's "now", as a metaphysically privileged *time*. We should regard *other possible worlds* and their occupants as no more mysterious and no less real than we do *other times and their occupants*. [HO 1.4, *Counterfactuals* p. 86.]

Lewis had, of course, many arguments for a view that many others found extremely counter-intuitive, but in the argument drawing on the analogy between location at a time and location in a possible world, Lewis was drawing on parallels between a type of logic called tense logic—the logic of tensed sentences—developed in the 1950s and 60s by the New Zealand philosopher and logician Arthur Prior, and Kripke's modal logic (handout 1.5). Indeed, Kripke himself had been influenced by Prior's temporal logic in his own work on modal logic.

So summing up. During the early decades of the second half of the twentieth century, the terrain of analytic philosophy had started to change considerably. Positivism was on the wane, and its arguments against the meaningfulness of metaphysics were being questioned. But beyond this, traditional metaphysical issues were reappearing in the wake of attempts to make sense of issues of modality that had been largely ignored in the first half century. For those who found Lewis's attempts to account for the meaningfulness of our modal talk just too counter-intuitive to take seriously what were the alternatives? One could, in the spirit of logical positivism, dismiss modal talk as itself meaningless, but modal notions seemed not only embedded in our everyday talk about the world and ourselves, they also seemed embedded in scientific concepts such as the concepts of a law and a cause. It's not surprising then that some gravitated to an anti-(David)Lewisian position that can be described as modal actualism. Modal actualists wanted both to adopt a realistic attitude to modal talk while denying that there was anything more to reality than what was *actually* the case. In the second half of the talk I'll be sketching a view of Hegel as a modal actualist, but will draw this section to a close by drawing attention to an aspect of Prior's work that will be important for my later attempt to locate Hegel in this debate.

Prior died in 1969 the year of publication of David Lewis's first book, and so before the debate about possible worlds really got underway. Nevertheless, Prior seems to have already had a *type of answer* to Lewis prepared, in that Prior had already objected to the *conception of time* implicit in Lewis's use of the parallel

between different times and different possible worlds. Indeed, aware of the parallel between time in temporal logic and modality in modal logic, he had speculated as to whether anyone *really* would want to take the idea of possible worlds seriously – it seemed to him a “tall story” (Prior and Fine, 92; HO 1.5). Only a year after Prior’s death Lewis was to identify himself as a believer in Prior’s tall story (Lewis 1970, 185, footnote 6).

Prior had actually been drawn to the topic of tense logic by a paper first published in the AJP in 1941, and republished in a collection on analytic philosophy in 1951, by his former undergraduate teacher John Findlay (Findlay 1941, HO 1.5. Prior seems to have read this paper in 1954 or 55.) Read now, Findlay’s paper reads as a type of exercise in “therapeutic” ordinary-language philosophy, and in it he acknowledges the influence of Wittgenstein, but the influences in the 1941 paper, I believe, are wider. Findlay was, among other things, one of the first interpreters of Hegel in the post-war period to challenge the anti-Hegelian sentiment of contemporary Anglophone philosophy. In an autobiographical piece he described Wallace’s translation of Hegel’s *Lesser Logic*, a gift received from his elder brother when starting university, as one of the first two philosophical works he had ever read seriously, and the “constant companion” throughout his life (Findlay 1985, 4. The other book had been Bergson’s *Creative Evolution*.) Towards the conclusion of the time paper he criticises the views on time of the British Hegelian, John McTaggart. Findlay was clearly no standard mid-century “ordinary language philosopher”.

Prior later nominated Findlay as the “founding father of modern tense logic” (Prior 1967, 1) on the basis of a footnote in that article (see HO 1.5), and Prior’s attitude to time, especially his critical attitude to the idea of point-like instants of time, is similar to Findlay’s. Prior points to Findlay’s claim that “our conventions with regard to tenses are so well worked out that we have practically the materials in them for a formal calculus”, which he mentions “should have been included in the modern development of modal logics” (Findlay 1941, p. 233; see handout 1.5). But if “all is so desirably definite”, Findlay goes on, “what room is there for puzzles and perplexities” he had been discussing? Findlay then points to “a certain aspiration which all our language to some extent fulfils, and which we are at times inclined to follow to unreasonable lengths. We desire to have in our language only those kinds of statement that are *not* dependent, as regards their truth or falsity, on any circumstance in which the statement happens to be made”. While he notes that “we do *in part* say things which may be passed from man to man, or place to place, or time to time, without a change in their truth-value” it is clear that he thinks that *something* is lost in such an aspiration, although it is not quite clear what.

Prior maintained a similar resistance to that “certain aspiration” named by Findlay, the aspiration to treat a totally decontextualized linguistic form as the basic form of language into which all other more contextually specific forms should be translated. (Prior and Fine, 27; 36; HO 1.5). In relation to *tensed* sentences, he had realized that a tensed sentence could be understood not as a proposition in the modern sense but as a *predicate* that was taken to be *tenselessly* true *of* the point in time at which it was said. Aristotle had thought of a sentence such as “Socrates is sitting” as complete and self-contained, but it is a judgment that becomes false when Socrates rises. Taking it as a *predicate* that is predicated *of the time of utterance* can produce a

de-contextualized “eternal” sentence, “Socrates is sitting at such and such a time”. Quantification over these temporal points became the model for quantification over possible worlds in modal logic. Thus the sentence “it’s possible that p ” could be treated as saying that at *some points* over an analogous range (*some possible worlds*) p is true, allowing the extension of modal theory to modal logic. Just as tensed sentences could be translated into *tenseless* ones, so too could modal sentences be translated into non-modal ones. But Prior asks after the philosophical significance and direction of this translation. “A possibility which immediately suggests itself is that the modal expressions ‘necessarily’ and ‘possibly’ are disguised quantifications of some sort ... It is much less usual to turn the parallels between modal logic and quantification in the opposite direction, and present quantification theory, or part of it, as being a disguised form of modal logic. Such a move, all the same, is in principle possible, and there is more to be said for it than one might at first imagine.” (Prior and Fine, 9–10; HO 1.6) Prior’s objection to treating tensed sentences as translations of more basic tenseless ones was the implicit *platonistic* treatment of “instants” (Prior and Fine, 37.) His objection to the modal analogue was more basic—it was just too hard to believe, a “tall story”.

To my knowledge, Prior himself had no interest in Hegel or German idealism, but his views on time and modality, I believe, show many features analogous to the approach of Hegel. Importantly, both Prior and Hegel were concerned with a conception of time and possibility that was compatible with human freedom, and both found important sources for this connection in the views of Aristotle, who, in contrast to the Stoics, held that indeterminism about the future was necessary for human intentional action. But tensed and modal sentences can be made equivalent to non-tensed and non-modal ones, and the question of how to understand the ultimate direction of this translation distinguishes positions such as modal actualism and modal possibilism, and in the context of time, presentism and eternalism. If we take Prior’s approach to tense/modal logics on the one hand, and David Lewis’s attitude to them on the other as defining opposing poles of a debate, Hegel, I will suggest, can be seen as squarely in the camp of the modal actualist.

2. Hegel’s Modal Actualism

John Findlay, whom Arthur Prior had nominated as the “founding father of tense logic” might also be described as one of the founding fathers of twentieth-century Hegel reinterpretation with *Hegel: A Reassessment* published in 1958, which attempt to “give a brief but rounded account of Hegel’s philosophical doctrines, and to relate them to the ideas and language of our own time” (Findlay 1958, 17). Findlay had been influenced by Russell and Wittgenstein as well as by Husserl and Meinong, and was completely opposed to the doctrines of Bradley and McTaggart he had found at Oxford as an undergraduate. Findlay thought that any great philosopher “has a side to show to every age” (Findlay 1958, 26) and in relation to Hegel’s relevance to the present age emphasized the stress that Hegel had placed on “the unity of thought and language”. Almost two decades later, in *Hegel* (1975) Charles Taylor also drew definite connections between Hegel and the later work of Wittgenstein, but in other respects Taylor’s Hegel was the old 19th century version that Findlay criticized as the

true Hegel.

Since the 1980s, a variety of favourable readings of Hegel have emerged from perspectives broadly informed by analytic philosophy, most of which have aimed at freeing Hegel's metaphysics from the counterintuitive commitments suggested by earlier readings. Nevertheless, it is still true to say that there is a wide variation among the interpretations of Hegel that are offered. Here I'll concentrate on just two groups. On one reading, commonly referred to as the post-Kantian reading, interpreters stress the continuity between Hegel's philosophy and Kant's critical philosophy. On this reading, Kant "critique" of traditional metaphysics made it only part of the way, with Hegel in turn criticizing remnants of the traditional metaphysics to be still found in Kant. The most well-known proponent of such an interpretation is Robert Pippin, whose work has appeared in a series of books starting with Hegel's *Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness*, published in 1989, and a broadly similar view is to be found in the work of Terry Pinkard. (HO 2.0)

More recently this view has been challenged by a range of views that I have elsewhere (Redding 2014) called the "revised metaphysical view" and characteristic of a younger generation of scholars. Typically, proponents of this second view believe that Hegel has more substantial metaphysical commitments than the post-Kantians allow, commitments, however, that are entirely defensible from a contemporary philosophical position. Proponents of the "revised metaphysical view" such as Robert Stern, James Kreines and Chris Yeomans, typically think that Pippin's version reduces Hegel to a type of *metaphysical anti-realist* and reflects prejudices against metaphysics more typical of the early positivist phase of analytic philosophy itself. To a certain extent this turn to some version of realist metaphysical readings of Hegel has been paralleled within the more "continental" literature as well where there has been a revival of metaphysical realism. Those of the "revised metaphysical view" are generally more comfortable with the type of post-positivist metaphysical turn found in analytic philosophy. My suggestion is that seeing Hegel in terms of contemporary modal actualism in some respects captures elements of both the post-Kantian and revised metaphysical positions, in that it both ascribes to Hegel a distinctive type of metaphysics but at the same time effects a type of redefinition of the very project of metaphysics in a way not dissimilar to that found in Kant's critical philosophy. It's as if metaphysical arguments are taken to the meta-metaphysical level concerning the nature of metaphysical inquiry itself. After all, Aristotle had originally deemed philosophical knowledge as a type of knowledge of *the necessary*, while knowledge of the actual was the province of news and history, but modal actualism ascribes a different modal status to metaphysical knowledge: metaphysics is about *the actual*. It is the actual as thought of in a particular type of way, but, nonetheless, actuality is its object. This captures some of the *anti-epistemological* thrust of Kreines's critique of the neo-Kantian reading (Kreines 2015) in that it takes Hegel as having displace Kant's critique of metaphysics from an *epistemological* to a *modal* register.

Material for a *prima facie* case for construing Hegel's idealism as a form of modal actualism is not difficult to find. As stressed by Findlay (1958, 19), Hegel was no "transcendent metaphysician". For Hegel, it made no sense to think of some realm beyond *this* one. This actualism even penetrated to his view of religion: protestant Christianity, on Hegel's thinking, was in fact a religion in which such a this-worldly philosophical attitude was expressed *symbolically* in the doctrine of the incarnation of

God in the person of Christ (Redding 2012). In Hegel's radical trinitarianism, the old Testament God the Father, it might be said, is shrunk to an extensionless point—the abstract and indeterminate “One” of neo-platonic thought. When Hegel described the act of reading the newspapers as the modern man's morning prayer, I suggest he meant it. The type of reading he had in mind, it seems to me, would have been his own experience, as a student, of having followed the events of the French Revolution in the newspapers—events he regarded as involving momentous restructurings of human institutions that could generalize the type of freedom hitherto restricted to a few. The French use “*Les Actualités*” where we use “the news”, and Hegel's use of “*Wirklichkeit*” [actuality], has, I suggest, something of this dimension.

But here Hegel had to fight on two fronts: on the one hand he had to oppose *transcendent* world-views, like that of the Old Testament in religion, or Platonism in philosophy, and on the other, oppose a form of modern *this-worldism* popular among his contemporaries, that of Spinoza—a position broadly like what would now be identified as *naturalism*. Hegel's resistance here was, he thought, that Spinozist naturalism, being a form of necessitarianism had in it no real place in it for human freedom. I'm going to take this motivation of finding a place for human freedom in the actual world as that which drove the idealist tradition. In relation to Spinoza Hegel used elements of Leibniz, appealing to the realm of possibility, but now conceived as *internal* to actuality. The result, I suggest, was a form of metaphysics similar to some contemporary forms of modal actualism.

In his discussion of the concept of actuality, in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, Hegel describes *possibility* as the “reflection-into-itself [Reflexion-an-Sich]” of the actual (HO 2.1). Here possibility “is posited as the *abstract* and *unessential essentiality*, in contrast to the *concrete* unity of the actual”. So for him it is *essential* that the actual *includes* possibility within it. It is only in imaginative picture-thinking (*Vorstellungen*), he goes on, that that the notion of possibility appears “to be the richer and more comprehensive determination” (Hegel, *EL*, §143 add). It is common for contemporary actualists (Kripke 1980, 43–4, Stalnaker 2008, 51) to criticize Lewis's picturing of other possible worlds as something like other far off countries, as if we are looking something like an atlas and can identify one of these “worlds” as the actual world we are in. This is something like what Hegel is objecting to here.

Hegel's odd locutions, I suggest, are his way of trying to capture a distinctive feature typical of actualist accounts of possibility *qua* possible worlds or *world-states*. Nowadays they may be expressed more clearly, but they are puzzling views. In the form of actualism put forward by Robert Stalnaker, for example, possibilities are conceived of as unactualized *properties* of the actual world (Stalnaker 2012, ch 2). They are to be understood as *abstracta*—and, in line with C. I. Lewis's original treatment, as *maximal sets of consistent propositions* (HO 1.2). For Stalnaker, such propositions are not to be conceived as mere linguistic representations of “possible worlds” without those worlds, a type of factionalism that Lewis had called “linguistic ersatzism”. For Stalnaker, propositions are what we appeal to in order to explain the representational properties of representations, such as linguistic representations. Propositions simply *are* the possible worlds or states of the world, and they relate to the world itself as properties relate to particular worldly objects. Hegel is sometimes described as a “conceptual realist” in an attempt to convey the idea that “concepts”

are part of the actual world, and not something in “the minds” of subjects. (Houlgate here) As in Hegel, for Stalnaker, possibilities are *abstracta* that must be understood as somehow existing *within* the actual concrete world. Where Hegel would talk of the determinations of conceptuality, Stalnaker talks of propositions. It is this “reflection” of possibility within actuality that Hegel contrasts to Spinoza’s necessitarian form of actualism. This metaphysics, I will suggest, in turn reflects Hegel’s logic and the way that for him Leibniz’s logic comes to mediate traditional syllogistic logic.

3. Lewis–Leibniz, Prior–Hegel and the interpretation of modal logic

I have described David Lewis’s thesis of the plurality of worlds as representative of the type of turn to metaphysics characteristic of post-positivist analytic philosophy, but an obvious distinction between Lewis’s use of possible worlds and the earlier approach of Leibniz consists in the fact while Lewis employed this thesis in the service of a form of physicalism, for Leibniz it was central to his Christian theism. While for Lewis, the possible worlds are conceived extensionally, although not in the spatio-temporal realm of the actual world, Leibniz’s are *intensional*, existing in, or in some relation to, the mind of God. But, very crudely, strip away the mind of God in Leibniz’s account and, I suggest, what is left is something like Lewis’s realm of possible worlds.

Like Leibniz’s, Hegel’s view is a fundamentally *intensional* one, in which *mind* is built into the conception of actuality *from the start*. But Hegel’s approach to actuality has elements of Lewis’s—in particular the *indexical* characterization of the actual. The actual is a world that contains *us*. And also like Lewis, Hegel does away with *the* mind of God, at least in line with the concept of God that seems presupposed by Leibniz—that is, the “mind of God” *qua* some extramundane intelligence after the style of the God of the Old Testament. In Hegel’s radically Trinitarian account, the “mind of God” is now distributed over the minds of finite actual beings, Hegel’s version of Leibniz’s finite monads. In a theological register, we might say that the Old Testament *personalistic* God has become more like the neo-platonists’ indeterminate “One” than a recognizable person, the “personal” God having been given a worldly presence, first in a historical human being, and then in a religious community extended in time and space for whom that first worldly presence *was* God.

In Leibniz’s monadology, each monad had been conceived as composed of representations and appetitions by which it could represent the entire universe from its own distinctive “point of view”, with the totality of those points of view ultimately unified in the mind of the omniscient transcendent God of the Old Testament. As a rational finite individual monad I am capable of moving closer to that God by a type of platonic ascent that takes me, in a stepwise manner, from *more contextualized-perspectival to less contextualized-perspectival forms of knowing*, described as transitions made between representations couched in clear but confused ideas to ones couched in clear and distinct ones. In the 17th C the distinction between intentional and extensional understandings of judgment structure had been made by the Port Royal logicians and Leibniz had believed that one could freely translate between Aristotelian categorical judgments understood from a intentional point of view and judgments given the form of conditionals and understood extensionally.

This logical distinction in turn maps onto these steps within reasoning. The *primary matter* that characterizes every finite monad is associated with the *confused* conceptions in their thinking. For example, most of us are restricted to having a clear but confused knowledge of gold in that we are limited to our intuitive apprehension of gold in terms of its particular colour and its hardness. A metallurgist, however, has ways of testing for gold by its particular “marks” (*Discourse on Method*, XXIV). In the early modern period, the “mark” of gold was thought to be its solubility in *aqua regia*, and linked to this test, the metallurgist’s representation of gold would be at least *relatively* clear and *distinct* in contrast to the clear and confused ideas of others. Distinctness of knowledge, however, comes in degrees, because it could be the case that metallurgist’s knowledge of what counts as *evidence* that this is gold is *itself* presented in a clear but confused way—the metallurgist, for example, might have to rely on smell, colour and so on for the identification of *aqua regia*. Even the metallurgist will stop *somewhere* in the giving of evidence for the judgment “this is gold”, because there is only one being—God—whose knowledge is entirely clear and distinct. It will be the point in a monad’s process of reasoning at which distinct ideas gave way to the clear but confused ones of perception that will define that monad’s “perspective” or “point of view” onto the world as a whole. In short we might characterize Leibniz’s idea of the movement from clear and confused to clear and distinct ideas as *akin* to the type of translation we have already seen—that of the translation of tensed sentences into tenseless ones, or modal sentences into non-modal ones.

We have seen how Findlay and Prior linked the *tense* system to the *modal* system, and in fact now the term “modal” has come to be used generically to refer to a host of different logics (epistemic, doxastic, deontic and other logics) all of which can be shown to have the *context dependency* of tense logic in their won particular ways, and which invite the question of a reduction of such “modal” sentences to some “non-modal”, relatively decontextualized equivalents. Moreover, we have seen Prior as having posed the question of how to think of this translation between these generically “modal” and “non-modal” forms. Are tensed or modal sentences ultimately to be translated into tensed or non-modal ones, or should the translation be thought to go the other way? David Lewis, following Russell’s original treatment of “analysis”, conceived of the modal sentences as essentially reducible to non-modal ones, while Prior, following Findlay and, indirectly, the later Wittgenstein, questioned this, entertaining the possibility of the translation ultimately going the other way (HO 1.5). What of Hegel? Can we even pose this as a possible issue about which he may have had an opinion? I believe we can.

It is often assumed that Leibniz had no logical followers and that his logical ideas had little influence until they were rediscovered in the later nineteenth century with the work of Louis Couturat, but this is not exactly the case. Throughout the eighteenth century interest was shown, especially among mathematicians, in developing the Leibniz’s ideas about the application of algebra to logic and especially in his idea of a *characteristica universalis* with its rational calculus. Such an interest had been unusual for philosophers, but one exception had been Gottfried Ploucquet, Hegel’s logic teacher at the Tübingen seminary, and in *Science of Logic* Hegel treats the attempts by Leibniz and Ploucquet to reduce the traditional syllogistic inference forms to mathematics (Redding 2014). Hegel had clearly been familiar with Leibniz’s devices of transforming “modal” judgments with traditional subject-predicate forms into

“non-modal” ones. For example, in one technique Leibniz treated the subject terms of a traditional judgment form as themselves *predicates*. In the new judgment form, both subject-predicate and predicate-predicate are conceived as applying to some “third”, *not* mentioned in the judgment’s surface grammar, a technique similar to treating an “incomplete” Aristotelian judgment as itself a predicate to be predicated of something else, such as the time of utterance (HO 3.4).

Hegel was certainly critical of this project understood as some global attempt to render judgments into an *entirely* extensional form—his criticism of such a project having similarities to C. I. Lewis’s later critique of Russell’s *non-modal* material inference. For Hegel, attempting to capture a judgment in an exclusively extensional way undermined the intensional relationships existing between parts of the judgments within a syllogism, parts that were responsible for the law-like nature of the inference involved (*SL*, 550–555). Nevertheless, it is clear in Hegel’s conception of the dynamics of thought, that this type of translation from the modal to the non-modal, that he calls “reflection”, plays a crucial role in thought’s progress. It is just that this movement cannot be considered as a series of iterated reflections that take us closer and closer to the mind of God. Hegel conceives of reflection as not take thought further and further away from the actual, but *deeper* into it, revealing connections that had not been apparent on the surface. And yet the individual knower, nevertheless, never ceases to belong to the actual nor to use the representational resources found there. The individual knower never achieves a “view from nowhere”, not because this “view” is unreachable for humans and only available to God, but rather because the idea of such a view is categorically ill-conceived. It is a remnant of a religion that pictures God is that of the omniscient otherworldly single mind—a “father”—as found in the Old Testament.

An example of how reflection should not be seen as simply going unidirectionally from modal to non-modal can be found in Hegel account of judgment, which provides a reason for the ineliminability of modal judgments from knowledge. It is clear that Hegel treats the concepts expressed in the predicates of observational judgments—predicates such as colour ones—as themselves *modal* concepts that cannot be understood simply as terms that simply name their actual *extensions*. This is central to his critique of empiricism. That the predicate of a simple perceptual judgment, “the rose is red”, expresses a *modal* concept is shown when one considers its negation. If one says, for example, “the rose is *not* red”, negation here will only be taken as applying to the *determinateness* of this general predicate, so that in saying that the rose is *not* red it is not implied that the rose is not *coloured*. Rather, “it is ... assumed that it has a color, though another color” (*SL* 565). That is, if it is red then it is not yellow, not pink, not white and so on, and if it is not red, it is either yellow or pink or white, and so on. And even if it *is* red, we can say that *had it not been red*, it *would have been* either yellow, or pink, or white, and so on. This is Hegel’s so-called “determinate negation”. All this we need to already know when we learn of something’s *particular* colour.

Moreover, the process of determinate negation could be repeated on another “higher” level, such that we might come to think of the colour of the rose as a type of dispositional property that the rose possesses and only manifests under certain conditions. Hegel’s example of such a *reflective* judgment that clearly involves a type of test akin to *metallurgist’s* test for gold—is “This plant is curative” (EL, §174, add).

At first glance, it might seem that unlike the property of *being red*, the property of *being curative* needs certain conditions under which to manifest itself, but we realize that this further analysis could be applied to redness itself. A thing's colour needs certain conditions under which to manifest itself *to* a perceiver, as a red rose might look *purple* when viewed in moonlight. Thus even having a particular colour can be thought of a disposition to produce certain effects *under* certain conditions in line with properties such as *being soluble in aqua regia* or *being curative*. It is in this sense that in Hegel the knower's reflection upon their perceptions produces a *deeper* understanding of the world experienced, the actual world, without taking the knower *out of* the actual world.

To express Hegel's initial example in terms of the language of possible-worlds semantics, one might say that when one learns *that* the rose is red, one *eliminates* from one's belief states certain other accessible doxastic possibilities, possibilities in which the rose is yellow, the rose is white, the rose is pink, and so on. The parallel, I believe, goes deep. Hegel thinks of a judgment, an *Urteil*, as involving a type of division, a *Teilung*, and from the perspective of possible world semantics, a proposition, *qua* intentional content of a linguistic assertion is itself conceived as a division—a division in the “space of possibility” demarcating a subspace representing those worlds in which it the proposition is true from the space representing those worlds in which it is false. (Stalnaker 2012, ch 5) This allows the assertion to be understood as conveying information that allows a hearer to *eliminate* from their beliefs an array of possibilities incompatible with the content of what was communicated (Stalnaker 1999, 86–8). As in Findlay's neo-Hegelian account, sometimes I, as an essentially contextualized embedded modal knower, need to put my beliefs in a form that can be conveyed to others who inhabiting different contexts, and so need to abstract from my linguistic representations those features that tie them exclusively to some aspect of my context not shared by the interlocutor. For the temporal context, I can thus replace indexicals like “now” or “next week” by phrases that specify the actual times intended. But the belief states themselves, as Stalnaker argues, cannot be entirely divested of modal contextualized-judgments, or, using another terminology, indexical or self-locating judgments (Stalnaker 2008, ch 3).

I have tried to convey some of the evidence that I see as pointing towards Hegel's metaphysics as a form of *modal actualism*. Hegel's modal actualism is, of course, a type of *idealism* rather than naturalism as it clearly includes *minds* as part of the actual. It is also a form of *conceptual realism* as it includes conceptual or propositional structures *as* part of the actual. Minds need concepts just as concepts need minds. Conceptual determinations (Hegel) or propositions (Stalnaker) are what allow me to attribute to other minds particular intentional contents such as experiences, beliefs, desires and so on—contents that allow others to understand the sentences that minded beings make as well as the actions they perform. All this, I suggest, is bound up with Hegel's now much-discussed theory of “recognition”—that is, his account of those acts that either tie minds together or force them apart in terms of the conceptually described intensional contents they share or fail to share. The most appropriate way to think of this, I suggest, is in terms of the pragmatics of language use (Stalnaker 2014)—a topic going back to mid-twentieth century analytic philosophers such as the later Wittgenstein or Paul Grice. The naturalist metaphysician might, I think, have something to complain about were this inventory of minds and concepts to be included in an account of what *necessarily* exists, but the

actualist does not approach reality in this spirit. The actualist approaches reality in the spirit of an account of what *actually*, not what necessarily, exists. Moreover, this reality is a world that includes the actualist theorist, and the activity of theorizing, *within it*.

The difference in spirit here might be expressed in relation to different ways in which an actualist and a naturalist might approach philosophy of mind. The naturalist, for example, will be interested in the sorts of biological underpinnings of the mind, and attempt to ground that mind *in* nature. The Hegelian actualist, in contrast, may tend to assume our being biological beings as given, assuming that having a mind must *in some way* be compatible with having such a nature, thus allowing her to focus her attention elsewhere. She will be more interested in attempts, like Hegel's, to say what it is about the historically specific ways in which we communities are constituted, the forms in which its members talk to and interact with each other and talk about and interact with other worldly items, about the institutions that shape and reproduce these forms of activity, and so on—in short attempts to say something about what Hegel describes as forms of *spirit* (*Geist*) rather than nature (*Natur*). In particular, she will be focused from an evaluative perspective in terms of the potentiality of current practices and institutions with the further development of the freedom that can be seen have been enabled by certain historical transformations in the past. Such configurations of “spirit”, the Hegelian actualist will think, are unlikely to be illuminated by discoveries in neurophysiology, and more likely to be illuminated by the human and historical sciences, by developments in literature, art, religion and so on—that is, by forms of representation that pertain the ways we think of ourselves as human. Hegel's metaphysics on this account will be as much a metaphysics *for* the human sciences and humanities, than it is one for the natural sciences alone. But as a metaphysics designed for human beings, need we think of this as a shortcoming?