Findlay's Hegel: Idealism as Modal Actualism

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At the beginning of the twentieth century Hegel, who had been an important figure within late nineteenth-century English-speaking philosophy, was effectively excommunicated from the circle of philosophers worthy of consideration. Hegel came to be seen as having, at most, historical interest whereas, say, Descartes, Locke, Hume or Kant were more likely to be regarded as having something important to say to contemporary concerns. Nevertheless, Hegel did not entirely disappear, and throughout the *second* half of that century there occurred a variety of attempts to revive him within an Anglophone philosophical culture that had moved on from the more positivistic approaches of earlier decades. One interpretative strategy attempted to divest Hegel of the bizarre metaphysical claims with which he had been popularly associated by portraying him as in the tradition of Kant. If Hegel was critical of *all* "dogmatic" metaphysical commitments, then he obviously couldn't be accused of the weird ones with which he was so often associated.[1] To some, however, this effectively disembowelled Hegel, robbing him of his greatest ideas, and in turn, the "post-Kantun" interpretation has more recently provoked a type of "realist" reaction, with an attempt to re-establish what were thought to be his central and defensible metaphysical claims, usually of a generally Aristotelian or Spinozist kind.[2]

Of course, such "realist" readers of Hegel have had to acknowledge that Hegel had *in some sense* aligned his views with Kant, just as the post-Kantians have had to acknowledge the undoubtedly "Aristotelian" or "Spinozist" features of Hegel, but the question of *how* to combine these two features has remained unclear. Of course one possibility is that, like the project to square the circle, this is a pointless exercise and that the early analysts had done

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[1]   See for example Pippin 1989, 1997, and Pinkard 1994, 2000.

[2]   For Aristotelian-leaning readings, see, for example, Stern 2009, Kreines 2015, and for a Spinozist-leaning reading, Houlgate 2005.

us a favour in dissuading us from the effort. I want, however, and to suggest a hitherto relatively unexplored way beyond the dichotomy of Aristotelian realist and Kantian idealist readings of Hegel by attempting to locate Hegel within the terrain of recent debates within modal metaphysics, and to do this by returning to the outlook of the *first* philosopher within the analytic context to attempt to bring Hegel into the analytic conversation—the South African born philosopher, John Niemeyer Findlay, whose *Hegel: A Re-examination* appeared in 1958. Thus rather than return to the details of Findlay's actual "re-examination" of Hegel, I want to find a place for Hegel as read in a broadly Findlay way by placing Hegel's idealism within the context of debates within recent modal metaphysics to which Findlay, I suggest, was a contributor. However, Findlay's contribution was not direct; rather, it proceeded via the influential role played within the emergence of modern modal metaphysics by the New Zealand philosopher and logician Arthur Prior, who had been a student of Findlay's in the 1930s when the then itinerant Findlay taught at the University of Otago.

In particular, I want to consider the idea of Hegel's idealism as instantiating the metaphysical position that in that context has come to be called "modal actualism", of which Prior can be regarded as an early and important advocate. To this end I will sketch some of the basic features of modal actualism on the basis of the work of both Findlay and Prior, and then examine some features of Hegel's logic from within this context. Finally, I will then try to say why modal actualism should be thought of as a form of idealism, albeit of a benign and non-worrisome kind. First, however, I'll prepare the way by quickly reviewing the general light in which Findlay portrays Hegel in *Hegel: A Re-examination*, and then by relating this to some general remarks that Hegel himself makes about the category of "actuality" in his *Science of Logic*.

The General Shape of Findlay's Hegel Interpretation

Findlay starts his 1958 Hegel book noting how "we", presumably referring to philosophers of the English-speaking world "spent much of the opening years of this century in elaborately abandoning and disowning Hegelian positions we had previously held" and while he concedes that the obscurities of Hegel's own language were surely partly responsible, he nevertheless contends that "Hegel deserves a restatement and

reassessment … on account of the originality and permanent interest of his ideas, and on account of the extent to which these ideas have been overlaid by prejudiced misconceptions" (Findlay 1958, 18). These common misconceptions include the picture of Hegel as "some sort of *subjectivist*, … who thinks the realm of nature or history exists only *in or for* someone's consciousness, whether this be the consciousness of a mind like ours, or of some cosmic or supercosmic mind" or "some sort of manic *rationalist*, … who seems to *deduce* or to *foresee* the detail of nature and experience from the abstract demands of certain notions, who tries to do *a priori* what we now hold can only be done *a posteriori*" (Findlay 1958, 19). But the misconception I want to focus most upon is that of Hegel as "a *transcendent metaphysician,* one who deals with objects or matters lying beyond our empirical ken, or who fits together or transforms what we know or experience into some total view beyond any individual's person's knowledge or experience". Hegel may talk of "the Absolute", Findlay goes on, but "there can be no doubt at all that Hegel sees what is 'absolute' in nothing which lies beyond the experiences and activities of men: the Absolute, he says is 'what is entirely present' (*das durchaus Gegenwärtige*), what is 'on hand and actual', not 'something over above things or behind them' (*etwas drüben und hinten*). … One might say, in fact, that there never has been a philosopher by whom the *Jenseitige*, the merely transcendent, has been more thoroughly 'done away with', more thoroughly shown to exist only *as revealed* in human experience" (Findlay 1958, 19). It is in this sense of "metaphysics" that Findlay might be seen as sharing some of the outlook of later "post-Kantians".[3]

It is this last feature of Hegel's philosophical position—his radical rejection of the *Jenseitige* of a world beyond *our* world, the actual world available to human experience—that will be the starting point for my attempt to interpret Hegel's idealism as a form of modal *actualism*. The basic claim here concerning "actualism" as a metaphysical stance might seem little more than common sense, but *philosophically* it seems to align with

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[3]	C.f., "Despite much opinion to the contrary, Hegel's philosophy is one of the most anti-metaphysical of philosophical systems, one that *remains* most within the pale of ordinary experience, and which accords no place to entities or properties lying beyond that experience, or to facts undiscoverable by ordinary methods of investigation" (Findlay 1958, 348).

particular elements of *both* Aristotle *and* Kant. In relation to Aristotle, this parallels his attempt to bring Plato's "ideas" *into* the world *from* some Platonic *Jenseitige* and thereby to introduce an element of *empiricism* into Platonism, while in relation to Kant, it aligns with his rejection of the epistemological dimension of a metaphysics as the rationalist pursuit of knowledge of what lies beyond the experienced world. But while actualism seems simply to *equate* reality with the actual world, philosophical reflection on "actuality" reveals that things cannot be quite so straightforward. This is because of a type of untutored "modal realism" that seems part of the everyday common-sensical outlook *via* which we seem to take into consideration non-actual *possibilities*.[4] For example, we typically conceive of the future as open, and of our actions as able to succeed or fail in their attempts to realize states of the world that at the time of action are *only* possibilities. And if the actual is *all* that exists, where, one might ask, are we to locate these? One particular philosophical alternative, favoured by the positivists and by Quine, had been to deny the *meaningfulness* of all such modal discourse, thus abandoning the untutored modal realism of common sense and its associated sense of practical agency. Another, more recent alternative has been the approach of David Lewis, who attempted to save our untutored modal realism by a highly *counter-intuitive* metaphysics, broadening reality to encompass a plurality of possible worlds *beyond* the actual. Modal actualism, as I understand it, has been offered as an alternative to both the positivists and to Lewis, and it does this by attempting to locate possibilities, which Lewis locates in *other* possible worlds, *within* the actual world.

One relevant contemporary version has been that advocated is Robert Stalnaker who has attempted to save the modal realism of the everyday view while remaining as close as possible to the spirit of the positivists' critique of any "luxuriant" metaphysics such as Lewis's. Thus, while being a proponent of "possible-world semantics" after the style of Lewis, Stalnaker contests the metaphysics of a plurality of possible worlds. Talk of "possible worlds", he insists, must be understood as loose talk for talk about possible states of *this*

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4   Or, as Hegel points out, each of the notions "actual", "possible" and "necessary" can only be understood in relation to the others, not individually. The problematic nature of the everyday "untutored" interpretation of "actual" only emerges when one reflects on the need to maintain the intelligibility of the opposed *possible*.

world, the actual world, and so possibility must be considered as somehow *internal* to it—as Stalnaker puts it, as unrealized *properties of* the concrete world (Stalnaker 2012). It will be *via* this broad idea of modal actualism as a metaphysical position that opposes Lewisian modal realism on one side and positivistic amodalism on the other, I suggest, we might understand Hegel's idealism along broadly Findlayan lines. Initial evidence for the adequacy of this reading to Hegel himself can be found in Hegel's account of the category "actuality [*Wirklichkeit*]", found in his two logical works, *The Science of Logic* and the *Encyclopedia Logic*.

Thus, for example, in an addition to the *Encyclopedia Logic*—a book effectively written as a teaching manual—Hegel is reported as saying in a lecture that "the notion of possibility appears initially to be the richer and more comprehensive determination, and actuality, in contrast, as the poorer and more restricted one". This *looks like* an allusion to a type of Lewisian modal realism. "But", he goes on, "in fact, i.e., in thought, actuality is what is more comprehensive, because, being the concrete thought, it contains possibility within itself as an abstract moment. We find this accepted in our ordinary consciousness, too: for when we speak of the possible, as distinct from the actual, we call it 'merely' possible" (Hegel 1991, § 143, addition).5 Moreover, just as Stalnaker's account comes into focus when it is opposed to the picture put forward by Lewis, Hegel's version of actuality, I suggest, might be thought to come into focus in its contrast with the opposing "possibilist" version of modality found in Leibniz.6 But Hegel is also to be understood as affirming the *reality* of possibility, in contrast to Spinoza's *necessitarian* form of actualism in which alternative possibilities evaporate, analogous to the way Stalnaker is critical of the work of contemporary *necessitarians* such as Timothy Williamson. Thus in his treatment of "Actuality" in the *Logic*, Hegel contests the accounts of *both* Leibniz and Spinoza, with, as is typical of his method, an attempt to capture elements of both.

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5   For an excellent account of these sections of the *Science of Logic* see Ng 2009.

6   In Leibniz's version, the actual world is actual because it was chosen from a plurality of logically possible worlds by God.

Hegel, however, goes further than Stalnaker by treating actualism as entailing an *idealist* dimension, in that it treats the mind as an ineliminable dimension *of* the actual world.[7] Later, I will turn to some elements of Hegel's "Subjective Logic" which support this interpretation, but before that I want to explore more of the actualist position itself by examining Findlay's own views in this regard, and the views of his former student, Prior. I will start with some remarks about the hidden paths of Findlay's influence on more recent discussions.

Findlay's Hidden Role in the Development of Recent Modal Actualism

I have suggested that modal actualism can most easily be understood as a strategy for doing justice to the intuitions of an untutored modal realism while avoiding the type of metaphysical position that was made famous by David Lewis. While Arthur Prior was a prominent figure within the revival of modal logic in the 1950s and 60s, he did not live to see much of the ensuing debate over David Lewis's controversial metaphysical views. However, he had clearly signalled his resistance to Lewis's metaphysics, thereby providing an early instantiation of the actualist position. Prior was the inventor of "tense logic", which played an important role in the explosion of work on modal logic in the 1960s,[8] and Prior's resistance to treating the semantics of *modal* sentences in terms of the contents of "possible worlds" was associated with a resistance to attempts to reduce the logic of *tensed* sentences to an extensionalistically conceived logic of untensed, or "eternal", ones— sentences that were conceived as rendered true or false by being indexed to the state of the world at *discrete points in time*.

In the early 1970s, David Lewis had argued that it is just as irrational to deny the reality of non-actual possible worlds as it is to deny the reality of times other than the present (D. Lewis 1973, 86). We don't think of the inhabitants of ancient Rome, for example, as unreal

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[7]   There are elements of this in Stalnaker, although Stalnaker (understandably, given his context of mainstream analytic philosophy) does not emphasize or develop these.

[8]   On Prior's role in this development see, especially, Copeland 2002 and 2008.

simply because they doesn't exist *now*, and we shouldn't think of the inhabitants and the goings-on of non-actual possible worlds as unreal, simply because they don't occur in *this* world. Here Lewis exploited certain parallels between the structures of tense logic and the "alethic" modal logic of possible and necessary truths that had figured in Prior's own work, but Prior had already rejected Lewis's way of thinking of the *temporal* vehicle of the analogy. Like Findlay, Prior was suspicious of the desire to try to speak meaningfully about other times in ways that purported to completely free the meanings of one's sentences from the temporal context of their utterance, and he did this because of metaphysical consequences involving what he thought to be an illegitimate appeal to "Platonic" entities such as "instants of time". Such a suspicion can be found in the work of Findlay.

Findlay had spent the years 1934–44 teaching at the University of Otago in New Zealand where he had introduced Prior to logic in his undergraduate years, and supervised his master's thesis. Later, in his first book, published in 1949, Prior had attributed to Findlay "almost all that I know of either Logic or Ethics" (Prior 1949, xi), although this was well *before* Prior was to develop the specific approach to the logic of tenses for which he was to become well-known. However, Prior seem to have only been influenced Findlay's specific views on the logic and metaphysics of *time well after* his teacher's stay in New Zealand. Findlay had published a paper on time, "Time: A Treatment of Some Puzzles", in 1941, during his time at Otago. However, Prior seems not to have read it until some time in the 1950s, after the paper had been republished in a collection on mid-century analytic philosophy in 1951 (Flew 1951). Whatever the details of Findlay's influence here, it was on the basis of *this* paper that Prior would later refer to Findlay as the "founding father of modern tense logic" (Prior 1967, 1).

Prior makes this claim in the essay "Precursors of Tense-Logic", published in 1967, giving as evidence 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 "should have been included in the modern development of modal logics" (Findlay 1941, p. 233; Prior 1967, 1). For Prior, the importance of Findlay's "tense-logical laws" pertained to the fact that Findlay had understood the *futurity* (or pastness) of some event x, as pertaining not to x *per se*, but as pertaining to its state of *presentness*. That is, to refer to an event in the

future (or the past) is to say that it is the event's *present* that is in the future (or past). For Prior, Findlay's insights about time were superior to those of Reichenbach in his accounts of tenses in the late 1940s (Prior 1967, 12), and more adequately captured points that Broad and Moore (17–8) had earlier struggled to capture. But the parts of Findlay's paper relevant to later discussions go beyond his single allusion to a modal logic of tense, and his analysis of "x future" as "(x present) future". Importantly, Findlay had *also* alluded to the *motivations* behind the interpretation of tensed sentences that would eventually become standard in tense logic and that Prior would oppose, and to the shortcomings of the type of *unmediated* system of tenses that Prior would develop into a calculus.

The calculus of tenses, Findlay noted, provides only an imperfect approach to temporal reference and he points to "a certain aspiration which all our language to some extent fulfils … 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" (Findlay 1941, 233). Findlay had, since his undergraduate days, been a keen reader of Hegel, and would have been familiar with a point made in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. An assertion such as "Now is night" might well be true when it is said, but it will certainly be false some time later (Hegel 1977, §95). But of course we have ways of overcoming the limitations of "indexical" terms like "now", "yesterday" and "tomorrow", by employing names for temporal points. Rather than refer to "yesterday", we can give its actual date. Thus Findlay 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" (Findlay 1941, 244). Nevertheless, the aspiration to speak "objectively" in this way is one that "we are at times inclined to follow to unreasonable lengths". This, I suggest, sums up what we might call Findlay's "mediated presentist" position on time. Later, Arthur Prior would attempt to introduce this degree of *objectivity* into his original tense logic with devices constituting what has come to be known as "hybrid logic" (Blackburn 2007). These parallels between the logic and metaphysics of *tense* on the one hand and *modality* on the other suggest that such a *mediated presentism* could be generalized to a "mediated actualism" in relation to modality—the idea of the actual as *internally mediated* by possibilities which we are able to know and act upon, but always from the "perspective" *of* the actual world and some particular perspective *in it*. In relation to time, this means that while we can *locally*

overcome the limitations of indexicals-centred utterances by translating our utterances into forms which are "timelessly true", we cannot *globally* do this. We cannot speak a language entirely purged of indexical elements nor could our knowledge be entirely constituted by timelessly true propositions,9 and much the same could be said in relation to modality. As Robert Stalnaker has expressed it, we can only have thoughts about possibilities by using semantic resources taken from the *actual* world (Stalnaker 2012, 13). Findlay *himself* was not a logician, but more metaphysician with an interest in logic, and Prior, his logically brilliant student, would come to work out such consequences for the semantics of temporal reference. But Prior's work was nevertheless, I suggest, effectively an elaboration within logic of Findlay's basic idea as presented in his 1941 paper. Moreover, that had not been the first context in which Findlay had engaged with the logics of temporality and actuality in such a way, as such engagements extended back to his earlier work on *phenomenology*.

Findlay and Phenomenology

Findlay is well-known for his English translation of Edmund Husserl's *Logical Investigations* published in 1970, but his engagement with the modern phenomenological tradition initiated by Brentano dated back to his first book published in 1933 on the Austrian phenomenologist and "object theorist", Alexius Meinong. This was effectively his PhD thesis completed at the University of Graz and supervised by the Meinongian logician, Ernst Mally. Among the many topics discussed there is Meinong's changing treatment of tensed statements.

Findlay reports that in his early work, Meinong had treated the tensed statement "my writing table exists" as *incomplete*, and to be completed as "my writing table exists *at time t*". For Meinong, Findlay writes, objective temporal dates constituted "a set of absolute determinations", despite the fact that we "usually apprehend them in their relation to the date at which our apprehension occurs" (Findlay 1933, 78). That dates constitute a set of *absolute* determinations was exactly what was later to be denied by Prior. That one

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9   This line of thought suggests the ineliminable nature of present-centred thoughts from the system of our beliefs as a whole—a version of the "ineliminability of the indexical" thesis made popular more recently by John Perry and others.

intentionally relates to other points in time *from* some specific one, one's *present*, Meinong interpreted as generating a subjectively based illusion. "We regard this date as specially privileged because we happen to be there; it is dignified with the title of 'present', which all later and earlier dates are referred to as 'future' or 'past' respectively. There is, however, nothing objective in such distinctions: we are intruding in to a statement about non-mental objects certain irrelevant statements about ourselves" (ibid.). This, as Findlay notes, was effectively the same view on the apprehension of times as found in a paper by Bertrand Russell in 1915, "On the Experience of Time" (Russell 1915, 79). Indeed, this basic orientation would continue to be the dominant way within which tense logic would come to be conceived *after* Prior, but it was an interpretation that Prior had himself resisted. Thus Prior would deny that "modal logic or tense logic is an artificially truncated uniform monadic first-order predicate calculus". Rather, first-order predicate calculus should itself be understood as "an artificially expanded modal logic or tense logic" (Prior 1969, 246).

Prior's chacterization of modal logic as an "artificially truncated uniform monadic first-order predicate calculus" here contains an implicit reference to the treatment of modal logic enabled by Kripke's revival of Leibniz's "possible worlds" approach to alethic modal logic from the late 1950s and early 1960s (Kripke 1959, 1963). By invoking the idea of quantifiers ranging over *possible worlds* rather than entities *in this world*, Kripke had been able to extend *to* the existing *propositional* form of modal logic introduced early in the century by C. I. Lewis (1912, 1914, 1918) the type of truth-functional semantics developed in the thirties for *non-modal* logics by Alfred Tarski. And yet, as earlier noted, many critics, including Prior, seemed to take David Lewis's "modal realism" as constituting a type of *reductio ad absurdem* of this extensionalist approach. If thinking about possibilities in this way committed one to belief in parallel universes, then so much the worse for this semantic approach. Significantly, in his Meinong book, Findlay had pointed out that Meinong had himself come to have second thoughts about his treatment of tensed statements in Russellian fashion, coming to admit "a sense in which the present is privileged. We call objects that exist now actual (*wirklich*) because they are able to act (*wirken*)" (Findlay 1933, 79).

I take it that at least part of what Meinong had in mind is that in perceptual experience we take *objects* within the *present* circumstances in which we exist *as* acting upon us, and take such causality as fundamental to the possibility of our knowledge of the world. If my belief that a particular table exists is rooted in my perception of it, it is because I take *that particular table* as causally relevant to my experience of it, and such causal influence requires my physical colocation with *that* table. I may have true *general* thoughts about non-specific tables, but these will ultimately depend on causal relations to particular things manifest in the direct "evidence" [*Evidenz*] of an experience that is always located in a specific "present". In short, in terms of my epistemic relation to the world, the present *cannot* be considered indifferently as just another point in time. But Findlay's interest was possibly piqued by the link between the actual (*das Wirklich*) and "acting" (*Wirken*) from a different direction, as his interest in Meinong seems to have been driven primarily by issues of *practical* reason. In fact, his former supervisor, Mally, had attempted to formalise a logic of practical reason—the reason of "the will"—in the 1920s (Mally 1926). This was the first work of modern *deontic* logic, published a quarter of a century before the more well-known work of G. H. Von Wright (von Wright 1951).

Prior had linked tense logic and alethic modal logic to issues of practical agency in the 1950s, and similar questions resurfaced in the 1970s and 80s bringing into focus the issue of deontic logic's relation to alethic modal logic when treated in the "possible-worlds" approach introduced by Kripke. Thus in 1981, a collection, *New Studies in Deontic Logic*, appeared containing a variety of approaches united by their opposition to what by then had come to be called the "standard" way of interpreting deontic logic, in which deontic logic was thought of as a *particular application* of alethic modal logic thought of in the new way. In short, they opposed the ultimate reduction of deontic logic to what Prior had described as "uniform monadic first-order predicate calculus". Prior's earlier resistance to this reductive approach is apparent in the contribution to that volume by Richmond Thomason in which he advocated the development of deontic logic along the lines of *tense logic*— specifically "Arthur Prior's work in indeterministic tense logic [that] provides for choices among alternative possible futures" (Thomason 1981, 171).

In his contribution to the same volume, von Wright noted Mally's pioneering work and placed it within the second of two quite different traditions in thought about deontic logic, the first going back to Leibniz and the second to Jeremy Bentham's "logic of imperation" (von Wright 1981, 10). In the *Leibnizian* tradition, the logic involved was conceived as ultimately applying to *propositional contents* evaluated in terms of truth and falsity such that the parallels with alethic modal logic could be brought out. Many of the contributors to the volume, however, contested the basic idea that the contents dealt with by deontic logic should be considered in this way. Propositions might be thought of as the contents of *theoretical* intentions, but practical intentions were *practical* intentions. If practical intentions are directed to states of the world conceived as it *ought* to be, then it would seem that such contents could not be thought of as timeless. They would thereby seem to more resemble perspectival or "ego-centric" beliefs, such as beliefs about contingent states of affairs revealed in perception. But these issues raised in the context of the new logic were the kinds of issues discussed earlier in the century by phenomenologists, and with his reflections on Meinong's approach to the logic of tenses in 1933, Findlay was thus going to the core of metaphysical issues that would resurface half a century later.

Meinong had been, as is well-known, an advocate of "inexistent" objects such as golden mountains and round squares, this advocacy being based on the idea that if intentional states can be *directed to* such objects then there must be *things* to which they are directed. But besides his controversial thesis of inexisting objects, Meinong had also assigned a separate place in his ontology for what he called "objectives" [Objektive]—something like "circumstances" or "states of affairs". While an *object*, a table, for example, can be said to exist or not exist, an *objective*, a state of affairs *concerning* an object, some particular way that that object *is*—a certain table's *being cluttered*, for example—should be thought of as *real*, but in a different sense to that in which the table itself is considered real. While objects "exist", objectives "subsist". But Meinong's later position seemed to introduce a duality of different types of "*Objektive*", ones that are true or false *timelessly*, and others the truth of which varied with the passage of time. Thus we might say that "tables are (essentially) three dimensional" or "A table (as such) has three dimensions" exemplify the former *timeless* judgments. To capture this distinction, Meinong distinguished the notions "true" and "factual", allowing truth to be used in relation to timeless objectives, and factual in relation

to temporally changeable states of affairs, and holding that truth and falsity "are completely overshadowed in importance by the fundamental distinction between factuality and unfactuality" (Findlay 1933, 89).

In timelessly true objectives, the "objects" involved are not particular empirical tables but non-empirical *ideal* ones that, although considered "incomplete" and lacking actuality, were nevertheless, somehow, *real*. Nevertheless, Meinong still seemed to regard these objects as somehow ontologically dependent on actual things—actual tables, for example—with which we can causally interact in time and space.10 But there now seemed an unbridgeable division between ideal objects and actual ones. While there could be timeless truths about ideal objects, they could never be fully determinate, and the fully determinate nature of the particular *experienced* objects came at the cost of the "truths" about them being unstable.

While Findlay expressed reservations about Meinong's later position and his treatment of the temporality of objects and factual circumstances, he clearly considered that this analysis was headed in the right direction in comparison to the earlier Russellian view. Claiming that Meinong, "gets rid of the specious, but intolerably superficial view of time to which most scientific thinkers become victims" (Findlay 1933, 80), Findlay clearly anticipates his later views expressed in 1941 that while we will need to be able to translate from tensed sentences about *perceivable objects* to untended ones expressing *timeless* propositions, this translation cannot be understood as a general recipe enabling the elimination of tensed representations from our beliefs about the world. This is indeed a theme that runs through Hegel's logic in which Hegel supports the idea of some kind of mutual translatability between contextualized and decontextualized judgments and *resists* the idea of reduction of one kind to the other. Like Findlay and Prior, Hegel, I suggest, was a mediated "presentist" as well as a mediated "actualist".

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10   Meinong was suspicious of attempts to *reduce Objective* to *Objekte* in the way, for example, favoured by Russell, who thought of his own equivalents to *Objektive*, propositions, as constituted *from* objects, their properties and relations, and so as reducible to them.

Hegel's Subjective Logic

After two hundred years since its first publication there is still no consensus among readers as how to interpret Hegel's *Science of Logic*. Very broadly, current interpretative debates divide along the Kantian and Aristotelian lines mentioned earlier. Hegel's *Science of Logic* is itself divided into two *Bände* or "volumes", the first of which is labelled "Objective Logic" and the second "Subjective Logic". The first volume, which has provided the focus of most interpretation, effectively develops a series of categories, starting with "Being" and ending in "Actuality". Read in an Aristotelian way, these are akin to Aristotle's categories in "The Categories"—they are seen as presenting us with general structural features of *being*, somehow knowable *a priori*. That Hegel calls his categories as "thought determinations" however, suggests to Kantian interpreters that we should think of Hegel's categories as in the *first instance* more akin to Kant's *a priori* concepts. Critics of this Kantian reading respond that this makes Hegel's categories too subjective, contradicting Hegel's criticism of the "subjectivism" of Kant's approach. One recent attempt to reconcile this difference is that of Stephen Houlgate who argues that Hegel's categories are *inseparably* ones of both *thought* and *being*, which gives a somewhat Spinozist look to Hegel's Logic as simultaneously a *logic* and a *metaphysics* or *ontology*. I want to pursue another option, however, more in line with the outlook of the Findlay-inspired modal actualism that is suggested by Hegel's treatment of the thought determination of "actuality" with which the Objective Logic concludes. What we find in the "Subjective Logic" of Volume II is, I suggest, precisely the approach to *formal logic* that is consistent with modal actualism.

At the beginning of Volume II Hegel reflects about the tradition of logic in ways that point towards types of issues found in more recent treatments logic. In particular, in his treatment of the "mathematical syllogism" he reflects upon the attempts by Leibniz, and by his own teacher, the algebraicist logician Gottfried Ploucquet (Pozzo 2010), to *reduce* the traditional syllogistic inference forms to mathematics in the "mathematical syllogism" (Hegel 2010, 602–7). Hegel's argument here is that this effectively "extensionalist" reading undermines those very elements within judgments that allow them to function within inferences. In fact, Hegel's arguments here have parallels to those used at the beginning of the twentieth century by C. I. Lewis in his criticism of Russell's conception of "material

inference", the criticism that was to lead to Lewis's early constructions of modern propositional *modal* logic (C. I. Lewis, 1912; 1914).[11]

Leibniz had conceived of a type of translation of Aristotelian judgments into mathematizable judgment forms broadly along the lines later advocated by Russell. For example, although Russell had portrayed this approach as an innovation of made by Frege in the late 19th century, Leibniz had already envisaged universal affirmative judgments as translatable into conditional statements in the way that Russell had seized upon and developed after Frege. On such an interpretation, "All Fs are G" is given the form "if something is an F, then it is a G".[12] This broke with the Aristotelian tradition as Aristotle had conceived "All Fs are Gs" in a basically *intensional* way—such a judgment said something *about* the *genus* F, considered as the subject of predication. With this, Russell's translation was thereby equivalent to the translation of a *intensionally* conceived modal judgment into extensionally conceived *non-modal* one.

While Hegel is critical of Leibniz's earlier version of this attempt to reduce modal to non-modal logic, it is nevertheless clear that in his own conception of the dynamics of thought, this type of translation from the modal to the non-modal expressions, that he calls "reflection", plays an *essential* role in thought's progress. Hegel is fully aware, as we have seen, of the limitations of tensed judgments, and with Findlay, thinks of context-specific

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[11]   Hegel was clearly familiar with the types of logical devices that had been employed by Leibniz for transforming modal judgments with traditional subject-predicate forms into non-modal extensional ones. In particular, he alludes to the Leibnizian technique for treating the subject terms of traditional judgment forms as themselves *predicates* (Hegel 2010, 602–3). 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. This technique is similar to treating an "incomplete" Aristotelian judgment as itself closer to a propositional *function* needing to be predicated *of something else*, such as the specific time of its utterance in the conversion of tensed to tenseless sentences, so as to arrive at proposition with a stable truth-value.

[12]   Formally, "All Fs are G" is rendered "Ax (Fx $\rightarrow$ Gx)".

judgments of perception as translatable into a more objective form. Nevertheless, he *also* insists that the resulting judgments are themselves incomplete, and must be retranslated into a *new form of context-specific judgments*, but ones that have to some extent overcome the limitations of the originals. In this way, "reflection" cannot be considered as constituting a series of *iterated* moves as it was conceived by Leibniz and Spinoza, and that take us further and further from our location in the actual world and closer and closer to a transcendentally located (that is, an actually *non-located)* mind—some *God*'s mind with its "view from nowhere". For Hegel, reflection does not as take thought further *from* the actual, but *deeper* into it, developing the *determinacy* of the concepts involved and revealing connections that had *not* been apparent to superficial experience. *And yet* the individual knower never ceases to belong to the actual, nor ceases to ultimately view the world from a perspective within it. That is, the individual knower never achieves a "view from nowhere", not because this "view" is available *only* to God, but rather because the idea of such a view, and even of the God that is considered as capable of it, is categorically ill-conceived.13

In his work on Hegel in the late 1950s, Findlay was to challenged the assumption held by both supporters and opponents of Hegel's logic that Hegel's logic was incompatible with the Russellian turn in logic (Findlay 1957, 1958, 1963). What we find in Hegel's *Science of Logic* is an approach to thought which

has a function complementary to the thought of *Principia Mathematica* and similar systems: it is the thought of the *interstices* between clear-cut notions, fixed axioms and rigorous deductive chains, the interstices where we are as yet unclear as to what our

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13   It is a remnant of a religion that pictures God as an omniscient otherworldly single mind—a "father"—as found in the Old Testament. In contrast, in Hegel's heavily conception of Trinitarian Christianity, which is both Aristotelian and neo-Platonist, the Father, *qua* "First Person of the Trinity", has effectively shrunk to an extensionless point. That is, in his "actualist" theology, Hegel has no place for even the *idea* of a mind located at a transcendent "view from nowhere". Findlay had written a similarly target paper on the conception of God involved in the ontological proof in Findlay 1948.

notions cover and what they do not, were we constantly stretch or retract them as we try them out on new material, where we are concerned to look at them from the outside, and see how well or how ill they do certain conceptual work…. Hegel's dialectic corresponds to the sort of informal, non-formalizable passages of comments and discussion in a book like *Principia Mathematica*, rather than its systematic text, and it has the immense importance of that interstitial comment. Findlay 1963, 218–9.

Findlay had commenced his philosophical life strongly influenced by Hegel's idealism, and would later describe his direction in the late 1930s Findlay as having been "pushed by Wittgenstein's influence in directions that he would not have sanctioned, but which coincided in part with my own original Hegelianism" (Findlay 1985, 31). Clearly, akin to the spirit of the later Wittgenstein, Findlay considered Hegel's "non-formalize .. interstitial comment" as expressive of everyday forms of language *use*—actual "language games"—*upon which* such formalizations are dependent. This is a generalization of his view that formalizable untensed sentences are dependent for their meaningfulness upon non-formalizable everyday *tensed* ones. Nevertheless, unlike Wittgenstein but like Hegel, he explored the syntactical features of contextualized, non-fully propositional sentences and sought to give a necessary place to the activity of translating contextually dependent modal sentences into explicit, decontextualized *nonmodal* ones. Thus *neither* the idealizations of Tractarian formal syntax *nor* the factuality of *actual language games* could be taken as foundational and of providing a definitive form into which the other form could be translated. In broad terms we can see Hegel doing something like this in the Subjective Logic of volume II of *The Science of Logic*.

Following Leibniz, Hegel demonstrates movements of thought that translate modal, contextualized forms, into non-modal, de-contextualized ones and vice-versa, as can be seen in Hegel's generation of different forms of judgment (Hegel 2010, 550–87) which alternate between these opposed forms. These forms Hegel distinguishes by the type of *predication* operative: on the one hand, predication capturing the *inherence* of a property in a determinate object and, on the other, predication capturing the *subsumption* of an indeterminate object *under* a predicate. Hegel calls the first judgment form, broadly meant to capture perceptually based judgments, judgments of "Dasein" or "existence", which,

although existential judgments in a sense, are not so in the modern sense of judgments formalized with the existential quantifier. Judgment now written as "∃x (Fx)", are, on the modern reading, effectively *higher-order judgments about* the property "F", namely, saying that *that property* is instantiated.14 In contrast, Hegel's judgment of existence should be thought of as a straight-forwardly "*de re*" judgments", judgments made about some particular object (*res*), saying *of it* that it instantiates some quality, and so implying its existence. This is Hegel's version of Meinong's *factual* objectives, and it is the determinacy of such object-involving objects that, as Meinong and Findlay were to point out, is purchased at the cost of such judgments having *changing* truth values.

In Hegel's account, the judgment of 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 from the opposed subsumptive judgments of *reflection*, which will have the more conventional *singular* subject and *general* predicate. Using the example of "the rose is red", Hegel claims that the predicate "red" should be regarded as a singular term.15 That is, he clearly intends that the predicate term acts in a name-like manner so to pick out the *specific instance* of the general property red, the instance "inhering" in *some specific* rose at some particular time—we might say *this specific* rose's *specific way* of being red *now*.16 Being *singular* the predicate term here has more in common with what Kant calls an *intuition* and the parallel is important. For Kant, that a

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14   This approach was widely thought to overcome problems surrounding existential judgments such as negative ones like "Santa Clause doesn't exist" which seems to presuppose an existing Santa Clause, *then* adding the contradictory information that he *doesn't* exist. In the new approach, "Santa Clause" is be translated into a definite description, and then the assertion taken as saying that such a complex predicate is *not* instantiated.

15   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.

16   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).

representation possesses intuitive content had *modal* connotations, marking the *actuality* of that representational content. While Hegel rejects the dichotomy of intuitions and concepts, he retains the idea that concepts can, as here, play the role of *singular terms* ("singularity" is a "moment" of concepts), and with this his version of the existential judgment can retain the same modal significance that Kant had attributed to intuitions. The singularity of the predicate is an indication that we are talking about an *actual* rose, with an actual, but *changeable*, property by which it is known.

But this positive judgment is a very limited form of judgment. If we take truth to mean more than *true at this moment*, such a judgment is "not true". Rather, Hegel says, it "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 that belongs to the system of reflection. When one says, for example, "the rose is *not* red", negation, he points out, will only be taken as applying to the *determinateness* of the predicate, because one does *not* thereby imply that the rose is not *coloured*.17 Rather, "it is … assumed that it has a color, though another color" (Hegel 2010, 565). If a rose *is* red then it is *not* yellow, *not* pink, *not* blue and so on, and if it is *not* red, it is either yellow *or* pink *or* blue, and so on,18 manifesting what Hegel calls "determinate negation" amongst those predicates. Thus 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 *an area* within a larger partitioned space of possible colours, an area *defined by* its borders, and that will, subsequently, potentially accommodate within it, a multiplicity of *shades of*, or *ways of being* red. With this it has become the appropriate type of predicate for a *reflective* judgment.

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17   "From the side of this universal sphere, the judgment is still positive" (Hegel 2010, 565).

18   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.

The reflective judgment has a more familiar logical form of predication in which the predicate term is a universal that "subsumes" or is "true of" an object or range of objects. While the typical judgment of existence described some property instance as inhering in a single substance that was itself the instance of a universal, a "this rose", the reflective judgment has a more "*de dicto*" than "*de* re" structure, and talks not about some specific thing but rather relations among sets of properties characterising *non-specific* things. It is the *non-specificity* of the objects involved that liberate them from the "present" of the judgment and allow the judgment to have a stable truth value. This distinction thus lines up with the later Meinong's distinction between two kinds of "*Objektive*", those expressing timeless, and those expressing tensed (factual) truths. This parallel is in fact underlined by the fact that Meinong's follower (and Findlay's supervisor), Ernst Mally had treated Meinong's distinction *explicitly* in the form of a distinction between two types of *predication* (Findlay 1933, 282–4).

But for Hegel these resulting judgments of reflection are, in turn, not fully fledged judgments, but rather are "more in the nature of *Sätze*" (Hegel 2010, 581), the term "*Satz*" being one that Hegel uses in the sense of *sentence* capable only of "correctness" or "incorrectness" rather than *judgment* which is capable of *timeless* truth or falsity (Redding 2016, ch. 3.3). These "subsumptive" and "quantitative" judgments in turn anticipate another, more developed version of the original qualitative judgment of inherence, such that we might come to think of properties of the rose more as dispositional properties belonging to the genus "rose"—the "rose as such", Meinong's ideal *object*—rather than simply qualitative properties that "inhere" in particular instances. We thus go from conceiving of the subject of the judgment as a singular isolated thing to the context of its connectedness to other things in the world. "If we say, 'This rose is red', for example, we are considering the subject in its immediate singularity, without relation to anything else; while, on the other hand, in the more complex judgment, 'This plant is curative', we are considering the subject (the plant) as standing in a relation to something else (the illness to be cured by the plant) in virtue of its predicate, curativeness" (Hegel 1991, § 174 addition). Such connections can be established only on the emergence of distinct patterns of association among experienced qualities that allow us to make quantified claims such as "some plants are curative" or "all plants are edible", the latter form constituting an

"empirical universality" in which one can glimpse, as Hegel writes with an allusion to the Aristotelian doctrine, "an obscure intimation of the universality of the *concept* as it exists in and for itself" (Hegel 2010, 573). Thus the appearance of quantitative distinctions such as "some As are B" and "all As are C" will point to the idea of A's essential properties, expressed in the form "The A (as such) is C": "Instead of 'all humans'", Hegel notes, "we now have to say 'the human being'" (Hegel 2010, 574). In this way the judgment of reflection transitions into the "judgment of necessity" in which "the universality is determined as genus and species … Now the categorical judgment has for predicate such a universality as in it the subject possesses its immanent nature" (Hegel 2010, 575). In the following "judgment of the concept", the "inferentialist" dimension of Hegel's conception of judgment (Brandom 1994) becomes explicit, as a judgment such as "the house is good" is shown to contain an implicit inference or syllogism, "the house, as so and so constituted, is good" (Hegel 2010, 585).

The circular movement of Hegel's dialectic, relying on successive translations between informal "modal" claims and formalizable and mathematizable *non-modal* ones, demonstrates two things. First, the ontological dimension of these ideal structures that, starting with the object-involving judgments of perception, allow the material of the actual world to be included into them, and next, it illustrates the constant return of minded subjects conceived as embodied and thus in some sort of interaction with the material objects that their thoughts are about. Hegel's treatment of *judgment* in this way progresses to his treatment of *inference structures* (syllogisms) which *themselves* are ultimately to be understood as structures among embodied and located thinking subjects related in terms of the object-involving recognitive structures of spirit (*Geist*).[19]

Conclusion: Modal Actualism *as* Idealism.

I have tried to convey some of the evidence pointing towards Hegel's metaphysics as a form of *modal actualism*. As Hegel makes clear, his idea of the actual includes possibility a type of reflection existing *within* it: "Possibility is what is essential to reality, but in such a way that it is at the same time only a possibility" (EL, § 143). But *abstracta* such as propositions are,

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[19]   I have argued for this conception of Hegelian syllogisms in Redding 1995 and 2007.

of course, ontologically contentious entities, and there is a strong tendency to treat them pianistically as other-worldly entities, something incompatible with Hegel's this-worldly actualism. Again, however, there is the suggestion of a Hegel-friendly non-transcendentalist interpretation of *abstracta* in some current forms of modal actualism in the spirit of Prior's. On Stalnaker's account, for example, possible worlds are to be treated as sets of propositions—that is, abstract entities (sets), the members of which (propositions) are *also* abstract. These second kind of abstracta are entities conceived as capable of truth and falsity understood in the logical sense, and of thereby standing in relations of compatibility or incompatibility, and are also regarded as the objects of intentional attitudes. Accepted in abstraction from a consideration of this *latter* role, propositions would be Platonic entities, but as I understand him, in Stalnaker's account the very existence of propositions seems tied to the role they play in the activity of subjects attributing intentional contents *to others*, in the effort of giving meaning to the sentences that they utter and to the actions they undertake. They are the means by which we go about conceiving how the world is *for* other subjects (Stalnaker 2007), and without the existence of such talking and acting subjects in the world, there would be no place for talk of *either* possibilities *or* propositions.

Hegel had conceived of spirit, *Geist*, as made up of the myriad ways in which individual subjects are caught up in acts of mutual recognition (*Anerkennung*)—acts in which subjects recognize and acknowledge other subjects *as* subjects and that are necessary for the constituting of self-conscious subjects *as* such. 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). For an actualist, spirit must always be embodied in the natural world (the actual world being largely natural), but spirit as such is conceptually *irreducible to* the natural world. In something of the same way, we might say that for Stalnaker, the *recognition* of others *as* thinkers to whom we attribute propositional contents is presupposed by any *cognition* we have of them as intentional beings.[20]

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[20] They don't form part of the fabric of the universe conceived naturalistically, as we don't typically attribute thoughts to beings *qua* natural beings. As *abstracta*, then, propositions or possibilities should be thought of as essentially mind-related notions. In

To sum up, on *this* version of actualism, we are to think of minds and the propositions they entertain and act upon as mutually presupposing entities within the actual world, and so as on the same level. *Abstracta* like propositions, when understood non-Platonistically, presuppose the existence of subjects who speak meaningfully, just as those subjects understood as speaking meaningfully presuppose the propositions we use to make that meaning determinate. Neither propositions nor minds can be eliminated, in positivist fashion, from the actual world, nor reduced to any naturalistically conceived entities. Thus this type of actualism entails a certain type of *idealism*—the idea of the *necessity* of the existence of the mind in the world—but this idealism is, I suggest, a metaphysically benign form of as it asserts nothing more than the presence of the mind in the *actual* world, and not the presence of mind in *all possible worlds*. Read along these lines, the claim that mind is necessarily in the actual world is able to be interpreted as a metaphysically trivial thesis: it is essentially David Lewis's thesis of the *indexicality* of the actual world—the idea that the actual world is *our* world, that it has us in it and exists in a way *for* us—without David Lewis's commitment to the reality of *other concrete worlds* with *other subjects* (our counterparts). Thus in the actualist alternative to Lewis there is something akin to Descartes' *cogito* argument, but without Descartes' metaphysics. That the actual world contains *mind* is surely a thesis that is hard to argue against *if* we concur with that part of Descartes' argument that *arguing* is an activity of the mind. With Hegel's actualism, we get this part of Descartes' argument unencumbered by the more metaphysically problematic other parts.

These are the general lines, I suggest, along which we might read Hegel in a way guided by Findlay's ground-breaking contribution from over half a century ago—a contribution that is yet to be fully appreciated.

Hegel's terms, they are posits that have a place in the world in the context of our practice of reflecting on and explaining or making explicit the contents of the thoughts of other subjects, or of ourselves.

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