

Hegel, Modal Logic and the Social Nature of Mind

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Introduction:

Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* provides a rich source of ideas for philosophical account of the mind. While an "expressivist" and "externalist" dimension of his analysis treats the mind as essentially embodied and socially located, Hegel nevertheless does not attempt to eliminate the elusive dimension of conscious *subjectivity* or the *phenomenality* of conscious experience as an essential property of mindedness. However, it can seem difficult to develop these ideas in any systematic way into a distinct *philosophy* of mind. First, Hegel's ideas relating mental states and processes to language and social life—ideas articulated around the theme of inter-subjective "recognition"—are presented more as hints than developed theories; and next, there is the *metaphilosophical* question of the status of Hegel's *Phenomenology* itself. For Hegel *phenomenology* was not philosophical science, "*Wissenschaft*", but rather a path taking a thinker *to* a "place"—a cognitive attitude or orientation—from which such scientific thought could proceed. In the first instance, this path leads to the categorical structures of the *Science of Logic*, which in turn are meant to provide the conceptual infrastructure for philosophical inquiry into first nature and then "spirit", as presented in the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. Hegel's philosophy of mind should be found in the latter, but in comparison to the ideas found in the *Phenomenology*, what is on offer in Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* is disappointing.¹

Here I want to suggest a path for developing the *Phenomenology's* suggestive ideas that broadly conforms to the demands of Hegel's architectonic—moving from his *logic* in the direction of a philosophy of mind in conformity with its categories. Following suggestions separately made by Arthur Prior (1968) and Jaakko Hintikka (1975), I will approach the mind's *intentionality* (spelt with a "t")—the idea of the mind's "directedness" to objects as reintroduced into European philosophy in the late 19th century by Franz Brentano—in terms of the logical notion of *intensionality* (spelt with an "s"),

¹ This seems built into the mode of presentation found there. For example, it is hard to see how Hegel could give any systematic treatment of the relation of psychological capacities to issues of language and intersubjectivity, as these topics are dealt with in separate parts of the system—the former in the philosophy of *subjective spirit* and the latter in the philosophy of what Hegel called *objective spirit*.

and approach Hegel's logic as an *intensionally* understood *modal* logic relevant for the modeling of mental states.² I will then suggest some developments in modal logic made over the few decades that might provide a helpful a way of filling out Hegel's hints.

First, however, I want to address the potential charge that this involves some anachronistic projection of a recent form of thought onto Hegel's philosophy. Modal logic is an ancient discipline stretching back to Aristotle, and the idea of treating the modalities broadly to include more than the "alethic modalities" of necessary and possible truths also has a long history. More specifically, however, I want to suggest that Hegelian influences can be discerned within the evolution of recent modal logic and the development of possible-world semantics itself. These influences come via the specific influence on the work of Arthur Prior—a key player in the development of modal semantics in the mid-twentieth-century—of a thinker with strong *Hegelian* leanings, Prior's teacher, the South-African born philosopher John N. Findlay. As Prior acknowledged, his work in tense logic—a logic that would provide a model for Saul Kripke's work in possible-world semantics—had been inspired by a paper on time published by Findlay in 1941, and on the basis of which Prior had declared Findlay the "founding father" of tense logic. If Findlay warranted such a status, then, I suggest, we might then think of Hegel as at least a god-parent of modern modal logic considered more generally.

A focus on Findlay allows us to appreciate something of the diverse origins of modern modal logic and especially the role of the discipline of *phenomenology* here, further underlining the link between the intensional and the intentional. In 1930, C. I. Lewis, who had played a major early role in the development of modern modal logic, had noted that in contrast to the extensionalist approach to logic characteristic of the British tradition from the time of Boole, logic as conceived in "continental" thought from Leibniz on had been understood "intensionally", that is, understood in terms of relations primarily conceived among mind-dependent concepts rather than in terms of the relations among the mind-independent *extensions* of those concepts, and this tension between "intensional" and "extensional" approaches to modal logic was to continue. From the extensionalist side, the development of modal

² While the latter derives medieval approaches to Aristotle's philosophy of mind, and was revived by Brentano in the nineteenth century, the former was the English translation used by Sir William Hamilton for what the Port Royal logicians had called the "*compréhension*" of a term, and which they opposed to its "*étendu*", translated by Hamilton as its "extension" (Kneale 1968, 84). Arthur Prior treats the *intentional* as a species of the *intensional* (Prior 1968).

logic had been stimulated by attempts to extend the type of extensionistically conceived semantics developed for non-modal logic in the tradition of Frege, Russell, Tarski and Carnap, to the initially *intensionally* understood propositional modal logic of C. I. Lewis. Considered in this line of development, modal logic will be focussed on the “alethic modalities” of necessary and possible truths.

Less recognized, however, were developments in modal logic stemming from the attempts of intensionalists belonging to the phenomenological tradition to provide a logic for the intentional structures of consciousness, and Findlay, I suggest, provided a conduit from the phenomenologists to the more mainstream analytic tradition. Before the decade spent in New Zealand, Findlay had spent time at the University of Graz in Austria, working on a monograph, submitted there as his PhD thesis, on the philosophy of Brentano’s former student Alexius Meinong. In Graz, Findlay’s work had been supervised by Meinong’s former student, the logician Ernst Mally, who, having published a book on “deontik logic” in 1926, seems to have been the author of the first modern work of non-alethic modal logic. In *this* tradition, modal logic is more likely to be seen as *paradigmatically* instantiated by *non-alethic* logics such as logics of belief and action. It is in relation to this latter tradition, I suggest, that we can locate Hegel, and it is from within this tradition that Hegel’s logic provides a basis for philosophy of mind.

My plan is first to sketch in section 1 the picture found in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* in which individual minds are conceived as recognitively linked into inter-subjectively patterns of holistically conceived “spirit”. This will then provide a framework for understanding the significance of the type of logical dualism that Hegel shares with contemporary modal logicians, argued for in section 2. The plan is to use this dualism to show how individual minds might be linked by shared intentional contents but differentiated by differences in individual *attitudes* to these contents. In the final section I will attempt to find in contemporary modal logic some resources for developing the *Phenomenology’s* hints about *geistig* systems of interconnected minds.

1. Clues for Philosophy of Mind from Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*

The first three chapters of Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, constituting the section “Consciousness”, start in a way that is familiar from the type of

epistemological approaches found in early modern philosophy. An opening move effectively asks the epistemological question “Of what can one be certain?” and the three chapters of this section consider three unsuccessful attempts to characterize objects of consciousness that can be known with certainty. First, in “sense-certainty”, the mind is conceived as immediately acquainted with atomic sensory contents in a way that resembles early empiricism or Russell’s later picture of the mind’s acquaintance with atomic sense-data. But it is unable to live up to its promise of immediate certain *knowledge* and collapses, to be replaced another model, “perception”. Here perceptual knowledge is conceived more along the lines of direct awareness of everyday worldly objects, perhaps closer to a model of direct perceptual realism. However, following a similar fate to that of sense-certainty, perception too collapses, and is replaced by a third mode of cognition, “the understanding” in which the contents of consciousness are understood as actively *posited* by the mind rather than passively *received* by it, as when the scientific mind posits underlying forces to explain regular patterns found *within* its experience. But it in turn too suffers a similar fate. All in all, the take-away lesson of these chapters is that the early modern individualistic *Cartesian* starting point is incapable of accounting for any genuinely *intentional* relation between mind and world—a critique that might also be applied to *post-Hegelian* forms of *phenomenology* when carried out from the perspective of a single consciousness as is typical of the work of Husserl, for example. Furthermore, at the end of the chapters it has emerged that the mind’s relation to any object is dependent upon an over-arching *self-relation*, an idea familiar in Kant, and especially Fichte, and with this the theme shifts from that of *consciousness* to this self-relation—*self-consciousness*.

It is in the context of the following Chapter 4, “Self-Consciousness”, that we encounter the idea that has captured considerable attention in the 20th century—the idea that the representational or intentional capacities of a subject depends upon that subject’s existence within relationships to others that Hegel characterises in terms of the notion of “*Anerkennung*”, “recognition”. Self-consciousness, we are told, “exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that is, it exists only as something recognized or acknowledged [*anerkannt*]” (Hegel 1977, § 178). Such acts of recognition are, it would seem, the very stuff out of which “spirit” is objectified and differentiated from nature. It is this objectification of spirit that specifically allows Hegel’s phenomenology to become a phenomenology *of* spirit rather than *consciousness*.

Hegel introduces this theme in the context of the much-discussed “master–slave” dialectic, in which a life-and-death struggle between two living beings becomes resolved into a relatively stable, norm-governed,

institutionalized form of life, in which the agents act out the linked functionally defined roles of master and slave. In such a scenario, a role for *language* would seem obvious (e.g., Bernstein 1984):³ a slave acts so as to satisfy his master's desires, and we might think that any such form of social life requires at least the capacity for the master to *convey* the determinate *contents* of his desires to his slave in some way that carries an effective *force*. But the role of any *simply* linguistic acknowledgement should not be over-exaggerated, as within such a context acting and acknowledging are inseparable. For example, acts cannot be identified as slavish without there being someone else *for whom* those acts are done, and to act as a slave *is* itself to acknowledge that other as one's master, and to acknowledge oneself as their slave. Thus the "language games" employing the terms must be embedded within an appropriate "form of life". Nevertheless, it still might be thought that language is *necessary* to achieve the level of determinacy possessed by concepts such as "master" and "slave" if there are to be such determinate social roles within a form of life.

Focussing on these features of Hegel's parable will thus suggest parallels to the later Wittgenstein, but the essentially *reciprocity* of Hegel's *Anerkennung* relation suggests an active role for the slave that goes beyond the behaviouristic connotations of Wittgenstein's well-known "builder's language game", for example. A speech act will be meant to bring about its effect *in virtue of* the recipient's *understanding* of the speaker's expressed intention, and thus Hegel treats the *actual, non-reciprocal* master-slave relation as in contradiction with essential features of the recognitive relation it instantiates. The master treats the slave as a type of will-less *object*, and yet *in commanding*, nevertheless implicitly recognizes the slave as a cognitive "subject" able to understand and act on his commands. In fact, for Hegel the very *conditions* of servitude encourage the development of intentional capacities that take the slave to a cognitive level beyond that of the master because the *slave's* practical relation to the world comes to be mediated by the contrary point of view of the master. Thus with this simple model we are presented with a picture of an emergent spiritual realm as one of interconnected individual "I"s within a "we" that exists in and is dependent upon the living world, but with a developmental potential that makes it not reducible to it nor understandable in terms of the categories of the natural world.

³ For an overview of Hegel's complex ideas on the relation of thought to language see my 2016a.

In his phenomenologically based ethical writings, influenced especially by the work of Alexis Meinong on whom he had completed a PhD dissertation, Findlay had distinguished between “fulfilled” and “unfulfilled” intentional states, treating the “presence to sense” of some object the paradigm of the former (52). But actually perceived objects do not exhaust the ways in which objects can be presented to the mind. When one posits a force of gravity as a condition of a rock’s falling, this posited *force* is not present to sense in the way that, say, a falling rock is. While Findlay, following Meinong, thinks of the mind’s directedness to abstract, *non-sensuous*, objects as dependent on the fulfilled intentions of sense, he, nevertheless, going *beyond* Meinong in a more Hegelian manner, also insisted that *full presentness* to sense of any object itself depended upon the *absences* represented by *abstract* “inexistents”.⁴ Thus he held that even in “the most primitive experience” there is to be found the consciousness of the “not yet” and “no longer”, anticipation and recollection themselves having a place *within* consciousness of some object in the present. Noting that such distinctions are able to be “crystalized into the clear concepts of a modal logic” (64),⁵ Findlay alludes to the idea about time and the differential accessibility of temporal points *from* the perspective of “the present” found in his 1941 paper on time that had stimulated Arthur Prior in his pursuit of *tense logic* as a form of modal logic. But Findlay’s long-standing interests in such issues are already clear in his earlier book published in 1933 on Meinong.

Meinong had been concerned with the mode of being of intentional objects that need not exist. Here Meinong considers a range of “inexisting” objects [*Gegenstände*]: first there are inexistent “*Objekte*” such as golden mountains, round squares; and next “circumstances”—“*Objektive*”—that may or not be the case, such as a rose’s being red. With respect to the former, the relevant question is to their being (*Sein*) while in relation to the latter it concerns their being “so” (*So-sein*). Beyond *Objekte* and *Objective* is the realm of “subsisting” abstract ideal entities such as characteristics, relations, identities, differences and so forth.

Such differences are relevant, of course, to the intentional contents of Hegel’s master and slave. In Hegel’s parable, the master is a consumer: his

⁴ In his work on Meinong Findlay noted that “though Meinong does not consider it, an objectum [a concrete *Objekt*] is as much dependent on the objectives [Meinong’s “*Objektive*”, abstract states of affairs] which concern it, as they are dependent on it” (Findlay 1963, 73).

⁵ While agreeing with much in the later Wittgenstein concerning the *parasitism* of “our talk about the so-called inner life ... upon talk of our so-called outer life” (Findlay 1963b, 204), Findlay always opposed the “radical publicism” (227) of the later Wittgenstein’s account of mental content.

world will be a world of actually existing *objecta*, the primary significance of which will be determined by whether they satisfy or frustrate the master's own immediately given desires. Clearly the slave cannot maintain *this* attitude to such objects—in accepting servitude the slave had to *forego* his own immediate desires for particular things for the sake of satisfying a more general desire for *life*. Thus the slave *refrains* from simply consuming desired objects, and acts *on* worldly objects, transforming them in such a way to bring them into conformity with a desire that he knows *of*, but which is not his own—the desire he attributes to his master. In Meinong's terms, the slave's intentional objects must be the as yet non-existing *objecta* that will satisfy the master's desires. Objects as yet only characterized as parts of abstractly and generally conceived circumstances or *objektives*. We have already glimpsed, in Hegel's consciousness chapters, some candidates for these different intentional attitudes relevant here: the sensory *givenness* of perceived objects and the abstract *positedness* of objects cognized as having explanatory roles.

By way of an example: let's say a slave prepares a meal for his master, cooking him a fish. In contrast to the sensuous way in which the ultimate *Objekt* of the master's desire—the mouth-watering cooked fish, promising immanent “fulfilment”, will be present to *him*—the object originally presented to the *slave* will be closer to a generally conceived circumstance simply *aimed at*, something to be made actual and determinate in activity. As not originally given but *simply* conceived, it will, in Meinongian terms, be *inexistent* and *incomplete*. But the parallel to Meinong doesn't end here, as we find later in his *Science of Logic* a dualistic classification of judgments supporting this distinction that resembles a dualism of forms of predications that had been put forward by Meinong's former student, and Findlay's supervisor, Ernst Mally, in his logical reworking of Meinong's idea of non-existent objects. To pursue these I'll now turn to Hegel's logic.

2. Logical Dualism in Hegel's Subjective Logic and in Contemporary Modal Logic

In his taxonomy of forms of judgment, Hegel generates a series of judgment with different logical shapes that finally transitions into a series of inferences. Running through both series is a recurring distinction between two different understandings of the *predication relation* appearing in the sentences expressing judgments: predication understood as the *inherence* of the predicate *in* the subject or predication understood as the *subsumption* of the subject *under* the predicate. There is no suggestion that either type of predication can be *reduced* to the other, although there *is* the suggestion that

one can alternate between these different construals of a single *Satz* or *sentence*, effectively converting a judgment of inherence *into* a judgment of subsumption, and vice versa.⁶ So rather than resulting in any *reduction* of one form of predication to the other, such translation of one form to the other produces Hegel's characteristic figure of *Aufhebung*—opposed forms become internally retained and related within "higher" more complex ones. These two forms of predication recall a similar distinction in Aristotle, but they can also be seen as analogous to a distinction that Mally had proposed as relevant for Meinong's distinction between existent and inexistent *Objekte*. This is the distinction between predication in which a concept is *satisfied* by some actual concrete object and predication in which a concept "determines" some non-specified *abstract* or ideal object.

For Hegel's part, predication as *inherence* is first encountered in the most primitive form of judgment Hegel treats—the *judgment of determinate being* [*das Urteil des Daseins*]. With this Hegel clearly has in mind a type of immediate and perceptually based "*de re*" judgment about *specific actually existing objects*, his examples including "the rose is red" and "the rose is fragrant" (Hegel 2010, 558–559). Predication as *subsumption*, by contrast is found in the succeeding *judgment of reflection* that will have a more properly propositional content as in a "*de dicto*" judgment.⁷ Elsewhere, Hegel hints that this logical distinction separates Aristotelians and Stoics (Hegel 1995 vol. 2, 255), and in its practical form, we might think of this distinction as expressing the different types of intentional capacities characteristic of master and slave.

The judgment of determinate existence evolves through a string of subforms, starting with the "positive judgment" which shows the surprising logical structure of having a *universal subject term* and a *singular predicate term* (Hegel 2010, 560), a structure that will distinguish *this* judgment form

⁶ This had been a technique utilized by Leibniz, but for Hegel it occurs in such a way that each cycle of translation increases the complexity of the logical structure involved. I explore this in greater detail in Redding 2016a, chapter 3. As mentioned, Leibniz had employed such translation between singular and particular judgment forms for logical purposes, and treating singular judgments as universal judgments had been a standard practice among Medieval logicians.

⁷ Here I am using the idea of *de re* states as about *specific* objects, not just individual objects per se. C.f., David Lewis: "If I hear the patter of little feet around the house, I expect Bruce. What I expect is a cat, a particular cat. If I heard such a patter in another house, I might expect a cat but no particular cat" (Lewis 1979, 513). I am treating *only* the former expectation as a properly *de re* attitude. The two states have very different fulfillment or satisfaction conditions, the former cannot be satisfied *without Bruce*.

from the opposed subsumptive judgments of *reflection*, which will have show the more conventional *singular* subject and *general* predicate. This first form is clearly relevant to the idea of the judgment expressing some *phenomenally rich* perceptual content. With the idea of the singularity of the *predicate*, such as “red” in “the rose is red”,⁸ Hegel clearly intends that the predicate acts in a name-like manner so to pick out the *specific* redness—a *property instance*—“inhering” in *some specific* rose—we might say *the specific way* of being red that this *specific* rose instantiates.⁹

But this positive judgment is, Hegel says, “not true” and “has its truth in the negative judgment” (Hegel 2010, 562), and it is this use of *negation* that introduces a new degree of logical complexity. When one says, for example, “the rose is *not* red”, negation will only be taken as applying to the *determinateness* of the predicate, because one does *not* thereby imply that the rose is not *coloured*.¹⁰ Rather, “it is ... assumed that it has a color, though another color” (565). Modal notions are prominent here: if a rose *is* red then it is *not possibly* yellow, pink, blue, and so on, and were it *not* red, it would *have to be* either yellow or pink or blue, and so on.¹¹ Understood as *determinately red* the colour of the rose is as much determined by the colours that it is *not* as the colour that it is—a situation analogous to Findlay’s insistence of the way the cognition of the thing present to sensory cognition is bound up with memory and anticipation of the things former and future states. With this the predicate “red” has gone from functioning in a *quasi-name-like* way of picking out some individual instance of redness to designating something like a *sub-area* within a larger partitioned space of possible instances of redness, a space *defined by* its borders, such that differences among colours play as important a role as similarities among shades of a single colour (Findlay 1963, 119–20). With this it has become the appropriate type of abstractly universal predicate for a *reflective* judgment.

⁸ Hegel switches between the examples “the rose is red” and “the rose is fragrant”. For simplicity sake, I will keep to the former. No logical point hangs on the difference between examples.

⁹ C.f., “The rose is fragrant.’ This fragrance is not some indeterminate fragrance or other, but the fragrance of the rose. The predicate is therefore a *singular*” (Hegel 2010, 560).

¹⁰ “From the side of this universal sphere, the judgment is still positive” (Hegel 2010, 565).

¹¹ Moreover, what counts as a determinable of any entity depends up what *sort* of entity it is. While numbers can be characterized as either odd or even, but *not* as either red, or blue, or yellow, or ..., roses can be characterised as either red, or blue, or yellow, or ..., but not as either odd or even. Aristotle’s hylomorphism is implicit here.

A subsumptive judgment of redness that results from this generalization of the predicate will be *indifferent* to the *ways* that actual objects manifest redness, such judgments simply classifying all red things into a single homogeneous class—an indifference present in Meinong as the indifference of a thing's "so-sein" to its "sein". It is this *indifference* to the *way in which* red can be instantiated that characterizes reflective judgments and that is given expression in Mally's idea of predicative determination *without* instantiation. It is this indifference that characterizes the abstract objects in intention. In the context of a slave's practical intention to "cook a fish", the object of this intention, the *cooked fish*, does not as yet exist, and without it, there is *as yet* no question as to the *way* that fish manifests the state of being cooked—for example, its being "well done" or "lightly cooked", or its being grilled or baked. Nevertheless, were it entirely isolated from its satisfaction conditions, such an abstract *de dicto* content would be ultimately meaningless. Abstract *objectives* require concrete *objecta*. Were the intentional activity of intending to cook disconnected from the *activity* of cooking, the language game expressing such intentions would, as Wittgenstein might put it, run "out of gear". The genesis of *actual objects* with their particular "inherent" properties are needed in order to give life to the generic determinations involved in general and abstract intendings.

3. The Logic of Intentional States

The classic version of modern modal logic as a logic of intentional states can be found in the "doxastic logic" developed by Jaakko Hintikka, in his 1962 book *Knowledge and Belief*. There Hintikka attempted to model a mind's states of knowledge and belief with the use of propositional operators "a knows that" and "a believes that", broadly analogous to the operators of necessity and possibility as originally developed by C. I. Lewis. Along with this, Hintikka proposed an accompanying type of semantics something along the lines of the models Kripke was proposing for alethic modality. Thus a type of possible-worlds approach could be applied such that "Jane believes that p" could be interpreted as "in all possible worlds compatible with what Jane believes, it is the case that p".¹²

¹² The idea of a plurality of worlds here captures something intuitive about belief. If, catching a glimpse of it through the bushes I form the belief that my neighbour's new car is *red*, this belief is compatible with a variety of other ways the car may be—two door or four door, manual or automatic, and so on. Part of what it means *to believe* something about the car is to know there is *more* to find out, such finding out involving the elimination of particular possibilities compatible with what had been believed.

Considered as having a properly *propositional* content, Hintikkarian belief states thus coincide with the reflective or “de dicto” intentional attitudes of Hegel’s logical dualism—conforming to the logic of subsumptive or “determining” predication. How then might we think of any alternative “de re” intentional attitude on which, according to Hegel and Findlay, *de dicto* states depend? In his phenomenological writings, Findlay had treated *belief* as a future-directed with abstract contents that anticipating ways in which the world *would* turn out to be in experience.¹³ As an intentional attitude towards *abstracta*, then, propositionally contentful beliefs are related to and presuppose some more immediate intentional states, ones with an *objectual* rather than propositional content. The content of this alternative state might be then thought of as expressed by judgments characterised by Hegel’s predication as *inherence* or Mally’s idea of predication as *instantiation*. In more recent times, this role is played by so-called “self-locating” or “essentially indexical” judgments as popularized by John Perry.

Arthur Prior had attempted to capture a logic of such *non-propositionally* articulated contents with his idea of “egocentric logic” (Prior 1968b),¹⁴ but did not develop this idea very far, but an analysis in a similar *spirit* can be found in Robert Stalnaker’s attempts to incorporate self-locating judgments into the possible-worlds framework. Parallel to the treatments of Hegel and Mally, Stalnaker’s self-locating judgments express singular or “witness” propositions and are directed to *actually experienced*, specific objects. Moreover, from the point of view of logical resources for *Hegel’s* philosophy of mind, Stalnaker’s analysis may be helpful in a way that Prior’s is not, in that it allows of a type of *collective* egocentricity—first-person plural “we” versions of John Perry’s “self-locating” judgments. Such judgments, involving “indexical” items such as “I”, “now”, “here”, “this” and so on, can be thought of as generalizations of Findlay’s and Prior’s “tensed” judgments

¹³ “The paradigm case of what we are ready for in believing is provided by the deliverances of sense... If we believe there to be honey in the jar, then we are ready for all the compulsive experiences which would be said to show us the honey in the jar, or which would lead up to or fit in with such experiences” (Findlay 1961, 102).

¹⁴ Here Prior had offered as a judgment of egocentric logic, the peculiar “It is paining”, which appears to be a type of extreme and privatised analogue of a contextualized *tensed* judgment like “It is raining”. Perhaps Prior had in mind the idea of making the contextuality of such a judgment explicit with something like “I am in pain”, just as one would make that of “it is raining” explicit with “It is raining *now*”. This might allow a series of objective translations based on regular patterns within such locutions: that is, just as the present tense of “now” can be further related to both past and future “thens”, so might “I” be thought as similarly standing in regular relations to locutions using other personal pronouns such as “you”, “her”, “we”, “they” and so on.

located in the speaker's present. And while usually thought of as centred on an "ego", there is no reason why such judgments might not be regarded as equally centered on a collective "we". Located with other perceiving subjects in the same spatio-temporal context, we assume that we can all perceive the same general range of things. The details of Stalnaker's analysis need not concern us here, but its general features may suggest a helpful way for modelling the complex relations at the heart of that dynamic interaction between minds that Hegel deals with in terms of the notion of recognition, ideas Stalnaker deals with in the context of his treatment of the "pragmatics" of communication (Stalnaker 2014).

While a shared context might be essential for the communication of those "centered" expressions, the meaningfulness of which *depend* on context, Stalnaker stresses that more than the *facts* of such a shared context are required here—such facts must be among the contents of shared intentional states—shared *assumptions*. Thus, following Paul Grice, he refers to the "common ground" of shared presuppositions forming the necessary background to the dialogical exchange of information (Stalnaker 2014, chs 1 & 2).¹⁵ Moreover, that speakers share this "common ground" is a stronger requirement than that they simply happen to have certain beliefs in common, as they must share the belief that they *do in fact, share those beliefs*: if Alice and Jane share a common ground, not only must both have certain beliefs in common, Alice must believe *that* Jane has those beliefs, must *believe* that Jane believes that she, Alice, has those beliefs, and so on. Here we enter into Hegelian territory. In Hegel's terminology, Alice and Jane must *recognize* each other as sharing these beliefs, and each must recognize the other as *recognizing* themselves as doing so.

Hegel had dealt with a similar form of recognitive and cognitive relation in his account of the recognitive structure of the *family* in the *Philosophy of Right* (Hegel 1991, §§158–81). Subjects in intimate social relations will be bound together by *shared beliefs* about the world—beliefs that typically have a type of strongly affective, and hence, phenomenally marked, *objectual modes of presentation*. But while *necessary* for rational human mindedness, Hegel treated this type of immediate common-mindedness is ultimately limited and one-sided.¹⁶ Spirit is indeed found *immediately* embodied in communities of like-minded individuals, but *qua* natural beings, such individuals are

¹⁵ Stalnaker's presuppositions have an equivalent in Meinong's "Annahme"—effectively, *uncontested* assumptions, and so beliefs not being considered in the context of a logical space of alternatives.

¹⁶ This immediacy is also seen as typifying the social relations of pre-modern communities more generally. This is "Sittlichkeit" in its immediate form.

themselves *ultimately individuated* as separable spatio-temporal particulars by their individual embodiments. The opposition between master and slave in the *Phenomenology* had dramatized *just this* potentially antagonistic dimension of an otherwise unifying *spirit*.

In the *Philosophy of Right*, such an individualized moment of spirit is reflected in the sphere of objective spirit that is the inverse of that of the family—“civil society” (§§182–256), the more impersonal *public* sphere grounded ultimately in *economic relations* between individuals, and in which each member participates as an individual “I” rather than as organic part of a collective “we”. Within *this* sphere, each subject is abstractly recognized as a point-like bearer of abstract rights, and it is in *this* sphere that subjective mental contents will typically be thought of and attributed to others in “*de dicto*” ways.

In some ways, modern market relations as found in Civil Society are akin to master-slave relations in that they involve an external, “instrumental” attitude towards the other—a type of negative version of the unifying recognition achieved in the family. Thus in economic dealings, while at one level I recognize another as a bearer of rights, at another level I treat her as a body directed by beliefs and desires that I can ascertain and exploit in the service of achieving my own desires. But unlike the master-slave scenario, this relation is, at least at a formal level, reciprocal, and I recognize that the other treats *me* in a similarly double-sided way. As with the original master-slave parable, that one comes to grasp oneself as an “object” in the world like any other is a constitutive part of achieving genuine *subjectivity* and genuine rational agency. A similar dimension of intersubjectivity is reflected in Stalnaker’s account of communication and is manifest in the context of his difference to the approach of David Lewis.

In an attempt to represent the total belief state of a subject, Stalnaker draws upon a variant of possible-worlds semantics introduced by Lewis, who had extended it to self-locating judgments (Stalnaker 2008, 49; Lewis 1979). In the standard possible worlds approach to belief states, the propositional content of a belief is understood as a set of possible world in which that proposition is true,¹⁷ and Lewis had suggested a similar treatment of self-locating beliefs. This involved the idea of *centered* possible worlds, made up of propositions “centered” on a particular subject at a particular time. Thus, while the content of an ordinary, uncentered judgment such as “grass is green” is given by the set of worlds in which that judgment is true, the content

¹⁷ Lewis treats the “centered possible world” approach as independent from his own ontology of possible worlds. Lewis 1979, 533.

of a *centered* judgment, such as “I am sad”, is given by the set of possible worlds which has a *sad person* at its designated center. A set of centered possible worlds thus give a worldly representation to a subject—not as something *in the world*, but rather as the *center of* that world, for whom that world is how it is. It is a crucial aspect of this Lewisian analysis that a subject so represented is represented as *general* rather than as *specific*—it is this feature that allows such contents to be shared. The *content* of the utterance “I am sad” will be the same if uttered by both you and me, as long as it is the case for each of us are actually *sad*, and it abstracts from our particular ways of *being sad*. But for Stalnaker this represents a limitation of the centred-possible-worlds approach. It will be limitation, I suggest, similar to that which Hegel attributes to the form of intentionality promoted in *the family*.

In the representation of a subject’s total belief state of a subject, the idea of centred-possible worlds will function twice over here, in that a subject’s total belief state is to be represented by the combination of a centred world *and* a set of centred worlds. The former, the “base world”, represents the contents of the subject’s actual beliefs, while the *latter*, the “belief worlds” represent scenarios that are alternate to those of the subject’s base world, and that can be used to represent the beliefs of other subjects. If I believe that *this rose is red*, then my base world, like my judgment, is centered on *me*. My *belief* worlds, however, will encompass a broader set of alternatives. In some, this rose may be a plastic rather than real, in another, it may be a white rose illuminated by a red light. Such scenarios are understood as alternate states of the world and what might be believed by possible subjects *other* than me. Stalnaker’s question now focuses on the way in which others and beliefs are represented in a subject’s world.

We have said that the subjective point of view given representation with the device of “centered possible worlds” is generic. The meaning expressed by “I am sad” is to be specified in such a way to be indifferent to whether it is specifically *me* who is sad: it will express the same content for *any* sad person who enunciates it. But if I tell *you* that “I am sad”, *you can* acquire the properly propositional belief, “Paul is sad”, conditional upon your knowing that *I am Paul*. This content will be an *uncentered* proposition that could be used to inform others *in other contexts*. It is at this point that Stalnaker thinks Lewis’s account needs modification.

Others must feature in one’s world as objective centres from which the world is cognized, but they must not *only* feature in that way—they must also feature as objects in *my* world. As Stalnaker puts it: “When we represent the way the individual locates himself in the world as he takes it to be, we need to include information about who it is who is locating himself there, and we need

to link the world, as the speaker takes it to be, with the world in which the speaker takes it to be that way” (Stalnaker 2003, Lecture 3). Here Stalnaker touches on the complexities of the dynamics of recognition as conceived by Hegel, but we must hold on the *reciprocity* of recognition in Hegel. Stalnaker is commenting on the demands of “we” theorists who are trying to make explicit the mental contents of some intentional subject. We must represent that subject as in the world (our base world) but in such a way that nevertheless involves recognizing her as a subject who *also has a world*. But what Hegel brings home in the *Phenomenology* is that this requires a certain sort of reflective insight on the part of “we” theorists. We have to grasp that *we too* belong to the world we are seemingly viewing from “without”, and that when we attempt to abstract from the broader context of the overarching “we” of the historical human community to which we *theorists* belong, the quest for objectivity has gone too far.¹⁸

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¹⁸ The restrictions of David Lewis’s centred-possible-world analysis of belief might be likened to the restrictions that Hegel deals with in terms of judgment structures limited to the categories of “universality” and “particularity”, but that don’t include a place for what he calls “singularity” (*Einzelheit*). In this system any subject is only determined as a particular instance of a universal, as when a person only conceives of themselves as having no dimension outside their determination as a member of their family. But for both Hegel and Stalnaker, the analysis of the inter-subjective relation must bore down to a deeper level—one in which our ultimate distinctness as believers is acknowledged. For Hegel this beings in the requirements of the category of *singularity*, “*Einzelheit*”. On the relation of these three categories see Hegel 2010, 529–49.

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