

# Rethinking Maker: Hegel's Realism Revisited

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## Abstract

I provide a metaphysically realist interpretation of Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature*—one that allows us to make sense of one of the more puzzling references to nature in his *Science of Logic*. I do so by affording William Maker's under-appreciated account of Hegel's realism more of the attention and scrutiny it deserves—not least because it involves a distinctively simple and elegant account of the famously obscure move from logic to nature in Hegel's system. Though I point out its limitations, I claim that Maker's arguments can be revised in order to recover more of the rigour and complexity of Hegel's metaphysics.

## Introduction

William Maker belongs to that group of scholars who have, over the past couple of decades, reintroduced Hegel into Anglophone philosophy as a resolutely presuppositionless metaphysician.<sup>1</sup> Within this group, he can be distinguished by the emphasis he places on presenting Hegel as a metaphysical realist.<sup>2</sup> Wanting to render him more palatable to a contemporary audience, Maker insists that Hegel believes in an 'external' or thought-independent world. Indeed, Maker claims a metaphysically idealist interpretation to be irreconcilable with Hegel's mission to articulate an entirely presuppositionless philosophy—or a 'philosophy without foundations'.<sup>3</sup> The argument for Hegel's realism is so pressing for Maker that it becomes a definitive concern for his interpretative project. As he remarks in the preface to his book on the subject:

when we have properly rethought what Hegel means by systematic philosophy, we will see that he is *not* a metaphysical idealist who attempts to foist on us a system which is as unintelligible as it is devoid of argument.<sup>4</sup> (1994: vii)

As one might expect, then, a key component of Maker's realist 'rethinking' of Hegel involves some account of the *Philosophy of Nature*. Indeed, he dedicates a section of

his book—along with several essays and articles (in whole or in part)—to challenging the claim that nature is, for Hegel, somehow dependent upon or reducible to thought.<sup>5</sup>

And yet, despite the various ways in which he mobilizes his arguments for Hegel's realism, and despite their centrality to his exegetical project, this aspect of Maker's account remains overlooked by commentators.<sup>6</sup> Part of the project of this essay, then, is to correct this oversight and to afford this aspect of Maker's account more of the recognition and scrutiny it deserves. In particular, I want to emphasize his distinctively simple and elegant interpretation of the famously obscure move from logic to nature in Hegel's system.

But I also want to advance our understanding of nature, its connection to logic, and its place within Hegel's philosophy. And it is by recognizing the limitations of Maker's interpretation, I argue, that we can do just that. After reconstructing his interpretative claims, then, I highlight some of the ways in which Maker's account fails to reflect Hegel's own presentation of his view. I also argue that Maker commits himself to a way of understanding the overall structure of Hegel's system that is incompatible with his commitment to reading him as a radically presuppositionless philosopher. I then attribute these limitations to Maker's concept of 'otherness', which I aim to show is by Hegel's own standards uncritical and therefore inappropriate for use in a presuppositionless philosophy. Drawing on Hegel's own concept from early on in the *Science of Logic*, however, I claim that Maker's arguments can in fact be salvaged. In particular, I claim that revising (or rethinking!) Maker's position in this way allows us to make sense of a rarely-addressed allusion to nature found in that same part of the *Logic*.

Before we proceed, though, I should specify a little more precisely how the labels 'realism' and 'idealism' should be understood throughout the course of this essay, as well as how my own revised account of Hegel's realism departs from Maker's original position.

Note that all references are to *metaphysical* realism and idealism—and to Maker's understanding thereof, which is itself relatively uncontroversial.<sup>7</sup> By 'metaphysical idealism', for instance, he understands 'the notorious reduction or identification of reality and thought' (1998: 2), or 'the thesis that reality is thought or thought-like, or is a derivative or product of thought' (1998: 4). Accordingly, he describes realism as the view that 'acknowledges and celebrates the existence and knowability of a given world, distinct from minds and Mind' (2002: 136).<sup>8</sup> So (and as we see in more detail below), whereas idealism for Maker involves a relation of identity, resemblance or ontological dependence between thought and reality (or nature), realism on his view insists upon their non-identity, dissimilarity or upon the independence of nature from thought—often cashed out in terms of the 'otherness' of nature from thought.

Now, the argument of this article does not concern the question of realism and idealism *per se*—and thus I do not deviate from Maker’s understanding of these terms. What this essay *does* concern, however, is what counts as realism and idealism *given Hegel’s peculiar philosophical commitments* (which, presumably, ought to be respected when attributing some position or other to Hegel). And it is at this point where Maker and myself diverge. To anticipate: Maker attributes to Hegel a realism according to which nature is ‘other’ than thought *in the ordinary or common sense of the term*. Thus, according to Maker, nature is for Hegel ‘a thoroughly different, autonomous, domain, whose *own* mode of independent determination is other than and autonomous of thought altogether’ (2002: 66). What I aim to show, however, is that for Hegel nature’s otherness from thought actually necessitates its exhibiting an increasingly thought-like structure. That is to say, proving to be thought-like—or logically or conceptually structured—just *is* what it is to be other than thought, according to Hegel’s own account of otherness in the *Science of Logic*. Thus, Hegel *is* a realist on my account, but only because he conceives of nature as exhibiting a thought-like structure.<sup>9</sup> And indeed, for reasons detailed further below, I claim that Maker’s original interpretation proves not to be realist after all, but instead inadvertently attributes to Hegel precisely the kind of metaphysical idealism that he wants to avoid.

Again, though, I stress that the point here is not to condemn Maker’s view. Indeed, I mean to acknowledge, celebrate and retain much of his interpretation—especially his account of the move from logic to nature, which still provides the descriptive and conceptual machinery required to make sense of Hegel’s resolutely realist conception of nature. It is merely the case that this realism needs to be cashed out in a different way than that originally expressed by Maker—a way, I claim, that enjoys greater textual and conceptual compatibility with Hegel’s work, and that helps us to elucidate one of his more puzzling references to nature in the *Science of Logic*.

Having established these terms and anticipated the shape of things to come, we can now reconstruct Maker’s argument for Hegel’s realism. To do so, we ought first to establish a clear sense of the charge of idealism against which he pitches his view.<sup>10</sup>

### I. The charge of idealism

This charge exploits the immanently developmental character of Hegel’s philosophical system. That is to say, it trades on the fact that properly critical or presuppositionless thought, for Hegel, takes the form of a spontaneous and self-generating series of speculative moments, each of which can only ever render explicit what is implicit, or immanent, within its preceding moment. In other

words, if thought is to retain its critical status, then it cannot admit of any external or unjustified influence. After discerning its appropriately presuppositionless starting point, then, such thought must limit itself solely to unfolding the necessary implications *of that starting point*.<sup>11</sup> As Hegel himself puts it, such thought ‘has to complete itself in a purely continuous course in which nothing extraneous is introduced’ (*SL*: 54/1: 49).<sup>12</sup>

The charge of idealism, then, suggests that such ‘methodological continuity’, so to speak, entails a corresponding continuity in subject matter. That is to say, it seems to be a requirement of radically presuppositionless thought that it only ever presents more and more determinate descriptions *of the same conceptual content*. Thus, if Hegel claims that such thought must begin with an account of *its own* ‘necessary forms and self-determinations’ (*SL*: 50/1: 44), or with a science of logic, then it seems as though each subsequent part of the system it generates must be a continuation of that account. Given Hegel’s claim that such a system must also include some description of the natural world, or a philosophy of nature, he therefore appears to commit himself to metaphysical idealism, since that account of nature must in some important sense be a continuation of his account of thought—lest he violate his commitment to presuppositionlessness.<sup>13</sup>

The advocate of this kind of argument can appeal to Hegel’s repeated statements that the *Philosophy of Nature* is ‘the science of the Idea in its otherness’ (*EL*: §18), or that ‘Nature has yielded itself as the Idea in the form of *otherness*’ (*EN*: §247), where ‘the Idea’ here can be understood simply as the ultimate conceptual content of logic or the fully specified nature of thought as such. That Hegel so clearly regards nature as some manifestation or modification *of* the Idea, then, seems to be definitive evidence for the claim that he defends a form of metaphysical idealism.

Maker, however, insists that this charge misrepresents Hegel’s position. He agrees that such passages entail idealism when taken at face value,<sup>14</sup> but he argues that a proper understanding of the demands of logic precludes such a literal reading. Indeed, he claims that, rather than stating the supposed *identity* of nature and the logical Idea, Hegel must in fact be interpreted as asserting their *non-identity* in these passages—or as claiming that nature is in fact ‘other than thought’ (1994: 117).

In order to make sense of this argument, we must now turn to Maker’s interpretation of the move from logic to nature.

## II. Maker on Hegel’s realism

At the end of the *Science of Logic*, Hegel famously (and quite unhelpfully) describes the Idea as ‘contracting itself into the immediacy of *being*’, or as undergoing a process through which it ‘*freely releases* itself in its absolute self-assurance and inner

poise' (*SL*: 843/2: 573). Given the opacity and the brevity of such remarks (they consist only of a few paragraphs at the end of the *Science of Logic*, as well as the last section or two of the *Encyclopaedia Logica*), it is perhaps unsurprising that the move to nature remains, as Alison Stone puts it, 'one of the most enigmatic sections' of Hegel's philosophical system (2005: 98). As I have already suggested, however, Maker manages to parse this particularly murky region of Hegel's thought in relatively straightforward terms.

Rather than delving into the arcane logical mechanics of the Idea's 'self-contraction' and 'free release', Maker instead provides a much more accessible reflection on the nature of logical self-determination as such.<sup>15</sup> On his view, the self-specification of thought is subject to a specific 'call to completeness'.<sup>16</sup> If thought is to have some definite character, or if there is to be anything like *what it is* to be thought, then there must come a point at which its examination of itself in logic comes to an end.<sup>17</sup> And it can only do so, on Maker's view, by 'limiting or circumscribing' itself (1998: 8). And it can only do *this* by invoking a domain of determinacy that is radically different from its own—a domain that Hegel calls 'nature'.

Now, it might not be immediately obvious as to *why* logic can complete itself only by invoking another domain of determinacy. Is it not sufficient, we might wonder, for logic to complete itself *without* this kind of appeal? Hegel does, after all, describe logic as 'a circle returning upon itself, the end being wound back into the beginning' (*SL*: 842/2: 571). We might therefore suppose that the condition for the completion of logic is merely that there comes a point at which, during the course of its immanent development, logic recognizes its return to its initial determination—that of pure, indeterminate being or being in its 'indeterminate immediacy' (*SL*: 82/1: 82). And indeed, Hegel would appear to confirm this supposition when he writes that 'logic [...], in the absolute Idea, has withdrawn into that same simple unity which its beginning is; the pure immediacy of being' (*SL*: 842/2: 572).<sup>18</sup>

Admittedly, Maker is not particularly vocal on this point. Nonetheless, we can reconstruct the case for the necessity of this other domain of determinacy by examining this moment of circular consummation in more detail. Notice, for instance, that it constitutes a crucial moment of abstraction. Here the Idea recognizes itself not merely as some further logical determination, or as 'one content among others' (Winfield 2012: 355), but as the consummation or most determinate articulation of *all logical determinacy*. Such recognition, on Hegel's view, effects a system-altering shift in perspective, one in which philosophical cognition steps back from inhabiting the immanently developmental procedure through which the Idea (or what will ultimately prove to be the Idea) thinks or comprehends its own logical structure and instead takes up the more abstract standpoint of '*apprehending* this process of comprehending itself' (*SL*: 843/2: 572; emphasis mine). That is to say, the Idea

no longer simply thinks or specifies itself in the manner exhibited throughout the course of the *Logic*; rather, it acknowledges itself as the whole or totality of this self-specification.<sup>19</sup> As Hegel puts it at the end of the *Logic*:

The method is the pure Notion that relates itself only to itself; it is therefore the *simple self-relation* that is *being*. But now it is also *fulfilled being*, the *Notion that comprehends itself*, being as the *concrete* and also absolutely *intensive* totality.<sup>20</sup> (*SL*: 842/2: 572)

The crucial point here is that, in this act of self-recognition, the Idea must *differentiate* itself (as part of the content of the science of logic) *from* itself (as the totality of that content). It thereby ‘appears as a knowing in a subjective reflection *external* to that content’ (*SL*: 842–43/2: 572; emphasis mine). And it is precisely in so appearing that it generates an entirely new domain of determinacy—no longer Idea *simpliciter*, but ‘external Idea’ (*SL*: 843/2: 573) or nature.

Far from challenging Maker’s claim that logic requires a limiting other, then, Hegel’s remarks about the circularity of logic actually help to illustrate its necessity. Logic might very well complete itself by ‘winding itself back up into its beginning’ (to paraphrase Hegel), but the crucial point is that it recognizes itself as doing so. And such recognition can only take place, as we have just seen, by means of a self-externalizing act of abstraction through which the Idea is left completely transformed. Maker is therefore correct to suppose that the end of logic ‘lies in the necessary recognition *by* thought of its *limits qua* pure thought’ (1994: 116)—the relevant limit, in this case, being thought’s inability to recognize itself as complete without altering itself (or quite literally *othering* itself) in the process, thereby forcing philosophical cognition into a new domain of determinacy.

The question then arises as to how precisely we ought to characterize this new domain. According to Maker, nature must indeed be *genuinely* other than logic, for otherwise it would represent a further determination of logic and logic would remain incomplete:

If the limiting other is, in its determinate content as the concept of nature, anything less than a genuine other to self-determining logical thought, logic would not be fully determinate as self-determining, there would be no final definiteness to its domain. (1998: 9)

He therefore repeatedly emphasizes the *otherness* of nature from logic, thought, or the logical Idea. Nature must be ‘radically nonlogical’ (2007a: 153), or the relation between logic and nature must be one of ‘mutual, utter, and absolute independence’ (2007b: 25). They must, for Maker, ‘quite literally have nothing in common’ (1998: 4).

And a key manifestation of this radical otherness is the particular way in which nature appears in Hegel's system. If nature cannot have anything in common with logic, then it cannot issue from the same immanently developmental procedure that generates logical self-determinations—for if it *did*, then it would once again be a further determination of logic and logic would once again remain incomplete. This is why Hegel insists that the appearance of nature in the system, or the self-externalization of the Idea just described, is not ‘*a process of becoming*, nor is it a *transition*’ (SL: 843/2: 573). The move to nature, on his view, should instead be understood as an ‘absolute *liberation*’ (SL: 843/2: 573)—one in which philosophical cognition finds itself jettisoned from the internally unified and immanently self-legitimizing domain of logical determination (whose preservation was so crucial at the outset and throughout the course of the *Science of Logic*). Instead, it finds itself thinking through a domain of sheer, autonomous externality—one that Hegel describes, in direct opposition to the domain of logic, as ‘*posited*’ (SL: 843/2: 573). As he later writes in the *Philosophy of Nature*: ‘Its distinctive characteristic is its positiveness’ (EN: §248R).

We therefore encounter a radical break or a gap in the conceptual content of Hegel's system. But a gap that is, as we saw above, nonetheless derived immanently from the very nature of logical self-determination as such.<sup>21</sup> Maker, in other words, is able to drive a wedge between the methodological continuity of presuppositionless thought and the corresponding continuity in conceptual content assumed by the charge of idealism. Far from violating Hegel's commitment to presuppositionlessness (as the charge of idealism thinks it does), introducing a break into the conceptual content of the system becomes the only way to respect that commitment sufficiently. That is to say, the conceptualization of a radically different domain of posited externality becomes a direct and necessary consequence of our resolve to unfold fully the immanent logical implications of self-determining thought. As Maker remarks, ‘it is just *because of* the requirements of systematicity that Hegel recognizes and conceptualizes the radical and consummate otherness of nature and thought’ (1998: 4).

Thus, on Maker's view, Hegel must be a realist about nature. He must be read as advocating the radical otherness or independence of nature from thought or the logical Idea if we are to take seriously his mission to articulate a properly critical philosophy.<sup>22</sup>

### III. Limitations

So much for Maker's realist defence of the nature philosophy. What, then, are its limitations?

First and foremost, it is difficult to square Maker's insistence that nature and the Idea are *nonidentical* with the sheer frequency and variety of Hegel's comments to the contrary. From the very start of the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, for instance, Hegel maintains that the Idea is (and remains) the ultimate subject matter of his philosophical system. This system might be composed of different parts, or 'sciences', but he states that each of those sciences addresses some aspect of one and the same logical Idea—or that 'what distinguishes the particular philosophical sciences are only determinations of the Idea' (*EL*: §18R).

More explicitly, and in more direct reference to nature, Hegel emphasizes that 'Even in such an element of externality, nature is, nevertheless, the representation of *the Idea*' (*EN*: §248R). He also claims that 'this Idea that *is*, is Nature' (*EL*: §244A), thereby reflecting the suggestion that nature is, quite literally, a concrete manifestation of the Idea or self-determining reason.<sup>23</sup>

Indeed, not only does Hegel never claim that nature is *other than* the Idea, instead always insisting that it *is* the Idea (albeit in the form of otherness or externality), he also states explicitly (*contra* Maker) that 'it is *not* something-other than the Idea that is [re]cognised' in nature (*EL*: §18R; emphasis mine). Maker's repeated claims that nature *is not*, or is *other than*, the Idea therefore sit uneasily with much of what Hegel actually wrote about their relation.

Further inconsistencies arise when we examine Maker's and Hegel's respective characterizations of nature in more detail. Recall, for instance, that for Maker the otherness of nature and thought requires that they have nothing in common. The specific determinations of nature must therefore be conceptualized in an entirely different way than those of logic on his view. More specifically, these natural determinations cannot be conceptualized as exhibiting a similarly immanent or inter-developmental relation to one another as those of logic. Rather than arising continuously out of one another, then, such determinations must be '*determined* as what they are externally to or outside of one another' (1994: 120). In other words, nature can exhibit no internal logic or immanent necessity of its own.

This, according to Maker, is precisely what Hegel means when he characterizes nature as 'externality' at the start of the *Philosophy of Nature* (*EN*: §247):

If the most general feature of logical determinacies is their 'internality,' that is, their immanent interconnection and interdevelopment relation with one another, then the most general feature of the determinacies of the philosophy of nature, as arising through thought's contrasting itself with itself and thereby constituting 'nature' as 'thought in its otherness,' is externality. (1994: 120)

But Hegel does not adopt this view. On the contrary, he regularly attributes a logically developmental structure to the nature philosophy, describing it as proceeding according to 'its own immanent necessity' (*EN*: §246).



Indeed, it is nature's internal logic that explains the appearance of spirit in Hegel's system. As he writes:

The thinking view of nature must note the implicit process by which nature sublates its otherness to become spirit, and the way in which the Idea is present in each stage of nature itself.<sup>24</sup>  
(*EN*: §247A)

In other words, the nature philosophy just *is* for Hegel an account of the gradual and logical emergence of spirit.

On Maker's account, however, this cannot be the case. He explicitly denies the possibility that spirit might arise in Hegel's system by means of 'some organic, spiritually evolutionary development in given nature' (1998: 19). And he even goes so far as to claim that Hegel himself also rejects this possibility: 'Hegel explicitly and properly rejects this form of metaphysical idealism' (1998: 19).

Maker's concern here is that the association of nature with spirit—as somehow 'pre-spiritual' or spirit in nascent form—threatens to reintroduce metaphysical idealism because spirit, as 'the Idea that returns into itself out of its otherness' (*EL*: §18), is more explicitly Ideal than nature is allowed to be. Just as nature must remain ontologically isolated from logic, then, so too must it be appropriately disaffiliated from spirit on Maker's account. He therefore insists that Hegel subscribes to this programme of disaffiliation, citing §249 of the *Encyclopaedia* as evidence of this endorsement (see 1998: 19, n.37).

In this passage, however, Hegel contradicts Maker in various respects. First, he once again attributes to nature an internal, logical necessity: 'Nature is to be regarded as a *system of stages*, the one proceeding of necessity out of the other' (*EN*: §249). He then warns that this series of natural determinations should not 'be thought of as a *natural* engendering of one out of the other' (*EN*: §249), which is to say that the nature philosophy does not describe a process that happens in space and time—it is not a piece of natural history. In this respect, then, Maker is correct to deny a spiritual development that is 'organic' or 'evolutionary' in any *material* sense. Still, Hegel's point is that the determination of nature is a strictly *logical* affair, which he then confirms by describing it as 'an engendering within the inner Idea which constitutes the ground of nature' (*EN*: §249).

Thus, for Hegel, despite the externalizing or othering process it undergoes at the end of logic, the Idea remains at the heart of nature—or nature remains 'essentially of an ideal nature' (*EN*: §247A). But it does so 'only implicitly' (*EN*: §247A), which is to say that this vestige of self-determining Ideality only enjoys minimal expression within the initial determinations of nature—in the mechanical motions of objects, for example.<sup>25</sup> As the logic of nature plays out, however, or as the Idea 'returns into itself out of its otherness' (*EL*: §18),<sup>26</sup> this expression becomes increasingly explicit, resulting in more and more explicitly self-determining natural

forms and eventually manifesting itself in the activity of conscious beings—otherwise referred to as ‘spirit’.

The aforementioned logical ‘engendering’ of the Idea within nature is therefore just that process through which the Idea refamiliarizes itself with itself in the form of spirit, as Hegel confirms just a few sections later: ‘the existence of spirit [...] constitutes the truth and ultimate purpose of nature, and the true actuality of the Idea’ (*EN*: §251). Far from supporting Maker’s claim that Hegel rejects the emergence of spirit by means of some logical development within the philosophy of nature, then, §249 of the *Encyclopaedia* does in fact lend itself to the very opposite interpretation.

These are just a couple of ways in which Maker’s realist account of the nature philosophy is at odds with the texts of the *Encyclopaedia* and the *Science of Logic*. To recapitulate: (1) Maker insists that nature *is not* the Idea, despite Hegel’s claims that it is; (2) nature is for Maker disqualified from exhibiting an immanently developmental (or logical) structure, despite Hegel’s claims that it does; and (3) Maker denies that spirit emerges logically through nature, despite the fact that Hegel describes it as appearing in precisely this way.

Textual discrepancies notwithstanding, Maker’s account is also conceptually incompatible with the critical framework of Hegel’s philosophy. Consider, for instance, Maker’s own explanation of the appearance of spirit in Hegel’s system (worth quoting at length):

As the overriding activity of systematic thought is the activity of determining self-determination in all its manifold guises, the system moves as a whole in the direction of fully determinate self-determination, in the direction of spirit and freedom. [...] So we move [...] from nature to spirit not because there is some organic, spiritually evolutionary development in given nature [...] but just because nature is so unlike self-determining thought but is nonetheless being conceptualized in the system of self-determining thought. (1998: 19)

Maker’s argument here is that the move to spirit is necessitated because the nature philosophy cannot furnish a description of the forms of self-determination found in the cognitive, political, religious, artistic and philosophical activities of thinking beings. This is because the domain of nature is, as we have already seen, defined by its exclusion of self-determination or self-determining thought as such. That is to say, nature is—and must be, for Maker—a domain of absolute *non*-self-determination. It therefore lacks the conceptual resources to provide a description of spiritual self-determination:

nowhere in nature as such do we find real self-determination. As achieved in the domain of the given, self-determination is freedom, which requires thought and the kind of liberation from nature which involves transforming and taking possession of it, and this is only found when we get to spirit. (1998: 19)

In a sense, then, Maker's account of the move to spirit reflects his account of the move to nature. Just as philosophical cognition must turn to nature in order to respond to logic's demand for completeness, so too must our attention turn to spirit in order to complete our description of self-determining thought *in all its forms*. In Maker's words: 'As called upon methodologically to completeness, the system must think the full range and nature of self-determination. It cannot stop at nature' (1998: 19).

But herein lies the problem. While the call to completeness that results in the move to nature issues from a proper consideration of logical self-determination, and is therefore perfectly justifiable within the critical framework of Hegel's philosophy, the call that encourages the move to spirit, as presented by Maker, comes *from spirit*. Spirit is anticipated in order to justify its own inclusion in the system. To repeat: 'the system moves as a whole in the direction of fully determinate self-determination, in the direction of spirit and freedom' (1998: 19). Maker's account is therefore circular; it fails to explain *why* spirit is there in the first place.

Admittedly, Maker attempts to guard against this circularity, arguing that the move to spirit is not anticipated but inevitable just because self-determination is the ultimate subject matter of philosophical cognition:

this is not because we know already that this is what given reality truly is, but because philosophically cognizable truth is self-determination, and must be completely conceived as such. (1998: 19)

And he is of course correct to claim that the ultimate concern of Hegel's system is, in some important respect, self-determination or self-determining thought. After all, and as we have already observed, presuppositionless thought is at the outset required to take *its own* necessary forms and self-determinations as subject matter. And we can regard the nature philosophy as further fulfilling this requirement in so far as the self-determination of thought *itself* demands the subsequent determination of a domain completely alien to its own. But it is the further claim that self-determining thought 'must be *completely* conceived as such' that is problematic, as here Maker simply repeats the same line (or circle) of thought exhibited by his earlier claims that self-determining thought must be detailed '*in all its manifold guises*' or that 'the system must think *the full range and nature* of self-determination'. Again,

that there is such a range, one that includes spirit, is taken *as explanation* when it is precisely this range, and its inclusion of spirit, that *requires explanation*.<sup>27</sup>

Maker is therefore caught in a dilemma of his own construction. On the one hand, his realist characterization of nature as strictly nonlogical is motivated by his commitment to interpreting Hegel as a radically presuppositionless philosopher. On the other hand, this realist characterization restricts him to an insufficiently critical account of the structure of Hegel's system. Given his understanding of what is required of a realist metaphysics, Maker is unable to attribute a logic to nature—and much less a logic that results in the emergence of spirit through increasingly explicit expressions of self-determining Ideality. He cannot therefore avail himself of the only conceptual resource available for a legitimate explanation of spirit's appearance in the system—namely, the logic of nature.

Such textual and conceptual incompatibilities can all be attributed to Maker's *ordinary* or *commonsensical* understanding of the concept of otherness. In each case, Maker either fails to reflect Hegel's writings or to maintain consistency with Hegel's commitment to presuppositionlessness precisely because he takes realism—understood here as the view that nature and thought are *other than* one another—to demand the radical non-identity of thought and nature, or their absolute and unqualified independence from one another in the ordinary sense.<sup>28</sup> Hegel, however, does not endorse this way of thinking about otherness. In fact, he explicitly rejects it when deriving his own, properly critical concept towards the start of the *Science of Logic*.

In what follows, then, I examine this part of the *Logic*—not only to show that Hegel rejects the commonsensical understanding of otherness as straightforward non-identity or independence, but also to discover whether his own concept of otherness might illuminate his account of nature.<sup>29</sup>

#### IV. Other nature

That the logical concept of otherness does in fact provide a good model for thinking about the *Philosophy of Nature* is suggested not only by Hegel's repeated references to nature as 'the Idea *in the form of otherness*', but also by the fact that Hegel himself alludes to nature in this part of the *Logic*:

Such an other, determined as other, is physical nature; it is the other of spirit. [...] since spirit is the true something and nature, consequently, in its own self is only what it is as contrasted with spirit, the quality of nature taken as such is just this, to be the *other* in its own self, that which is *external to itself* (in the determinations of space, time and matter). (*SL*: 118/1: 127)

Note, however, that this allusion seems out of place. Indeed, it seems illegitimate. For if Hegel expects this reference to do any explanatory work, or to help progress the development of logic, then he stands in violation of his well-established commitment to the immanent or methodologically continuous character of presuppositionless thought.

Part of the project of this essay, then, is to make sense of this allusion as a kind of anticipatory (or retrospective) remark for the benefit of those who are currently reading or thinking about the *Philosophy of Nature*. That is to say, Hegel's reference to nature here plays no role in the immanent development of the logic of otherness. Rather, it occurs on a different narrative register, one that transcends or has nothing to do with the immanent developments occurring at this point in the *Logic*. It *does*, however, help to explain the intra-systematic relations between logic, nature and spirit as presented in the *Philosophy of Nature*. That is to say, by examining the dialectical relationship between the specific logical categories of 'something' and 'other', and by documenting the similarities between this relationship and that between the logical Idea and nature, we can go some way towards explaining why the nature philosophy possesses an immanent logic and why that logic develops in the way that it does. We will also simultaneously be able to resolve the various tensions between Maker's and Hegel's respective accounts of nature.

First, then, note the resemblance between Hegel's description of the Idea at the end of the *Logic* and his description of the category of 'something' in one of its earlier sections. Just as the Idea is described as 'simple self-relation' (*SL*: 838, 842/2: 566, 572), so too is 'something' defined as the very first logical category to exhibit self-relation proper. Indeed, for Hegel, 'simple self-relation' (*SL*: 115/1: 124) just *is* what it is to be something. To be something, in other words, is just to relate to oneself and thus to exhibit a sense of ownership over, or identity with, one's *own* domain of determinacy.

Now, at this point one might expect the logical structure of 'otherness' to be simply that of *another* domain of self-relating determinacy, or *something else* with its own set of characteristics or identity that is itself nonidentical to that of our initial something. In other words, one might expect Hegel's own description of otherness to reflect the commonsensical conception employed by Maker.<sup>30</sup>

And, anticipating precisely this sort of expectation, Hegel does indeed present this conception as an initial impression of what being other might entail, writing that 'an other is also immediately a determinate being, a something' (*SL*: 116/1: 125). But he also claims that this initial characterization fails to capture what it is to be *genuinely* other, which is to say that it fails to reflect the truly distinctive logical structure of otherness, or what it is to be 'an other on its own account' (*SL*: 118/1: 126). It is, after all, only an *immediate* characterization of otherness, one according to which whether or not something is in fact something or other is a matter of indifference (*SL*: 116/1: 125), having nothing whatsoever to do with what it in fact *is* to be other,

or with otherness *as such*, instead relying upon the arbitrary selection of an external observer. That is to say, on this initial characterization, precisely which something or other is to be ‘taken affirmatively’ (*SL*: 117/1: 125–26) as the something in question, and which is to be taken as its other, is at any given moment dependent upon a ‘subjective designating’ (*SL*: 117/1: 126), an ‘external reflection’, or can be determined ‘only through being *compared* by a Third’ (*SL*: 118/1: 126).

This initial characterization therefore suffers from a critical problem. As indicated by its failure to exhibit any distinctive logical structure on the part of otherness,<sup>31</sup> it fails to preserve the critical or presuppositionless status of self-determining thought. That is to say, such thought no longer qualifies as *self*-determining because it now depends upon some kind of *external* (and therefore illegitimate) reflection in order to distinguish being something from being other. Thus, on Hegel’s own view, this initial characterization of otherness, which is the very characterization adopted by Maker, is inadequate to the task of articulating a properly critical description of what otherness truly is.<sup>32</sup>

So what *is* otherness on Hegel’s account? Well, if the distinctive logical structure of ‘something’ lies in its self-relation or self-identity, or its having *its own* domain of determinacy, then the properly distinctive character of being ‘other’ lies precisely in its *not* having its own domain of determinacy. That is to say, to be other is to exhibit a relation not of self-*identity* but of self-*negation* or self-othering:

The other simply by itself is the other in its own self, hence the other of itself and so the other of the other—it is, therefore, that which is absolutely dissimilar within itself, that which negates itself, *alters* itself. (*SL*: 118/1: 127)

Note here the resemblance with Hegel’s description of nature as ‘the negative of itself, or *external to itself*’ (*EN*: §247). Both nature and the logical other, it would seem, exhibit the same basic logical structure of self-othering. The similarities do not end here, though, as there is one final step to the determination of otherness in this part of the *Logic*—one that is also reflected in Hegel’s account of nature.

We have seen that the other, for Hegel, must be conceptualized as being *other than* itself. But precisely in being other than itself, the other does in fact prove *to be* itself. That is to say, the other’s *lack* of its own domain of determinacy *is* its own distinctive domain of determinacy. The other therefore undermines its own self-othering character: the more it differentiates itself from itself, the more it proves to be identical with itself. Otherness, in other words, proves to exhibit precisely the same sort of self-relation or self-identity as that exhibited by the logical category of ‘something’ after all. As Hegel observes:

But in doing so [negating or altering itself] it [the other] remains identical with itself, for that into which it alters is the other, and

this is its sole determination; but what is altered is not determined in any different way but in the same way, namely, to be an other; in this latter, therefore, it only unites with its own self. It is thus posited as reflected into itself with sublation of the otherness, as a self-identical something [...] (*SL*: 118–19/1: 127)

Note here the direct correspondence between Hegel's claim that being other involves the 'sublation of [...] otherness' with his above description of the philosophy of nature as documenting 'the implicit process by which nature *sublates its otherness* to become spirit' (*EN*: §247A; emphasis mine).

Hegel's presentation of the philosophy of nature, along with its relations to the other philosophical sciences, therefore closely reflects his logical account of otherness in various respects. Just as the other proves to exhibit the same kind of self-identifying self-relation from which it is initially differentiated, so too does nature prove to harbour a kernel of self-relating or self-determining Ideality, which in turn generates a logic of increasingly explicit expressions of itself, eventually culminating in the emergence of spirit.

The point, however, is not merely that the logic of otherness and the logic of nature *resemble* one another, but that the logic of otherness goes some way towards *explaining* the logic of nature. That is to say, it is precisely *because* nature is conceptualized as radically and consummately *other than* thought or the logical Idea that it proves to yield increasingly explicit forms of self-determining Ideality, as this is just what being other entails on Hegel's account.

To insist on the nonidentity of thought and nature, or on the absolute disaffiliation of nature from logic and spirit, then, is to fail to recognize what it is to be other in the properly critical or Hegelian sense. As ironic and counterintuitive as it might seem, it is thus Hegel's own close affiliation of nature with the logical Idea, and *not* Maker's insistence upon the radical independence of the two, that confirms his status as a realist about nature. In fact, though Maker regards himself as *differentiating* nature from thought, by conceiving of it as 'a thoroughly different, autonomous, domain, whose *own* mode of independent determination is other than and autonomous of thought altogether' (2002: 66), he is actually attributing to nature *the same* logical structure as the Idea or thought (namely, the self-relation and self-identification of *one's own* domain of determinacy). That is to say, the fact that nature, on his view, never *lacks* its own domain of determinacy, and thereby proves to exhibit an increasingly Ideal structure, shows that he fails to conceive of nature as sufficiently other than thought. Maker, in other words, inadvertently does the very opposite of what he sets out to do. He attributes to Hegel a form of metaphysical idealism.

## Conclusion: Maker rethought

We are now in a position to recognize precisely how Maker's account can be revised—namely, by replacing his more ordinary or commonsensical notion of otherness with the properly critical concept derived by Hegel towards the start of the *Logic*.

Following Maker, then, the consummation of self-determining thought in logic demands and depends upon the invocation or positing of nature as a domain of determinacy that is indeed radically and genuinely *other than* logic. What this otherness entails, however, is not the radical independence of nature from the logical Idea, or the 'non-identity of thought and nature' (2005: 8), but a series of increasingly explicit expressions of self-determining Ideality in nature such that nature ultimately gives rise to elements of itself that are, quite literally, *identical to thought*—namely, the cognitive activity of particular animals. We are therefore able to reject the charge of idealism without committing ourselves to an account that fails to reflect Hegel's own presentation of his view. All that is required is that we recognize the properly critical concept of otherness employed by Hegel.

Having revised Maker's account in this way, there remain some questions to be addressed. First, I should say something about how this revised account relates to the current 'conceptual realist' trend in the secondary literature.<sup>33</sup>

The conceptual realist claims that Hegel's use of the term 'Notion' or 'Concept' (*der Begriff*) designates the objective structure of the world and thus functions, as Wolf puts it, 'not as an innocuous semantic or epistemological construct but as a central component of a full-blooded metaphysics' (2018: 331). This is not to say, however, that conceptual realism amounts to metaphysical idealism.<sup>34</sup> As Stern makes clear: 'none of this implies that Hegel is an idealist in the modern (subjectivist) sense of claiming that the world is mind-dependent' (2009: 76). Rather (according to Stern, at least), such realism should be understood as a kind of anti-nominalism. Hegel's 'absolute idealism', then, is conceptually realist in so far as it describes a commitment to the objective, mind-independent existence of ideal entities or 'universals' that are instantiated or exemplified within finite individuals:

to be an idealist is to be a realist about universals as opposed to being a nominalist, where the nominalist thinks that such conceptual structures are imposed by the mind on reality and thus depend on us, which the realist qua idealist denies. (Stern 2018: 107)

Such universals, or 'immanent concepts', are encapsulated and encoded within what Hegel refers to as 'the Concept', and in its various logics (mechanism, chemism, life and so on).<sup>35</sup>



The conceptual realist interpretation is therefore not incompatible with the revised metaphysical realism I push forward here. Though I do not adopt the anti-nominalist framework of universals or discrete immanent concepts that are instantiated by individual entities, I do endorse the view that nature is Ideally structured. And indeed, my own account could be viewed as a complement to conceptual realism—the latter concerned more with the exemplification of immanent concepts by finite individuals, or with ‘the reasons that explain why things are as they are and do what they do’ (Kreines 2015: 22); my own view elaborating more generally upon how nature, for Hegel, can (and must) be *both* other than thought *and* conceptually structured.

I should also say something about the utility of retaining the term ‘realism’ when talking about Hegel’s metaphysics. After all, one of the key potential benefits of presenting Hegel as a metaphysical realist is presumably that it might enable us to relate his philosophical position, more or less straightforwardly, to others of a similarly realist stripe. But, as we have just observed, Hegel’s own logical and metaphysical commitments involve a reconceptualization of what qualifies as realism in the first place. Realism, for Hegel, does not hold nature to be ‘independent’ from mind or thought *in the ordinary sense*. Rather, such independence, on his view, demands that nature exhibit an increasingly Ideal or thought-like structure. The relation between Hegel’s realism and more conventional realist positions therefore becomes much less straightforward than initially anticipated.

So what value might there be in retaining this particular vocabulary? Why argue that Hegel is a realist when his realism can only be understood in a distinctively Hegelian way? One response here is pedagogical. That is to say, the vocabulary of realism and idealism provides a useful foil or an already established orthodoxy against which we can leverage a more nuanced understanding of Hegel’s philosophy.<sup>36</sup> (And indeed, this is one of the merits of Maker’s work that I mean to highlight.)

Another response is critical, which is to say that appreciating Hegel’s own peculiar brand of realism does indeed allow us to locate a key source of disagreement between Hegel and realists of a more conventional stripe—namely, their respective concepts of independence or otherness. If one wants to criticize Hegel’s realism, then, one must find some way either to invalidate his deductions in those passages from the *Logic* discussed above (*SL*: 116–19/1: 125–27), or to justify the ordinary, more intuitive notion of otherness employed by conventional realism (and this includes Maker’s original position).

Finally, I should address the lack of reference in this essay to latter parts of the *Science of Logic*—namely, the doctrines of essence and the concept. After all, it would seem odd to claim that Hegel’s nature philosophy, as well as its systematic relations to both logic and spirit, can be explained by one very specific section towards the start of the *Logic* when there are so many conceptual resources that contribute to the completion of logic and so must play at least *some* explanatory role in the move

to nature. This is why I claim only that the logic of otherness *goes some way* towards explaining the nature philosophy—or only that it *helps* to do so.

Appealing to further resources from subsequent parts of the *Logic* would of course yield a richer and more determinate account of the relation between logic and nature.<sup>37</sup> For instance, we might wonder why the logic of nature proceeds by means of incremental steps between increasingly explicit expressions of self-determining Ideality, while each moment of the logic of otherness, being part of the doctrine of being, resolves *immediately* into what follows. That is, there appears to be an important (and as yet unexplained) difference between the *gradual* or *developmental* logic exhibited by the nature philosophy and the *immediate* logic of the doctrine of being, in which each moment simply proves *to be* its subsequent determination.<sup>38</sup>

In order to explain this difference, we would indeed need to appeal to a latter part of the *Logic*—namely the *Begriffslogik*, which is precisely where the incrementally developmental character exhibited by the philosophy of nature first appears. As Houlgate remarks: ‘The concept is self-determining, self-developing being, [...] it is not mere immediate being’ (2005b: 20; emphasis mine). More specifically: the concept is ‘being that is genuinely differentiated in itself and that relates to itself only in and through its own differences’ (2005b: 25). We can therefore see how the manner in which the *Philosophy of Nature* progresses—that is, according to a ‘system of stages’, each of which maintains its difference from the others, or remains only ‘the proximate truth of that from which it results’ (EN: §249)—could be explained within a more comprehensive and determinate account of the nature philosophy, one that elaborates more explicitly upon its *conceptual* provenance.

But the purpose of this article is not to provide such an account. Rather, it is to demonstrate how we can generate an accurate, if admittedly less determinate, account of the nature philosophy by referring to the logic of otherness alone. We cannot, after all, ignore the fact that Hegel himself alludes to nature in this part of the *Logic*. An explanation of why he finds such reference appropriate at this specific juncture is therefore required. And this is what I hope to have provided in this article. Hegel clearly identifies at this particular moment the resources necessary to provide a preliminary gloss and explanation of (1) the move from logic to nature, (2) the logic inherent in nature, and (3) the resultant global architecture of his philosophical system. And it is precisely this gloss and explanation, I have argued, that can be reflected by Maker’s account—albeit with a little revision or rethinking.<sup>39</sup>

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This group also includes Stephen Houlgate and Richard Winfield. See, for example, Houlgate (2006) and Winfield (2012).

<sup>2</sup> Note that it is Maker's *emphasis* on Hegel's realism that distinguishes him within this group. Houlgate, for example, also describes Hegel's philosophy as a 'full-blooded realism' (2006: 429), but this description is nowhere near as prominent or important for him as it is for Maker.

<sup>3</sup> The title of Maker's principal work on Hegel is *Philosophy Without Foundations: Rethinking Hegel* (1994).

<sup>4</sup> Maker identifies Hegel's 'overall philosophical method' with his 'systematic approach' (1998: 1). Thus, whenever he refers to Hegel's 'systematic' philosophy, or to the 'systematicity' of Hegel's thought, he is also referring to the presuppositionless and immanently developmental character of that thought. See Maker (1998: 1–2).

<sup>5</sup> See Maker (1994: 114–21; 1998; 2002; 2005; 2007a; 2007b).

<sup>6</sup> References to Maker's work on the nature philosophy are typically cursory. See, for example, Ferrini (2012: 121, n.13), Rand (2007: 384, n.16) and Stone (2005: 99, n.27). Similarly, references to his broader project typically do not mention the emphasis he places on Hegel's *realism*. Instead, they tend only to mention his aforementioned contribution to the 'presuppositionless metaphysics' reading of Hegel's thought. See, for example, Houlgate (2005a: 63, n.48; 2006: 33–34), Stern (2009: 215, n.15), and Winfield (2012: 37–38).

<sup>7</sup> For the sake of simplicity, I do not dwell on the other senses in which Hegel is unambiguously an idealist—for example, 'critical', 'methodological', or 'absolute'. For his remarks on the first two of these senses, see Maker (1998: 4). Curiously, Maker seems to want to distance Hegel 'from his perceived commitment to absolute idealism' (1994: 24). Here, though, I maintain that Hegel's absolute idealism is compatible with, and indeed entails, metaphysical realism.

<sup>8</sup> The use of 'Mind' here is an allusion to the infamous Taylorian '*Geist*'. For a critical overview of Taylor's interpretation, see Stone (2005: 22–23).

<sup>9</sup> At this point one might wonder how the account developed here relates to 'conceptual realist' interpretations of Hegel's philosophy. I address this question towards the end of the essay.

<sup>10</sup> Maker (1998: 2, n.3) attributes the claim that Hegel is a metaphysical idealist to various commentators, including: R. G. Collingwood (1945), Errol Harris (1993), Michael Rosen (1982), Charles Taylor (1975), and Dieter Wandschneider (1992).

<sup>11</sup> Of course, as Hegel remarks at the start of the *Encyclopaedia*, this starting point is not *entirely* without presuppositions. Though he does claim that properly philosophical, or 'thoughtful', consideration requires that 'the *necessity* of its content should be shown', he also admits that 'philosophy can [...] presuppose some *familiarity* with its objects' (*EL*: §1). Indeed, Hegel claims the beginning of philosophy *itself* to be a presupposition of sorts, given that such a beginning must, on his view, be 'something *immediate*' and thus without prior explanation or justification (*EL*: §1). Making sense of this complication requires distinguishing between legitimate and illegitimate presuppositions, as well as the social and material conditions needed for philosophical inquiry

to arise in the first place. I say a little more on this subject below (see n.13), but for more on the presuppositions of presuppositionless thought, or on the problem of beginning in Hegel's philosophy, see Houlgate (2006: Ch. 3) and Dunphy (2021).

<sup>12</sup> I adopt the following abbreviations:

*EL* = Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, trans. T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting and H. S. Harris (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991).

*EN* = Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, trans. M. J. Petry (London: Allen and Unwin, 1970).

*SL* = Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (Amherst NY: Humanity Books, 1969) / *Wissenschaft der Logik* (2 vols.), in *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, vols. 5 & 6, ed. E. Moldenhauer and K. M. Michel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1969).

<sup>13</sup> One might question whether Hegel's commitment to presuppositionlessness does indeed apply to the *Philosophy of Nature*. After all, though he claims presuppositionlessness on the part of his *Logic*, he readily admits that the *Philosophy of Nature* 'presupposes and is conditioned by empirical physics' (*EN*: §246R). Here we need to distinguish the *historical* and *social* conditions of properly critical thought from its strictly *logical* conditions. As Hegel himself remarks: 'The procedure involved in the formation and preliminaries of a science is not the same as the science itself' (*EN*: 246R). The literal construction and articulation of philosophical thought in speech or writing of course requires that various material conditions be met—the development of language, freedom from poverty and political oppression, and so on. And such conditions undoubtedly include specific scientific developments. As Houlgate observes: the empirical discoveries of Galileo, Kepler and Newton 'paved the way for [...] philosophy to arise' (2005a: 116). ('Philosophy' here referring to what Hegel regards as the distinctively modern manifestation of philosophical thought.) Nonetheless, once such conditions have been met, properly philosophical explanation itself remains, for Hegel, committed to the standards of logical self-determination established at the start of his system. Even the nature philosophy must proceed according to 'its own immanent necessity' or 'the self-determination of the Notion' (*EN*: §246). As Houlgate sums up: 'the philosophy of nature is *historically* dependent on, but *structurally* and *logically* independent of, empirical science at one and the same time' (Houlgate 2005a: 116). Thus, the concern for presuppositionlessness in the relevant sense remains. (See n.11 above.)

<sup>14</sup> That is, if 'nature and spirit *are* the Idea, albeit in the secondary mode of otherness or self-externality', then this entails a 'metaphysically idealistic identity-philosophy' (Maker 2002: 60).

<sup>15</sup> Accounts that *do* take on these logical mechanics in more detail include Ferrini (1999) and Stone (2005: 98–106). And indeed, these accounts appear to corroborate Maker's more straightforward gloss. Ferrini, for instance, endorses the 'momentary serious otherness' of nature (1999: 75–78)—though she parses it in terms of Hegel's description of the Idea, at the end of the *Logic*, as 'divine' (*SL*: 843/2: 572), along with selected passages from the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. Even more striking is Stone's description of the Idea as assuming 'the form of a *thinker*, a thinker which reflects on its own status as rationality pervading all that really exists' (2005: 99)—itself prefiguring our reconstruction of the Idea's abstracting act of self-recognition below.

<sup>16</sup> See, for instance, Maker (1998: 8–9; 2007b: 24).

<sup>17</sup> We might ask whether thought's logical self-specification *must* in fact come to an end. Could it not, for instance, continue indefinitely? No, because such a suggestion assumes a conception of infinity as endlessness—or as 'infinite progress' (*SL*: 142/1: 155)—that Hegel criticizes and replaces with a conception of infinity as self-relating finitude. As Houlgate remarks, true infinity 'is simply the process of always-relating-to-self to which finitude itself gives rise' (2006: 424). Indeed, Hegel expressly rejects the possibility of a logic without end when he writes, towards the end of the *Logic*, that 'the infinite progress as such belongs to reflection that is without the Notion; the absolute method, which has the Notion for its soul and content, cannot lead into that' (*SL*: 839/2: 567–68). See also Walter Stace, who observes that infinity for Hegel involves self-determination and, importantly, self-limitation (1924: 146). Technically speaking, then, self-determining thought *is* for Hegel infinitely self-determining, but only because it does in fact come to an end.

<sup>18</sup> I am grateful to an anonymous referee for raising this objection.

<sup>19</sup> The metaphor of the circle is useful here. We can visualize this abstracting move as the difference between 'occupying' the circle, so to speak, as a hamster does a wheel, and 'stepping back' so as to regard it laterally, taking its whole circumference in view.

<sup>20</sup> When it comes to the very end of the *Logic*, we can for all intents and purposes treat the terms 'Idea' and 'Notion' as interchangeable. As Hegel himself writes at this specific juncture: 'The Idea is itself the pure Notion that has itself for subject matter' (*SL*: 843/2: 572).

<sup>21</sup> What we encounter is, for Maker, a 'radical break, albeit a break engendered by the Idea, by logic itself' (2002: 66).

<sup>22</sup> In this respect, Maker's account of the nature philosophy is antithetical to that articulated by Edward Halper. On Halper's view, the determinations of nature do not stand independently of logic. Instead, they essentially rehearse the *Logic*, consisting of the Idea 'yoked together' with successive logical categories (1998: 33). Nature, he writes, 'is the beginning of a kind of second-go-round of the same concepts, now with absolute idea attached to them' (1998: 35). Such close affiliation with the domain of logical determinacy means that Halper's account, on Maker's view, fails to qualify as critical in the way Hegel requires.

<sup>23</sup> Hence Hegel's description (borrowed from Schelling) of nature as 'petrified intelligence' (*EN*: §247A). See also Stone (2005), who takes this phrase as the title of her book.

<sup>24</sup> Despite its place in the *Zusätze*, this passage accurately reflects how Hegel thinks about the *Philosophy of Nature* and its role in his system. To confirm, refer to the final sentence of the *Science of Logic*, where Hegel claims that the logical Idea 'posits for itself the mediation [i.e. nature] out of which the Notion [i.e. the Idea] ascends as a free Existence [i.e. spirit] that has withdrawn into itself from externality [i.e. returned into itself out of its otherness]' (*SL*: 843–44/2: 573). (Regarding my identification of 'the Notion' with 'the Idea', see n.20 above.)

<sup>25</sup> 'Ideality' here simply refers to the state or quality of being Ideal—or *of* the Idea. I adopt this term to more naturally articulate the fact that the expression or manifestation of the Idea throughout the *Realphilosophie* is subject to gradation—or to degrees of increasing explicitness.

<sup>26</sup> This phrase might be used to refer to spirit, but Hegel also maintains that 'The philosophy of nature itself belongs to this pathway of return' (*EN*: §247A), which is to say once again that the

*Philosophy of Nature* documents the very process through which the Idea does in fact ‘return into itself’ in the form of spirit.

<sup>27</sup> One might suggest that Maker’s account here *legitimately* presupposes specific experiences of spiritual self-determination—that is, in a similar fashion to how the *Philosophy of Nature* presupposes empirical science. Notice, however, that Maker is attempting to explain how properly *philosophical* cognition moves from nature to spirit, and recall (from n.11 and n.13 above) how empirical presuppositions cannot legitimately feature in such explanations.

<sup>28</sup> Indeed, we might also wonder whether Maker regards such otherness, independence or non-identity as precluding any isomorphism between thought and the world, and thus our ability to think or represent the world. He therefore faces a further dilemma: a choice between allowing for such isomorphism (and thereby relinquishing his commitment to realism as he understands it), or holding fast to his realism (and thereby endorsing the bizarre claim that we cannot think the world). I am grateful to an anonymous referee for articulating this point.

<sup>29</sup> A full account of the precise derivations of ‘something’ and ‘other’ in the *Science of Logic* falls outside the scope of this paper. For an example of such an account, see Houlgate (2006: 312–30).

<sup>30</sup> Again: according to Maker, nature is for Hegel ‘a thoroughly different, autonomous, domain, whose *own* mode of independent determination is other than and autonomous of thought altogether’ (2002: 66).

<sup>31</sup> As Hegel writes: ‘Both [something and other] are determined equally as something and as other, and are thus the same, and there is so far no distinction between them’ (*SL*: 118/1: 126).

<sup>32</sup> Here I should acknowledge a point of disagreement between Houlgate and myself. For Houlgate, being ‘something else’ is indeed a genuine feature of what it is to be other. He writes: ‘Although the other is not merely the negation of something’, by which he means another something that is nonidentical to the something it negates, ‘the other is at least the negation of something’ (2006: 324–25). Moreover, Houlgate denies that this initial characterization of the other as ‘something else’ is uncritical. Where Hegel complains about ‘subjective designating’ (*SL*: 117/1: 126), ‘external reflection’, and comparison by ‘a Third’ (*SL*: 118/1: 126), Houlgate argues that such a characterization ‘remains rigorously immanent [...] because the necessary possibility of such comparison is derived from the logical structure of something itself’ (2006: 325). That is to say, ‘every something is *intrinsically* vulnerable to being *externally* compared with another by a third party’ (2006: 325). Though the scope of this paper precludes a comprehensive response, it is worth at least acknowledging that, despite Houlgate’s claim, Hegel nonetheless describes this comparative act as ‘a subjective designating *falling outside* the something itself’, emphasizing that the ‘*entire* determinateness falls into this *external* pointing out’ (*SL*: 117/1: 126; emphasis mine). Also, Hegel does indeed describe this comparison as ‘arbitrary’ (*SL*: 117/1: 126), despite Houlgate’s refusal of this portrayal: ‘Such a comparison is not [...] an arbitrary act carried out by “external” reflection’ (2006: 325). At the very least, then, there is at least *some* reason for thinking that Houlgate’s account of this part of the *Logic* does not sit entirely comfortably with Hegel’s text.

<sup>33</sup> Advocates of conceptual realism include Robert Stern (see his 2009: Ch.1) and James Kreines (2015).

<sup>34</sup> Though, according to Maker's original position, conceptual realism certainly *does* amount to metaphysical idealism.

<sup>35</sup> See Kreines (2015: 23).

<sup>36</sup> In this respect I agree with Stone, according to whom the nomenclature of realism 'does not fully capture the complexity' of Hegel's metaphysics (2005: 22)—but only up to a point. I agree that realism, more straightforwardly understood, fails to capture the complexity of Hegel's position, but I claim that recognizing how this standard formulation must be reconceptualized in light of Hegel's logic of otherness does in fact allow us to capture the complexity of his thought. And indeed, I claim that doing so renders such thought more easily transmissible to those who are getting to grips with it for the first time.

<sup>37</sup> Indeed, Maker himself occasionally gestures towards such an account. See, for instance, Maker (2005: 9–11).

<sup>38</sup> I am grateful to an anonymous referee for pressing me on this point.

<sup>39</sup> In addition to the anonymous referees, I am grateful to numerous people for their questions and comments on previous versions of this paper. These include: Eliza Starbuck Little, Thomas Pendlebury, Sebastian Rödl, Ahilleas Rokni and Alison Stone. I also want to thank the organizers and attendees of the DPhil Seminar at the University of Oxford and the 'Examining the End of Hegel's Logic' conference at the University of Warwick in 2021.

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