THE REFORM OF HEGELIAN DIALECTIC (1912)

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[3] Chapter I. The dialectic of the content of thought and the dialectic of thinking.*

The core of Hegelian idealism is the concept of dialectic, the soul of logic and the fundamental law of reality in all its forms. This dialectic is as vastly different from Platonic dialectic as the categories or pure concepts of the Transcendental Logic in the *Critique of Pure Reason* are from Plato's ideas and Aristotle's universals, and its character cannot be more plainly indicated than by this very contrast of the category with the Platonic idea and the Aristotelian universals.

Hegel certainly highlighted the *a priori* nature of the synthesis, in other words the originality and absoluteness of the *relation* by which the concepts are dialectically linked with each other, but to concentrate exclusively on this facet of Hegelian dialectic would be to miss its essential feature.

For even in Plato's theory of dialectic[1] the ideas are conceived as essentially constituting a system; and Aristotle allows validity only to the propositional or indicative mode of discourse, which requires and implies the synthesis of concepts συνφεσις της νοηματων.[2] The same applies to all the formal logic evolved from Aristotle's Analytics, even in its most degenerate forms, medieval terminism [4], and modern empirical nominalism. Being wholly based on the epistemological presupposition, which is of unmistakable Platonic provenance, of the absolute objectivity of the truth, with which logically correct thought accords, it could not depart, and never did depart, from the idea that the truth is attained by means of logical construction modeled on the connections of the real, or alternatively of experience, which the empiricist conceives as a system of data outside the mind into which experience is gathered.

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*Page numbers in Gentile's *Opere* are given in square brackets.

Undoubtedly the Kantian theory of the *a priori* synthesis has led to a much keener awareness of this truth of the absolute relation between concepts, which had earlier been clearly stated by the greatest Greek philosophers; but it is no less certain that this keener awareness peculiar to post-Kantian idealism is due to the new character with which the old concept of relation reappears as it were rejuvenated and reanimated in the Critical philosophy. This new character has two distinctive marks, which on reflection come down to one. In Kant's Transcendental Logic *relation* (1) is not a *connection of concepts*, but is itself a *concept*, and (2) is no longer an objective character of the truth, but an *activity of the subject* who apprehends the truth.

Kant's *a priori* synthesis is a category, which is not an object of thought. It is not something thought of, or, really, something that admits of being thought of, since, as a transcendental function, it is prior to experience, in which everything thinkable gradually gets thought by virtue of the category itself. Therefore it certainly is a concept, but one that is transcendental and so immanent in the concepts that we find ourselves thinking as connected in the synthesis of experience: these presuppose it and hence appear with respect to it in all their *a posteriori* nature. So if the elements of the synthesis are to be called concepts, they are such by virtue of a concept on which they depend, and without which they would in no way be present to thought; [5] this is therefore the original concept, the true concept, or *pure concept*.

This pure concept, however, bears no resemblance to the empirical concepts that are indebted to it for their excogitation. It constitutes the object of experience, the (intelligible) object in which all empirical concepts emerge. As such it can never figure in the sequence of these concepts, and, strictly speaking, it cannot be something thought of. It is thought itself as the act of thinking, by which the thing thought of is constituted. It is not *conceptum* but *concipere* or *conceptus* in the precise Spinozistic definition.[3] Just because it is *concipere* and not *conceptum*, the Kantian transcendental relation or synthesis can be rescued—in Kant the rescue begins—from the equivocal position to which relation was relegated in Platonic dialectic and Aristotelian logic, the position of mere liaison between concepts, as though concepts were primary and relation secondary. Once the nature of concepts is understood, with Kant, to be a product of the category, any originality (objectivity) of concepts considered on their own is ruled out, and the true concept becomes the very act of conceiving.

If, then, by dialectic is meant the science of relation, it may be said that Plato's ancient dialectic is the dialectic of what is thought of, whereas the

new dialectic, required by the Kantian doctrine of the categories, is the dialectic of thinking.

Between the two dialectics there is a gulf, the gulf dividing modern from ancient idealism. The dialectic of what is thought of may be styled the dialectic of death, and the dialectic of thinking the dialectic of life. For the fundamental presupposition of the former is reality or truth wholly determined *ab aeterno*, so that it is no longer possible to conceive of a fresh determination in the sense [6] of an effective determination of reality. On such a presupposition, the advancement of learning (and in general the whole life of the world) can only be the vain dream of a shadow:[4] the fading of vain, insubstantial, and pointless pageants on the unchanging world stage of an empty theater. How can one find in Platonism the explanation of the genesis of souls and of the world in all its infinite variety?[5] Given the ideas in their inherent relations, nothing that ever happens, including human dialectic, which raises itself from the shadows of the worldly prison house to contemplate the living sun of the Good or the One,[6] can be pictured as even the slightest ripple on the surface of a measureless ocean that is forever still. Given even Heraclitus's ever-living fire, the perpetual flux, and war the sire of all things,[7] then since all this is a world that is thought of, and therefore admitting of being thought of, eternally admitting of being thought of, and therefore already determined *ab aeterno*, that fire will burn as little as a painted fire; since, if it really burned, the combustion would imply a novelty, an absolute novelty, which is ruled out by the conception of reality as determined *ab aeterno*. Given the atoms with their perpetual downward fall, or whatever sort of motion belongs to them *ab aeterno*,[8] there is no longer the possibility of any event that is a genuine event, in the sense of something new that would change the essence of reality. Objectivism of every kind stagnates in this lifeless pool of a reality that is already realized.

The dialectic of thinking, on the other hand, does not acknowledge a world that is there already, which would be something thought of. It does not presuppose a reality beyond consciousness that the latter would have to appropriate; because it knows, as Kant has shown, that everything that can be thought of as real (the thinkable, the concepts of experience) presupposes the very act of thinking. It therefore regards this act as the root of everything. So everything that exists, exists by virtue of thinking, and thinking is thus no longer a posthumous and futile effort exerted when there is nothing left to do in the world, [7] but is the cosmogony itself. In the new dialectic the history of thought accordingly becomes the course of events, and the course of events is no longer conceivable except as the history of

thought. Ancient man felt himself sadly cut off from reality, from God. Modern man feels God in himself, and extols in the power of spirit the essential divinity of the world.

[8] Chapter II. The problem of the deduction of the categories.

This is not the place to recount the historical passage from the Kantian doctrine of the categories as *a priori* synthesis to the problem of Hegelian dialectic. Undeniably, however, the point of view which Hegel has already reached with his *Phenomenology*, and from which he starts in the *Science of Logic*, is that outlined in the preceding pages. Hegel has set foot on the firm ground that reality is thought itself, and the true concept, the only real concept, is conceiving; or, as he says in the *Phenomenology*, all knowledge is resolved into absolute knowledge, i.e., into the *idea*, as a system of categories in the Kantian sense, which is precisely the principle of the new dialectic. In Hegel, the science of the idea is the science of relation, of synthesis, or, to put it more clearly, of the synthetic and relating activity: a science of thought, but in the sense not of something thought of, but of thinking. His idea is the unity of *being* and *essence*, which is to say of subject (the immediate) and predicate (mediation); it is precisely the category productive of the synthetic *a priori* judgment, to which Kant had shown every real act of thought comes down. And Hegel makes every effort to fathom the abstruse process bringing about this unity of the idea, which is the life of thought, not, I repeat, in the sense of what is thought of, but in the sense of thinking or category. This abstruse process of the idea ought to incorporate, as its phases or as phases of its phases, all the concepts [9] that constitute thought as thinking: all the categories. For the idea just is the totality of transcendental thought.

But how is the number of categories to be established? [And can there be a fixed number of categories?][9] Kant had provided a merely empirical deduction of them, analyzing the forms of judgment offered to him by experience. Fichte had shown the need for an *a priori* and genuinely systematic deduction. Hegel followed along this path, striving to overcome the host of difficulties clustering around this problem of the combined multiplicity and unity of the categories by packing the multiplicity as tightly as he could in the triunity of the idea, which is thought itself, all fitting neatly together and forming a perfect unity in its absolute transcendental character. Whether his effort was, or could have been, successful has not hitherto been methodically discussed, and it is a point of crucial importance for the theory of thought as thinking. Since if it be true, as I believe I have

shown elsewhere,[10] that multiplicity belongs to thought in the sense of what is thought of, the very inquiry into the number of categories, whether explicit as in Kant, or implicit as in Hegel, means straying off the course along which the transcendental problem of the categories that constitute thinking both arises and ought to be pursued.

Although Hegel in fact numbers the categories in his deduction, he certainly intends to undo their numbering by means of his dialectical method, thanks to the law of *supersession* (*aufheben*) or the notional existence abiding in the real, which at the very outset of his deduction he calls a most important concept and a fundamental determination that reappears at every turn.[11] Consequently all the multiplicity of the Hegelian categories boils down in the end to the concrete category (the only concrete category) of the absolute idea, and hence to absolute unity. But the trouble just is [10] that this dialectical process, in which reality is mediated, and which therefore contains within itself an intrinsic notional existence, in other words a phase that is already superseded and preserved, this process, which is the concrete form or realization of the idea, can be multiplied only from the empirical or historical point of view, not from the transcendental point of view; and for it to appear susceptible of further mediations, as takes place in Hegel's logic, it has got to be transformed from a process of thinking into a process of the content of thought. If we call this thinking *idea*, then the process is *being*, *essence* (negation of the immediacy of being) and concept (in the sense of *conceiving*) or idea. Here, however, being is not something thought of but a notional phase of the act of thinking: as such, it does not play the part of an abstract concept whose union with the other equally abstract concept of essence is to yield, in the shape of the unity, the concrete concept. It is an abstract phase of the act of thinking, which is not consummated as an act until after this phase, and therefore if arrested at this phase it is strangled at birth.

To mediate this phase which, I repeat, is not a concept, it would have to be considered as itself an act of thinking, which in some primitive and rudimentary fashion is already consummated on its own. That is obviously impossible except on one condition: that the abstract is treated as though it were concrete. Now to treat the abstract as concrete is to detach, if only provisionally, the part from the whole in which its reality lies. But once the part is detached from the whole, the part becomes a whole, and the process of the part cannot but be the same as the process of the whole. The being which belongs to the main triad in Hegelian logic is mediated within itself, in that it finds already in itself an immediacy and the negation of this immediacy: another being and another essence, of which it is the idea: *quality*,

quantity, *measure*. The same applies to quality, which appears as *being for self*, the unity of *being* (a third being) and of *determinate being*; and it applies [11] again to this last being, which appears as becoming, or the unity of *being* (a fourth being) and of *nonbeing*. Being (pure being), determinate being, quality, and measure thus turn out to be four grades of being, which is fully developed only in the fourth grade as the first phase of the main triad (being-essence-concept). But what is the difference between the first and the second grade? Determinate being is the mediation of pure or indeterminate being. This, however, is also the difference between the second and the third grade, between the third and the fourth, and between the fourth and, ultimately, the concept. So the concept is the concept of measure; but measure is the concept of quality, and quality the concept of determinate being, and determinate being the concept of indeterminate being: or (which comes to the same thing) determinate being is the becoming of pure indeterminate being, and quality the becoming of determinate being, and measure the becoming of quality, and the concept the becoming of being as measure. Whether the reconciling and concrete form of the thinking act or category is called *becoming* or *concept* (conceiving, thinking) we always have the same (dialectical) process, with variation only in the terms of the connection: it is always the becoming of a certain being or the concept of a certain measure (= being). Being varies, and becoming varies as the correlate of being. Becoming in its dialectical character, the restlessness (*Unruhe*) spoken of by Hegel, does not and cannot change.

[12] Chapter III. Thought as the sole category.

Yet does being really change? The old Hegelianism holds with Hegel that it does. The new Hegelianism is convinced that the only change of being is its becoming; and this is the genuine characteristic of what might be styled specifically *actual idealism* because it insists on the concept of the idea act. In the actuality of the idea, which is becoming or concept (thinking), there is no indeterminate that is not absolutely so, no immediate that is not absolutely immediate, in short, no being that is not pure being. There is not the more determinate and the less determinate, but the indeterminate and the determinate: the real (act of thinking) as determinate, which has superseded the indeterminate and contains it within itself: in short, the becoming of being. Actual idealism regards the change of being, and hence diverse and manifold being, as outside the actuality of thought, in the thing thought of considered abstractly in Platonic fashion: in other words, in the category itself made into a content of thought, and converted from

transcendental thought into empirical thought, regarded as detached from the self, which is nevertheless active in empirical thought itself.

As it is firmly convinced of the reality of being in thought, it can no longer admit a realm of ideas or any kind of being that would transcend the actuality of thought as thinking; and it points out that any work of thought (for example, all Hegel's *Logic*) is real in the unique act of thought which thinks it, and only there has its truth. Therefore, it is no longer a matter of seeing if being as [13] measure is different from simple indeterminate being; it is only a matter of knowing if, when thought takes measure as a factor in terms of which it is actually thinking, it can see in measure something more than the absolute indeterminacy in which pure being as the initial factor of becoming comes to consist. If this is so, it is clear, or so it seems to me, that the problem of the deduction of the categories ought to be handled very differently from the way in which it is done in Hegel; and that Hegel's deduction ought to be considered as one case among an infinite number of possible cases of deduction, or rather as itself a *fragment or factor of the eternal deduction which makes up the history not only of thought as ordinarily understood but also of the world.* For since thought is dialectical, since it is always a live determination (self-determination) of the indeterminate, any thought is a triadic process of categories. Any subject and predicate are factors of the category which is the judgment in which they live; and every thought is a category because to think is to judge; and since everything is thought, everything is category too. Hence, there is no philosophy of nature and no philosophy of spirit *besides* logic; and hence the deduction is never exhausted; and Hegel's logic is true, to the extent that any logic is true, like any flash of thought, and any rustle of leaves (understood in its intrinsic self-creative and therefore spiritual inwardness).

On the other hand, actual idealism has no mind to get lost in the imaginary infinite of an interminable dialectical process. It knows that this is a bogus infinite, a construction based on the seeming multiplicity of thoughts, as though there were a plurality of judgments or a plurality of acts of thought. Thought is single and unmultipliable; and in this unity it is genuinely infinite, qua thinking. What is thought of is manifold; but when what is thought of is grasped in its concreteness, because it is what is thought of by thinking, or thought itself [14] in its concreteness (self-consciousness), all its multiplicity is fused into the unity of thinking. Accordingly, all *acts* of thought, when they are not considered as mere *facts*, when they are not looked at from the outside, are one single act. In conclusion, the categories are infinite in number, qua categories of thinking which is considered as content of thought (history); and they are one sole

category, qua category of thinking in its actuality.

It might therefore be shown that where, in Hegel's deduction, you see dialectical activity, you have the genuine restlessness of thinking, and consequently the infinite, and so unmultipliable, unity of the category; and where you are confronted with diversity, the variety of the categories, dialectical activity ceases and up again bobs the lifeless finitude of the content of thought, as in ancient dialectic.

[15] Chapter IV. Hegel's concept of becoming.

The lack of a clear apprehension of the conception which we have elucidated, of the absolute actuality of the idea as category, is perhaps the main cause of all the defects found in the structure of Hegelianism, and it begins to operate from the very first steps taken by the great idealist in the deduction of his categories. For the problem of becoming as the unity of being and nonbeing is really the whole problem of dialectic. Among the numerous expositions of it which have been essayed, the plainest is still Hegel's own first systematic exposition given in the *Science of Logic*; and it is so succinct that it is worth quoting in full:

> *Being, pure being,* — without any other determination. In its immediate indeterminacy, it is equal only to itself, and is not even unequal to anything else, it has no difference inside it or outside. With any kind of determination or content that would make it internally different or different from anything else, it would no longer be preserved in its purity. It is pure indeterminacy and pure emptiness. There is nothing to see in it, if one can talk here of seeing; or rather it is only this pure empty sight itself. Nor again is there anything in it to think of, or it is equally only this empty thinking. Being, the immediate indeterminate, is in fact *nothing*, neither more nor less than nothing.
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> *Nothing, pure nothing*; it is simple identity with itself, perfect emptiness, absence of determination and content; undifferentiatedness in itself. So far as one can talk here of seeing and thinking, there is a difference between seeing or thinking of something [16] or nothing. To see or think of nothing has therefore a meaning; if the two things are distinguished, it means that nothing is (exists) in our seeing and thinking; or rather that it is empty sight or thought itself; and the same empty sight or thought as pure being. — So nothing is the same determination, or rather absence of determination, and thus, in sum, the same as pure being.
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> *Pure being and pure nothing are therefore the same.* The truth is

> neither being nor nothing, but that being (does not pass, but) has passed into nothing, and nothing into being. But equally the truth is not their undifferentiatedness, but that they are not the same, that they are absolutely different but also inseparate and inseparable, and immediately *each one disappears into its opposite.* The truth is therefore this *movement* of the immediate disappearance of one into the other: becoming; a movement in which the two terms are different, but with a difference that is patched up equally immediately.[12]

This sameness, which is not immediate but resulting from the passage of being into nothing or nonbeing (*Nichtsein*), an expression which Hegel also uses a little later, and of nonbeing into being, is what Hegel calls the "unity of being and nothing." And in a note on this deduction he remarks that "the unity of the two phases, of being and non-being, in so far as they are inseparable, is at the same time distinct from them, and is with respect to them a *third thing*, which in its most proper form is *becoming.*"[13]

He goes on, however, to throw more light on the unity itself, observing that "becoming, coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be, is the inseparateness of being and nothing, not the unity that leaves out being and nothing; but, as a unity of being and nothing, it is this determinate unity, in which there is both being and nothing." Being does not occur as being, separated from nothing; nor does the latter occur as nothing, separated from being; both occur in the unity, insofar as they are evanescent [17] (*verschwindende*), only insofar as they are *superseded.* They have to come down from self-subsistence to being phases that are still distinct but superseded.

The difference does not get obliterated, but each of the two terms is a unity of itself and the other. "Becoming therefore contains being and nothing as *two such unities*, each of which is itself a unity of being and nothing: in one, being is present straightaway and forms a link with nothing; in the other, nothing is present straightaway and forms a link with being." There are thus two sides to becoming: on one it has nothing straightaway, i.e., it starts from nothing and passes into being; on the other what it has straightaway is being, and it moves from being and passes into nothing: coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be.[14]

Now, it does not take much effort (if we have got hold of the conception of the actuality of the idea) to realize that all this deduction is out of line with the essential aim of Hegelian dialectic; and indeed it makes possible the preeminently antidialectical conception, at which the deduction promptly arrives, of the neutralization of becoming in the outcome, whereby, just as being fades into nonbeing, becoming in its turn is to fade into the negation of becoming: *Verschwinden des Verschwindenden.* And Hegel is led on to

say that "*das Werden ist eine haltungslose Unruhe, die in ein ruhiges Resultat zusammensinkt.*"[15] The whole deduction turns into an analysis of concepts designed to uncover the identity of opposites underlying their difference.

"This," he later says in the *Encyclopaedia*, "is one of the hardest parts of the task of thought; since being and nothing are components of the antithesis in all their *immediacy*, without there being already *stated* in one a determination that would contain its relation to the other. However, they *contain* [18] this determination [viz. of not containing any determination]: the determination which is just the same in both. The deduction...is to that extent wholly *analytical*; as all the procedure of philosophy, being methodical, i.e. *necessary*, is nothing but the explicit *statement* of what is already contained in a concept."[16] This proposition hardly sounds Hegelian if Hegel's logic is meant to be dialectical. For the analytical process is the (apparent) process of Aristotelian logic governed by the principle of identity, whereas the genuine Hegelian process is that of the *a priori* synthesis, in which it is not the identical but the different that is unified. Analysis, which renders the implicit explicit, presupposes a concept on its own and a potentiality of thought preceding the actuality, and hence an objective reality: all the old Platonic views. Hegel really knows that pure identity (and consequently pure analysis) is not enough. Immediately after the passage quoted from the *Encyclopaedia* he hastens to remark: "It is, however, no less correct to say that being and nothing are *quite different* than to assert their unity [= identity]: – the one is not what the other is." But he goes on: "Only since the difference is here not yet determinate – because being and nothing are still the immediate – it remains, in the way in which it exists between them, something that cannot be put into words, mere opinion."[17] This falls far below what he had said in the *Science of Logic*: "The proposition [being and nothing are one and the same] *contains* the result, implicitly is the result. But what is to be noticed here is the defect that the result is not itself *expressed* in the proposition; it is an external reflection which descries the result in it." He meant that the [19] proposition expresses the result of a process which is the reconciliation of a contradiction, in other words the identification of two different terms; and does not express the process in which this difference, too, ought to appear. To put it otherwise, Hegel is pointing out that his kind of identity is not like Aristotle's, the exclusion of contradiction, but includes it.

Furthermore, he was anxious to underline the need to distinguish between the imperfect form imposed by a reflection external to the dialectical process and the intrinsic nature of this process. Accordingly, he added the

general observation that "the proposition, in the *form of a judgement*, is not suited to express speculative truths...because the judgement is a relation of identity between subject and predicate, where no notice is taken of the fact that the subject has other characteristics besides the predicate, and the latter is of wider extension than the subject. Now if the content is speculative, even the non-identical side of subject and predicate is an essential factor; but this does not get expressed in a judgement."

Lastly, Hegel remarked that when it is said that being and nothing are a unity, this word "unity," even more than "identity," expresses a subjective comparison, as though it were a relation deriving from a comparison. It would be better to say that being and nothing are inseparate and inseparable, if this did not leave the positive side unexpressed. In short, he concluded, the result of the deduction, becoming, is not the one-sided and abstract unity of being and nothing, but "consists in this movement: that pure being is immediate and simple, and for this reason is just as much pure nothing; that there *is* a difference between them, but it is also true that it is *cancelled* (*sich aufhebt*) and there *isn't*. The result, then, asserts the difference, too, of being and nothing, but as a difference that is only opined."[18]

[20] Chapter V. Critique of Hegel's concept of becoming.

In Hegel's doctrine it is clear that becoming involves a difference underlying the sameness of being and nothing; but it all comes down to a postulate: being and nothing are identified, ergo they must have been different. But how were they different? In what did the difference consist?

Trendelenburg[19] is going to say that there is no difference and that therefore there is no sign of the beginning of dialectic, the contradiction spoken of by Hegel. Hegel himself, feeling the need for the difference and being unable to deduce becoming analytically except from the identity, fell back, as we have seen, on the *opinion* that there is a difference. But in what does this opinion consist? It is the assertion of something that cannot be put into words, according to the passage quoted from the *Encyclopaedia*. The point is put more clearly in the *Science of Logic*:[20]

> *Opinion* is that being is on the contrary what is altogether other than what nothing is, and that nothing is clearer than their absolute difference, and apparently nothing is easier than to formulate this difference. It is, however, just as easy to convince oneself that this is impossible, and that the difference *cannot be put into words. Those who will insist on the difference between being and nothing should*

challenge themselves to say in what it consists.

If being and nothing had any kind of determination to distinguish them, they would, as mentioned before, be determinate being and determinate nothing, not pure being and [21] pure nothing, as they still are here. Their difference, then, is quite empty; each of the pair is in the same manner the indeterminate; hence the difference does not lie in them but only in a third thing, *opinion*. But opinion is a form of subjectivity, which does not fall within this sequence of the exposition.[21] The third thing, however, in which being and nothing have their subsistence, must also turn up here; and it has turned up here—it is becoming.

In this they function as different components; it is only to the extent that they are different that there is any such category as becoming. This third thing is something other than themselves;—they subsist only in something else, which is to say that they are not self-subsistent.

Becoming is the subsistence as much of being as of non-being, or, their subsistence is only their being in *unity*; this subsistence of theirs is precisely what at the same time cancels (*aufhebt*) their difference.

There are, it seems to me, two comments to be made on this: (1) If opinion, to which the fact of a difference is due, does not fall within the actuality of the logical process of becoming (because, as a form of subjectivity, it belongs according to Hegel to the first section of the logic of the concept). it is not possible to talk about difference in the categories of becoming without going beyond the actuality of the process by resorting to that external reflection to which, as we have seen, Hegel attributes the form of the judgment, "Being and nothing are the same": a form that is extraneous and therefore inadequate to express the act of identifying the opposites, though it ought to do so. In other words, there is no difference logically between pure being and pure nothing in their indeterminacy. And that is the end of the identification, and the last to be seen of dialectic. (2) If the logical third thing, in which the real connection of being and nothing is to be sought, is not opinion but becoming, becoming will presuppose and supersede the difference, but this will not help to shed any light on the way to satisfy the postulate mentioned previously. For likewise in the later development of the logic, in categories where there is no lack of the determinateness which is missing from the thesis and antithesis which have their synthesis in becoming, the synthesis [22] presupposes the difference as something that has already been intrinsically superseded; but there this supersession of the difference does not involve the impossibility of stating the difference before its supersession. The absence of determinateness here, if it implies identity,

cannot imply, or be compatible with, difference as well.

To sum up, it must in the end be admitted that Hegel has a hazy view of becoming but does not have the concept of becoming. And he does not put himself in a position to get hold of it because he analyzes this concept instead of realizing it, as he ought to have done, in order to think of it dialectically and in conformity with the principle of the identity of being and thought.

[23] Chapter VI. Interpretations of Hegel's concept of becoming.

Just because Hegel strenuously asserted the essentiality of the concept of becoming, without succeeding in determining it himself, the main problem, the hardest problem, that he bequeathed to later philosophers who reached his point of view, or believed they had, was that of gaining a clear understanding of the first categories of the logic, in which it ought to be possible to recognize the dialectical nature of thought. A detailed history of the wanderings of the Hegelian school over the ground of the first logical categories would make quite interesting reading.[22] For, ever since 1824, when Hinrichs published his attempt at a dialectical treatment of formal logic (*Grundlinien einer Philosophie der Logik*), many followers of Hegel have tried to touch up and polish this fundamental part of the master's teaching. The younger Fichte and Weisse abandoned it entirely, disengaging logic from metaphysics: the former in his *Grundzüge zum System der Philosophie*, the first part of which (1833) is dedicated to logic and the second (1836) to ontology, and the latter in his *Metaphysik* (1835). But Werder's *Logik* was intended as a commentary on, and completion of, Hegel's logic; it did not get beyond a first fascicle (1841) [24] containing the doctrine of quality. Erdmann's *Grundriss der Logik und Metaphysik* (1841; 3rd ed. 1848) is a faithful, though rather elementary, exposition, with no attempt at reform except in terminology. Revisions with claims to originality were, however, produced by Fischer, Weissenborn[23] and Rosenkranz,[24] not to mention expositions in English and French, as well as one in Italian by Spaventa, of which more anon.

Fischer's work was particularly important. After an unsuccessful first attempt at revision,[25] he published in 1852 a *Logik und Metaphysik oder Wissenschaftslehre*, as a manual for his university lectures: a concise epitome of Hegel's doctrine lucidly expounded and illuminated in masterly fashion by placing it in its historical context. Fischer, following Werder,[26] had the merit of applying his mind to the difficulty brought to light by Trendelenburg's criticism and of suggesting the line to follow for the

discovery of the real mainspring of dialectic, which right from the first categories had escaped Hegel's lynx-eyed scrutiny. With a clear awareness of the *transcendentality* or, as he calls it, of the *critical* character of logic, which he therefore regards as theory of knowledge, or theory of the categories, he is quite sure about the *logical* nature of all the categories, i.e., the principle which we call that of the actuality of thought, under which the categories are categories of thinking and not of the content of thought. He is therefore careful to note at the outset [25] that being as a category is *logisches Sein* and thinking (*Denken*) itself which at its dawn says, *I am being*, and in this manner he tries to smooth the way to the discovery of the difference that was missing in Hegel's becoming and to the discovery of an active difference that does not need external reflection or an external opinion to state it. Being, he says, as an act of thought, is inherently contradictory, because thought, which is movement and determination, is extinguished in the stillness and indeterminacy of being. Being itself (= thought) accordingly explains the negation of being (= nonthought). And therefore being as being is nonbeing.

And the thought which tries to say: *I am being*, ought to say: *I am being that does not be.*

Fischer describes as an empty tautology and a sterile identity the stock deduction of becoming, reduced to the equation Being = Nothing, where the two opposites become two different names for the same thing; and as a falsification "of the spirit of Hegelian logic" the exposition given by Erdmann[27] and others who treated nonbeing as the pure equivalent of being. "Non-being," he said, "is the inherent contradiction of being; being contradicts itself, because it contradicts thought, and if being is not considered as an *act of thought* (as *thinking being*), no contradiction can be found in it, nor does it admit of any dialectical development. [26] If being were really that *vacuum* [as Hegel too had called it], non-being could never signify the *vacuum* over again, but would then be the *non-vacuum*, or in the *vacuum* the *horror vacui*, in other words the inherent contradiction of the vacuum."[28]

[27] Chapter VII. The reform of Hegelian dialectic essayed by Bertrando Spaventa.

Even in Fischer's exposition the skein is not untangled. Our own countryman Spaventa set out on the same path as Fischer in his essay of 1864: "The first categories of Hegel's logic,"[29] making profound observations to inject the animation of thought as thinking into the category of being; but

he did not at that time go beyond Fischer's position. Nor did he go beyond it in his *Logic and Metaphysics* (1867) where, condensing the studies of three years earlier, he deduced nonbeing as follows:[30]

> The only distinction, within which being is possible, is thinking itself: the *act* of thinking. Qua this distinction, I, as simple thinking, can just disregard myself as thinking, as doing the thinking, and simply *concentrate* on the thing thought of. The thing thought of, in this way, is being. By concentrating on being, I *do not distinguish myself* as the thought of being; I *extinguish myself* in being, I am being.
>
> This *self-extinguishing* of thinking in being is the *self-contradiction of being*. Being contradicts itself, because this self-extinguishing of thought in being—and it is only in this way that being is possible—is a non-extinguishing; [28] it is a *self-distinguishing*. To think unthinkingly, to disregard thinking, i.e. to concentrate on being, is to think; it is abstraction, and therefore thinking. Being is the *abstract*, and nothing but the abstract, the absolute abstract. To get the abstract, and nothing but the abstract, I disregard the abstracting, i.e. I am *abstracting*, absolute abstracting. Thus being, logical being, negates itself. First I was being (the abstract): now I am *non-being* (abstracting); I am *being that is non-being*.
>
> Non-being is not the erasure of being but more than simple being.

The flaw here—a flaw which is enough to destroy the dialectical character of thought—is the permanent duality of abstract and abstracting. For, granted that abstracting (= thinking) could and should disregard itself to extinguish itself in being, being would for that very reason come to be conceived as other than thinking, as its absolute negation; and the awakening of thought in the object in which it had been extinguished (*awareness*, as Werder had already called it) could be regarded only as a reflection extraneous to the object asserted by abstracting, and therefore as something that did not belong. If the self-extinguishing is genuine, the distinction is no longer conceivable (thought has committed suicide!); if thought, in the very act of asserting being, draws a distinction, it is not asserting the being that is the absence of any distinction. For the self-extinguishing and self-distinguishing to meet and coincide, thought would have to extinguish itself not in something else (being) but in itself. That is to say, being as well as nonbeing would have to be thinking. This is obviously both Fischer's and Spaventa's goal; but it is not yet reached.

Fischer, however, fell further and further back. In the expanded revision of his work, carried out in 1865,[31] [29] though continuing to insist that being is *Begriff* and *Denkakt*, he increasingly detaches it from the live *Denkakt*

which plays its part in the second phase of becoming. "As concept," he says, "(being) excludes all distinctions from itself; it is this concept only qua undistinguished unity. As object (of thought) it excludes the thinking activity, which is at the same time a distinguishing activity; and yet without this it is obviously impossible as concept. This is the contradiction inherent in the concept of being." Being is the object at one time, and the act of thought at another. It ought to be the act qua object.

Nevertheless, in 1865 Fischer maintains the position (without taking full advantage of it) that for the dialectic of being to be possible, being must be regarded as a pure concept, a category, and the category must be regarded as an act of thought; and he still declares that obliviousness to this is Hegel's notorious aberration (*Fehler*), "subsequently repeated in a gross form within his school": whereby being and nonbeing become two opposite names, not two opposite characteristics (*zwei entgegengesetzte Namen, nicht zwei entgegengesetzte Merkmale*). In 1901, however, in the course of his large-scale account of Hegel's doctrine, he first slavishly reproduces Hegel's deduction:

> Just as the last and highest categories contain all the preceding ones as superseded phases, so the first and lowest categories contain all the later ones in the form of undeveloped seeds. This thought which is comprised in being, but is still entirely undeveloped, and so without content, is equally pure and empty, equally being and nothing. Being and nothing are the same, because they are the expression of pure thought in its simplest form; being is its positive expression, nothing its negative one. Being is nothing, because there is nothing in it to know, since it is without content and vacuous. But being and nothing are not only identical but also different: being means that being is; nothing means [30] that it is still entirely without development and content.

Then he adds rather naively:

> Nothing can be plainer than this unity and this difference of being and non-being; we must necessarily pass from the concept of being, because there is nothing in it to know besides the absence of content and vacuity, to, and only to, the concept of nothing. These two logical determinations, being and nothing, are inseparate and inseparable: this inseparateness or inseparability, as Hegel points out expressly, constitutes their unity, which is therefore by no means sameness but implies difference and requires unification.[32]

Here, as anyone can see for himself, Fischer has lost his awareness of the difficulties that Hegelian dialectic, by affecting to analyze concepts, was bound to meet, and did meet, in the way of achieving this unification of the

different, which is just what constitutes dialectic.

Spaventa, on the other hand, far from going back on his recognition of Hegel's error and the need for a reform of the new dialectic, pressed on toward the goal, and it can be shown from an unpublished manuscript of his, which has recently been discovered, that he had even reached it, really establishing the principle of dialectic as *Wissenschaftslehre*. In his essay of 1864 he had already given considerably greater depth to Werder's and Fischer's view of the logical or mental actuality of the category. Being was for him still the thing thought of and not thinking: i.e., thinking as something thought of. But in this thing thought of he caught a glimpse of thinking, although the subject's becoming an object to itself still seemed more like a disability (a theme developed by another Italian Hegelian, Antonio Tari)[33] than the [31] exercise of the real power of thought.

> I think of being; and in so far as I think of being, I am thinking, I am non-being; in so far as I disregard myself as abstracting, I am abstracting. But I do not think of thinking, I do not think of it as thinking, I think of it once more only as something thought of. I cannot catch myself thinking or non-being; I catch myself as being: as thinking, I am being that is non-being. This saying: I am thinking, and not being able to catch myself thinking—this restlessness, this being which is restlessness itself—this is becoming. (I cannot catch the act as an act, as an effort, as, I would say, *agens*; when the act is caught, it is no longer an act, it is *actum*).[34]

What is seriously wrong here is this failure to recognize in the *actum* the very *actus* of the active effort, the inability to perceive the unity of thinking and what is thought of (the latter as the former itself). But at any rate it is acknowledged that we *need* to recognize the *actus* in the *actum*, in short to find out how what is thought of is thinking itself.

Spaventa sees the goal right from 1864, though he has no clear idea of the way to reach it.

> Why, then, is there the nay, non-being, negation? and why is it after and notwithstanding the yea, being, affirmation? Why is there not only the yea? Why is not everything being? This is the very problem of the world, the enigma of life, in its maximum logical simplicity.

To this question he replies as follows:

> What we know is that without thinking there would not be the nay, there would not be non-being; and the power which says nay, which vanquishes the invincible and splits the indivisible, i.e. being: which distinguishes and contrasts within being itself, qua itself, what is and what is not: the begetting or *doubling* of being; the power which

troubles the peaceful rest, the dark unbreakable sleep of absolute and unbegotten being, this infinite power, this great *prevaricator*,[35] is thinking. If there [32] were nothing but being, there would not be the nay. And when we get down to it, being itself, being on its lonesome, does not say: "being," it does not say "it is," it does not say anything. The "it is"—affirmation itself—is thinking, distinguishing, and concentrating being; it is simplifying being, reducing it to a point, and so doubling it.

Nor does thinking, this prevaricator, intervene in being *ab extra*. Spaventa already recognizes thinking as the inherent act of being that does not be:

> It should be noticed that thinking does this, it distinguishes, divides, negates, not because it finds, so to speak, a negative fact, and repeats, copies, observes and sees it in being; but thinking is the first to do this; this affair is *its own* doing and its doing *alone*; negation is its very own originality (a spark that flies out from itself).

This is an idea which he works out more precisely later on.

This negation makes being genuinely being, self-identical and self-fathoming. Being as this self-fathoming (nonbeing) is "thinking," Spaventa says, "as willing": i.e., the act of thought. He had an inkling of the enormous importance of this, concluding:

> Such is therefore for me the genuine meaning of non-being: such is the reform that has to be carried out in the concept of nothing, as found in Hegel's logic. If it is not carried out, Trendelenburg is right; and what is more, Hegelianism as a system of absolute spirituality—since it is nothing but this—is contradicted by the first categories of the logic itself: the foundation of the whole edifice.[36]

How far this definition of Hegelianism is historically defensible is open to question, since it leads straight to the rejection of the tripartite division of logos, nature, and spirit (a division which was accepted by Spaventa himself, who never fully realized the scope of this "reform"[37] proposed by him from 1864 onward); but without doubt it exactly fits the nature of the Hegelian quest, in which [33] spirit itself, like nature and all the logical categories, belongs to a single dialectical process, the truth of which is realized at the end of the process precisely as spirit. From 1864 onward Spaventa insisted on this point, which is a quite fundamental point of the crisis which is now taking place in the heart of Hegelianism; since he considered the objection (to which he was certainly exposed from the strict Hegelian point of view)[38] of the illegitimacy of thus introducing a spiritual category like that of thinking into logic, or rather into the first step of logos: where there ought not to be anything but pure objective thought, or the ob-

ject of pure thought; and he replied that Hegel's logic presupposes the *phenomenology* which, starting from immediate consciousness, reaches a stage or shape in which the *opposition* which marks *consciousness in general* ends and is reconciled: knowing (the subject) and the thing known (the object) have become the same; the subject, as knowing, is no longer a mere ego, a mere subjective operation, but the *act* of reality itself, and the object, as known, is no longer a mere object, a mere reality, but *mentality*; and *the true reality is mind.*[39]

Now, it is a moot point whether it is still possible to return from this position to the phenomenological position reestablished by Hegel in the philosophy of spirit, or whether the former is not a position to keep and maintain; but it is incontrovertible that this is the upshot of the phenomenology, and that after this it is more than allowable to consider the logical process as a process of the object of thought which is pure thought itself, or, as I would say, *pure act.*[40] And if Spaventa never abandoned this point of view, he should have been led to discover the logical unity of [34] opposites which is the secret of dialectic, bringing not only nonbeing but also being itself within this act of thinking.

In fact, in his Logic of 1867[41] he protested against the *strange claim* of certain Hegelians, or rather the majority of them, who would have it that "being moves all on its own, outside thinking and without thinking."

Did Spaventa ever return to the crucial problem of dialectic? Hitherto what we had was a short article of his written in 1882: "Examination of an objection of Teichmüller's to Hegel's Dialectic,"[42] where, combating Teichmüller, he spotlighted the impossibility of understanding Hegelian dialectic by setting on the one side the idea, considered accordingly as changeless, and on the other side thought, considered as a wholly subjective passage from one idea to another.

> In this way thought and idea are two *abstract* entities: the idea is there, without thought, whether thought contemplates it or not; and thought is there, without the idea, and travels at will from one idea to another, under its own power and not under that of the idea. So the motto is: stand back and take a look (*zusehen*); the object is there, and does not move; it is the eye which roves this way and that, to view it on every side. On this interpretation Hegel treats the idea as Herbart treats the *datum*: he just looks at it. Now this is just the mistake: to reduce the idea to a *datum*, when it is nothing like a datum; in this way it is deprived of its dialectical nature.

His rebuttal of such a misconception of dialectic ran as follows:

> The truth is, that thought and idea are what they are, in so far as they

> are *one*, though *distinct*; and each by itself alone is neither thought nor idea. The idea is such, in so far as it is thought of; and thought is thought, in so far as it thinks of the idea. This unity (and distinction) constitutes the changelessness and the dialectical character [35] of the idea...The idea being thought of stimulates, so to speak, the thought which thinks of it, and thought moves; and this movement, in so far as thought and idea are *one*, is a movement of the idea itself, and in this way, and only in this way, does thought pass to another idea.

This drives home in admirable fashion the unity of the categories (which are absolute reality itself) with thought, in other words the conception of the categories as activity; and one might expect the author to reduce being as well as nonbeing to this activity, thus identifying dialectic with the pure act of thinking. But it was not evident either from this or from other writings of Spaventa's known hitherto that he really had met the requirement implicit in his thought since the essay of 1864.

[36] Chapter VIII. New studies of Spaventa's.

The requirement that dialectic be conceived as the act of thinking was, however, met in certain unpublished memoranda of Spaventa's which have not previously been studied.[43] Their chronology is fixed exactly by the date of the Note on *Protagoras* (June-July 1880) published as an appendix to his book *Experience and Metaphysics*, since the author refers repeatedly to this Note in the memoranda displaying a continued lively interest in its subject matter, and by the date June 1881, which the author wrote in pencil in a marginal addition to these memoranda, when he went over them again.

The relevant matter consists of a lengthy digression upon which Spaventa embarked after setting out to discuss the mishmash [*guazzabuglio*] of materialism and Kantianism served up by A. Mayer, which was known to him through the criticisms of H. H. Studt (*Die materialistische Erkenntnisslehre*, Altona, 1869). The discussion led him to forget Mayer and jot down for his own benefit some "hairsplittings" [*arzigogoli*] of his on the problem of experience and then on the allied problem of relation. Pursuing this line of inquiry and lighting again on the Hegelian topic of *becoming*, he tried once more to settle the right way to understand this fundamental principle of the dialectic of thought. He did so by means of a scathing criticism of the [37] relevant explanations offered by Augusto Vera in his French translation of the *Encyclopaedia*—Vera was a colleague of his in the University of Naples, whose Hegelianism Spaventa had always held in low regard, although he had never spoken his mind on him in public.[44] This

criticism, which is printed as an appendix hereto,[45] shows the enormous distance between the facile orthodoxy of Vera, and of the numerous Veras following in the wake of Hegel as of any great thinker, and the brisk, unflagging criticism with which Spaventa endeavored up to the last years of his life to comprehend that "seed of a new life" which he espied in Hegel, as in all genuine philosophers: that seed "which is more than themselves and of which they are not conscious."[46] It shows also that Spaventa really did succeed in grasping the principle of idealism, as we understand it today, by doing away with the opposition between logic (*Denken*) and reflection (*Nachdenken*); in other words, by completely reducing the dialectical process, beginning with being itself, to the pure act of thinking: wherein lies the genuine elimination of the transcendent, and the validation of Hegelianism as transcendental dialectic, and therefore absolute immanentism.

As early as 1861 Spaventa focused his attention on the problem of Hegel's logic as elucidation of knowledge, and felt that the solution could lie only in the proof of the identity of logic with logos, in other words, of thought with the real, or, as he also put it in a vigorous phrase, in "mentalizing logic": a solution implying the identity of pure thinking with rethinking. But this identity was then something postulated rather than comprehended. For he said: "To me [38] Hegel's whole merit, here, lies in *proving the identity.* Has he really proved it? That is another question." And so he had a horror of the mechanical reproduction of Hegelianism. To repeat philosophers mechanically, he declared, is to crush the seed of life that is in them: "to stop its growing and becoming a new and more perfect system."[47]

He, himself, did not crush it. He gradually gave up the philosophy of nature and the philosophy of spirit, not as a result of a critical examination of them but by ceasing to feel any interest in those problems. His mind was entirely occupied and engrossed with the critique of knowledge,[48] which he had always championed as the new metaphysics, the *metaphysics of mind*; and on this track, as is now evident from this unpublished fragment, he saw quite clearly that with Hegel's deduction of the first categories "we are going outside logic."[49] For the truth is that the grave difficulty which has exercised the minds of commentators on Hegel's logic, and is still exercising them, disappears as soon as dialectic is coolly considered in the light in which Hegel, following Kant and Fichte, had so plainly placed it: in the actuality of thinking. If being is no longer an idea on its own but a category, and a category is a mental act, how can the act of mind be realized except as a unity of being and nonbeing, i.e., becoming? The act makes itself, *fit*, it comes into being. It is something, to the extent that it comes into being. It cannot be anything before it comes into being. When it is simply an act, it is not. A

thing or a Platonic idea is what it is: but a *cogitatum* as *cogitatio*, as *ipsum intelligere* (*act*), makes itself what it is: its being consists in self-realization. The inseparability of being and nonbeing on which Hegel insisted is an essential factor of the act [39] of thinking: but it is only one factor, which is complemented by the dynamic factor on which Spaventa insists here, pointing out that being itself negates itself in nonbeing, by thinking.[50] It was through the radical criticism of the distinction between *Denken* and *Nachdenken* that he managed to come upon this dynamic factor inherent in being.

Was Spaventa aware of the scope of this discovery of his? The very obscurity of his exposition suggests that he was not. Above all, he does not see (and this accounts for the obscurity) the singular character of dialectical deduction, which is not analytical, and does not start from concepts, because concepts presuppose the act of thinking. which is just to say, dialectic. It is therefore not a demonstration. It is a mistake (a confusion of the new dialectic with the old) to begin by asserting being and then hunt around for the contradiction that is to set it in motion. Contradiction presupposes identity; and this category has no place in transcendental dialectic. To contradict itself being would have to exist, and it exists as becoming: i.e., it does not exist. To search out the contradiction is to peg being, i.e., to falsify it (to go outside mental logical actuality). Therefore the concept of the outcome is fallacious, as was pointed out before. The pure act of thinking is eternal.

This, however, is the path along which we have to make our way after leaving Spaventa; his is the honor of having led us to the place where it begins.

Notes

[1]*Sophist*, 253c; *Republic*, vii, 532.

[[2]*De Interpretatione*, 16a10-17a6; *De Anima* 430a27-b3.] Cf. Plato, *Sophist*, 259e: δια γαρ την αλληλων των ειδων συμπλοκην ο λογος γεγονεν ημιν [For it is due to the interweaving of ideas with each other that we have got the power of discourse.]*

[3]*Ethica*, part II, def. 3 explanation: "*Conceptus actionem mentis exprimere videtur*," unlike *perceptio*, which "*indicare videtur, mentem ab obiecto pati*."

[[4]An echo of Pindar, *Pythian Odes*, viii, 95.]

*Square brackets indicate notes by the translator.

[[5]The "varietà" of the 1954 edition seems preferable to the "vanità" of the 1923 edition (Principato, Messina). See Gentile's posthumous *History of Philosophy, Opere,* p. 222.]

[[6]*Republic*, vii, 514a-517c.]

[[7]*Fragments*, 12, 30, 53, 91. Gentile actually makes Heraclitus call war the "madre" of all things, but this is just the conventional Italian rendering.]

[[8]According to Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, ii, 80-224, the primary motions of the atoms are the perpendicular fall and the slight swerve that leads to collisions and rebounds. But this was an Epicurean "correction" of the original view of Leucippus and Democritus that the motion of the atoms was completely *random*.]

[[9]This second query given in the edition of 1923 is omitted from the edition of 1954.]

[10]See my essay, "The Act of Thinking as Pure Act" [*Opere*, xxvii, pp. 183-95.]

[11]*Wissenschaft der Logik*, second edition, Vol. I, p. 104 [Miller, p. 106]

[12]*Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 72-74 [Miller, pp. 82-83].

[13]*Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 87 [Miller, p. 93].

[14]*Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 102-03 [Miller, pp. 105-06].

[15][Becoming is a mercurial restlessness which subsides into a motionless result.] *Ibid.*, p. 103 [Miller, p. 106]. Cf. *Encyclopaedia*, § 89. The result needs to be pegged, says Hegel; but does not *pegging* a result mean going outside the category as transcendental thought?

[16]*Encyclopaedia*, § 88.

[17]*Meinung*, which Croce translates by "intenzione," illuminating shrewdly, but somewhat arbitrarily, the obscurity of this *Meinung* of Hegel's, which it would perhaps be better to leave in its original vagueness.

[18]*Wissenschaft der Logik*[2], Vol. I, p. 85 [Miller, p. 92].

[19]*Logische Untersuchungen*, Berlin, 1840, Vol. I, pp. 25 ff.

[20]*Wissenschaft der Logik*[2], Vol. I, pp. 85-86 [Miller, p. 92].

[[21]The 1954 edition wrongly has "opposizione" for the "esposizione" (= *Darstellung*) of the 1923 edition.]

[22]Some parts of this history—so far as concerns the Italian critics and interpreters of Hegel—are included in my *Origins of Contemporary Philosophy in Italy*, Vol. III, Part 1, pp. 209-11, 367-71; and Part 2, pp. 162 ff. [*Opere*, xxxiii, p. 201-03, 354-57; and xxxiv, pp. 167 ff.].

[23]*Logik und Metaphysik*, Halle, 1850-1851.

[24]*Wissenschaft der logischen Idee* in 2 vol., Königsberg, 1858-1859. The first contains the *Logik und Ideenlehre*, the second the *Metaphysik*.

[25]*Grundzüge des Systems der Philosophie als einer Encyklopädie*, 1848; in the first part he expounded logic both as objective logic (or doctrine of the categories) and as subjective logic (or doctrine of the concept).

[26]Whose work I have not managed to see and know only through Fischer and Spaventa.

[27]The following is Erdmann's exposition in his *Grundriss der Logik und Metaphysik*[3], Halle, 1848, § 30: "But if being is not marked by any differentiation, then there is nothing to be distinguished in it, and it is therefore utter absence of content, the absolute vacuum, which is

conceived as quite as indeterminate and pure as being was previously. More closely regarded, therefore, being proves to be *pure negation*. A negation which we call *nothing*, nonbeing, or, perhaps better, *no*. Hence the expression: being is being and nothing *more*, contains unwittingly the correct and exact relation."

[28]*Logik und Metaphysik*, Stuttgart, 1852, § 29.

[29]Published in the *Atti della R. Accademia delle scienze morali e politiche di Napoli*, Vol. 1 1864, pp. 123-85; reprinted in *Scritti filosofici*, ed. G. Gentile, Naples, Morano, 1900, pp. 185 ff. It was reviewed by C. L. Michelet in *Gedanke*, V, 1864, 114-17.

[30]*Logica e Metafisica*, new edition with the addition of unpublished matter, ed. G. Gentile, Bari, Laterza, 1911, pp. 166-67.

[31]*System der Logik und Metaphysik*[2], Heidelberg, 1865 (since reprinted by the *Kantgesellschaft): see* § *77*.

[32]*Geschichte der neuern Philosophie*, Bd. VIII; *Hegels Leben*, *Werke und Lehre*, Heidelberg, 1901, pp. 448-49.

[33]On Tari, see my *Origins*, Vol. III, Part 2, pp. 28-37 [*Opere*, xxxiv, pp. 27-36].

[34]*Scritti filosofici*, p. 199.

[[35]I.e., the power that palters with us in a double sense.]

[36]*Scritti filosofici*, pp. 215-17.

[37]Compare *Principii di etica*, 1867, ed. G. Gentile, pp. 45-57.

[38]B. Croce, *Critica*, X, 1912, p. 309.

[39]*Scritti filosofici*, p. 235-36.

[40]Compare "The act of thinking as pure act" [*Opere*, xxvii, pp. 183-95].

[41]*Logica e metafisica*, p. 176.

[42]Published posthumously in 1884; reprinted in *Scritti filosofici*, pp. 253-76.

[43]Kindly made available to me by my friend the late Professor Sebastiano Maturi.

[44]See in this connection my essay on Vera in the *Origins of Contemporary Philosophy in Italy*, Vol. III, Part 1, p. 346 [*Opere*, xxxiii, p. 261].

[[45]Gentile reprinted the whole "Unpublished fragment of Bertrando Spaventa" as an appendix to this essay. It is not here translated. See note 49.]

[46]*Italian Philosophy in its Relations with the Philosophy of Europe*, 1861, ed. G. Gentile, Bari, Laterza, 1908, p. 238.

[47]*Op. cit.*, p. 237.

[48]"It is my war-horse," he told a pupil of his: D. Jaja, *Sentire e pensare*, Naples, 1886, p. 1. [The expression *caval di battaglia* signifies metaphorically a performer's favorite part or piece.]

[[49]Reprinted in Gentile, *Opere*, xxvii, pp. 40-65. The reference is to p. 65. Apropos of Hegel's appeal to opinion, Spaventa allows that if you ask somebody whether being or nonbeing are the same or different, he will reply forcefully that they are different. "But is there any difference between being and nothing in our set-up, the ones you call the indeterminate? No, a thousand times, no; but only between those that are the objects of *opinion*, not between those that are the objects of *thought*. When you say: the difference is mere opinion, you do not see that you are dragging the *difference* in from outside. It is a difference that *does not belong*, and

therefore is not an object of *thought*. And, I repeat, you are altering the set-up; you are not *thinking* even of being and nonbeing as the indeterminate. You are going outside Logic."]

[[50]On Spaventa's way of thinking, "the *difference* of being and nothing follows immediately from the very *identity*; since *nonbeing* is the act of being," *Opere complete*, xxvii, p. 64.]