

## Rorty on *Hegel* on the Mind in History

Paul Redding

In an autobiographical essay Richard Rorty recounted an early phase of his intellectual life in which he became disillusioned with the Platonist “quest for certainty” that he had harboured up to that time.

The more philosophers I read, the clearer it seemed that each could carry their views back to first principles which were incompatible with the first principles of their opponents, and that none of them ever got to that fabled place ‘beyond hypotheses’. There seemed to be nothing like a neutral standpoint from which these alternative first principles could be evaluated. But if there were no such standpoint, then the whole idea of ‘rational certainty’ and the whole Socratic-Platonic idea of replacing passion by reason, seemed not to make much sense. (Rorty, 1999, 10)<sup>1</sup>

As this self-narrative continues, we learn how his discovery of Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* had played a crucial role in his continuing to pursue life in a discipline otherwise threatened with meaninglessness.<sup>2</sup> The message he took from this work was that “granted that philosophy is just a matter of out-re-describing the last philosopher, the cunning of reason can make use even of this sort of competition. It can use it to weave the conceptual fabric of a freer, better, more just society” (Rorty 1999, 11). For Rorty, Hegel’s masterpiece of re-description had become linked to another, Proust’s *Remembrance of Things Past*. Together they formed

the two greatest achievements of the species to which I belonged... It was the cheerful commitment to irreducible temporality which Hegel and Proust shared – the specifically anti-Platonic element in their work – that seemed so wonderful. They both seemed able to weave everything they encountered into a narrative without asking that that narrative have a moral, and without asking how that narrative would appear under the aspect of eternity. (Rorty 1999: 11)

Not surprisingly it was Proust’s *aesthetic* application of re-description that provided the most concrete example of what this freedom achieved through

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<sup>1</sup> Rorty describes his disillusion as climaxing around the time he went to Yale to start a PhD in 1952.

<sup>2</sup> Rorty’s “discovery” of Hegel also seems to have taken place in the early 1950s (Gross 2008, 112).

redescription amounts to. As he described Proust's literary revolution elsewhere, Proust had wanted

to free himself from the descriptions of himself offered by the people he had met... His method of freeing himself from those people – of becoming autonomous – was to redescribe the people who had described him. ... He redescribed them as being as much a product of others' attitudes toward them as Proust himself was a product of their attitudes toward him. (Rorty 1989: 102)<sup>3</sup>

Rorty's parallel vision of Hegel as providing a philosophical form of this redescriptive path to freedom and thereby as providing a philosophical narrative *without* a "moral" or any "aspect of eternity" is one that, of course, stands in stark contrast to the usual picture of Hegel's philosophy. Was it not Hegel who wanted to reinstate "the Absolute" as the only real object of metaphysical inquiry, resulting in the "Absolute Knowing" in which *The Phenomenology of Spirit* itself terminates? And wasn't "the Absolute" simply an alias for *God*—a God whose "march" in the world can be seen in the development of the state into its modern form? (Hegel 1991, §258 add.) But of course Rorty was not making claims to historical accuracy here. As is explicit elsewhere, the thinker he often refers to as "Hegel" is a product of his own "redescriptive" narrative, and his redescription is carried out in the pragmatist spirit of Dewey who had earlier wanted to "naturalize" and "de-absolutize" Hegelian ideas, creating a type of synthesis of Hegel's historicism and Darwin's naturalism (Rorty 1998, 77–8 & ch. 15). Rorty appears to have assumed that the *actual, historical* Hegel did in fact pursue those traditional metaphysical aspirations from which he himself wanted to release philosophy,<sup>4</sup> but he clearly thinks that there is much in Hegel that can be capitalized upon for this project. Rorty cites Charles Taylor's *Hegel* (Taylor 1975) in which, by focussing on what Hegel had in common with his "expressivist" contemporaries like Herder and Humboldt, Taylor had brought Hegel into alignment with ideas about the relation of thought and language popular in the third quarter of the twentieth century. But behind this one might also discern a vision of Hegel able to be rescued from Absolute Idealism in the approach of Alfred North Whitehead, a focus of Rorty's interest in the early parts of his career as an aspiring philosopher.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Rorty was to pursue this theme also in relation to Harold Bloom's thesis of the "anxiety of influence" of creative artists. Rorty 1989, ch. 2.

<sup>4</sup> It might be argued here that with his radically redescriptivist stance, Rorty simply could not maintain a distinction between the "actual" Hegel and any particular description. The distinction might then be redrawn between Rorty's description of Hegel's thought and another description—*Hegel's own*.

<sup>5</sup> In the Preface to his *Process in Reality*, Whitehead asks whether or not his approach to cosmology there might not be a "transformation of some main doctrines of Absolute Idealism onto a Realistic basis". (Whitehead 1978, viii). David Hall is

In fact, Rorty's own "cheerful" take on Hegel was soon to align his approach with a number of Hegel interpreters who, stressing similar sorts of considerations, were to contest even the *historical* accuracy of the traditional "metaphysical" view of Hegel Rorty seems to assume,<sup>6</sup> making Rorty's *re*-description closer to what they were to think of as just *description* of the real thing. Along with this, the sorts of elements from contemporary analytic philosophy that Rorty brought together in his naturalized Hegel were to be developed in systematic form into an interpretation broadly along these lines by his former dissertation advisee, Robert Brandom (2009, Part 1).

In this essay I take up aspects of Rorty's account of Hegel in the light of such developments. One notion in particular that has been seized upon by revisionist Hegelians in the effort to free Hegel from the traditional interpretation has been the idea of "recognition" that plays a central role in Hegel's anti-Cartesian account of the capacity for human intentionality on the one hand and the constitution of "objective spirit" [*objektiver Geist*] on the other. In contrast to Hegel's suggestive concept of recognition, Rorty's somewhat "flatter" and one-sided "redescriptivist" analogue, I will suggest, can be seen as having been held captive by influences from his own "analytic" past, even when he had self-consciously broken with this past. In particular, this persisting feature of Rorty's thought can be seen as derived from his particular way of appropriating the "linguistic turn" of the analytic movement when he first turned to analysis early in his philosophical career. Moreover, it is what had also resulted in him having held a radically "eliminativist" position in philosophy of mind in the early 1960s, an attitude to the mind that melded seamlessly into his advocacy of Proustian redescriptivism. Finally, I will raise the question of whether or not something *more* might be saved from Hegel's original notion from within the broader analytic field than Rorty's particular approach had allowed.

## 1. Rortarian Redescription and Hegelian Recognition

When discussing Proust's technique of disarming the oppressive descriptions that others made of him by redescribing *them*, Rorty notes Proust's motivation: "He dreaded being, in Sartre's phrase, turned into a thing by the eye of the other." This reference to Sartre provides a direct link to Hegel *via* Sartre's appeal in *Being and Nothingness* to Hegel's dialectic of "master and slave" in Chapter 4 of *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Sartre had interpreted Hegel in the light of Alexandre Kojève's controversial account of the "struggle for recognition" (Sartre 1956, Kojève

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one of the few commentators on Rorty to stress the continuing influence of Whitehead's "aesthetic pluralism" in Rorty's philosophy in Hall 1993, ch. 2.

<sup>6</sup> For example, Pippin 1989, Pinkard 1994, Redding 1996. For an overview of the field of contemporary Hegel interpretation see Redding 2015.

1969)—a struggle motivated by a purported “desire for recognition” that he took to be fundamental to the human species.<sup>7</sup>

Rorty had been obviously attracted to the strongly anti-Cartesian dimensions of Hegel’s account of “Anerkennung” in which mindedness is treated not as a fixed human capacity but as having a *history* in virtue of being dependent upon historically variable forms of social interaction. Like Kant, Hegel had thought of one’s capacity to be *consciously aware* of an external world of objects as requiring the reflexivity of *self-consciousness*, but Hegel went beyond Kant by expanding on an idea found in Fichte that made an individual’s self-consciousness dependent of their recognition (or acknowledgment—*Anerkennung*) of some *other* actual self-conscious subject’s recognition of *them*. The master-slave scenario sketched in the *Phenomenology*’s Chapter 4 had provided perhaps the simplest instantiation of a dynamic of recognition that would be expressed elsewhere in other more complex forms, but even in this initial parable of a simple form of life constituted by a single master and his slave, the relations involved are complex and difficult to unravel. Moreover, Hegel nowhere developed anything like a systematic theory of this very suggestive, but equally confusing, idea.

The goal of the figure of recognition in Hegel is ultimately to reconcile the spurious duality of the subjective and objective dimensions of human lives, the apparent dichotomy between the freedom each of us possess *qua* rational mind and the causal dependencies to which one belongs *qua* physically located body. Hegel’s starting point in Chapter 4 concerns the illusions of “self-certainty”: contra Descartes, he tries to show that *no* subject can be immediately aware of itself *as* a subject. A subject can only grasp its own subjecthood indirectly in the recognition of *another* who recognizes the subjecthood of the first. But to be a vehicle for another’s recognition, the first subject must have an *objective* presence for the other and, similarly, that other must have an objective presence for the first. An immediate consequence of this is that I can only achieve a sense of my status *as* an independent subject, which on the idealist account is a necessary condition of *being* an independent subject, by taking on board the fact that I inescapably belong to the world of causally related and so dependent beings. In the master-slave dialectic, this is what the master, the exemplar of immediate self-certainty, *fails* to do. It had been the slave’s initial *acceptance* of servitude and objectivity that paradoxically allowed him to *escape that condition* and achieve an independence and rationality denied to the master. The master’s “recognition” of the slave *as* a slave, and so as lacking independence, *contradicts* the essential reciprocity of recognition itself, since one can only properly get *recognition* of one’s independence from another *construed as*

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<sup>7</sup> I have criticized the Kojèvean interpretation of Hegel on which this is based in Redding 1996, 119–22.

independent. Rorty's way of dealing with these matters, I will suggest, seems unable to capture this insight.

Part of the problems facing an Hegelian attempt to unravel these complex relations stems from the fact that Hegel had used the dichotomous vocabularies of "subjects" and "objects", "dependence" and "independence" and so on, much in the way they are used above, in the endeavour to go *beyond* such a framework. Thus we easily fall into somewhat loose talk about "inter-subjective" relations as if they are relations *between* existing embodied subjects, at the same time as we deny that those relations can be thought as *relating* identifiable *relata*, because they are *constitutive* of those *relata*.<sup>8</sup> In places Hegel's hints about the deep role played by the fact of one's belonging to a linguistic community as a condition of the capacity for mindedness, hints that had been taken up by Taylor and others and illuminated in the sort of *language-games-and-forms-of-life* approach of the later Wittgenstein, especially. This seems to promise an approach that gets beyond talk the quasi-Cartesian talk of "subjects" and "objects", but Hegel nowhere develops these hints. Rorty's response to this is wholesale, in that he attempts to by-pass the entire framework of subjects and objects, and to do so on the basis of a particular appropriation of the "linguistic turn" of twentieth-century analytic philosophy. In this approach, while he does appeal to the later Wittgenstein, a more definite source of influence seems to have been, first, the work of Wilfrid Sellars, and later, that of W. V. O. Quine and Donald Davidson. However, even before his turn to "analytic philosophy" in the early 1960s, Rorty had clearly formed an idea of the need to get beyond the language of subjects and objects from his study of Alfred North Whitehead.

Rorty's initial professional training had not been as an analytic philosopher: rather, as both a masters candidate at Chicago, and a graduate student at Yale, his main teachers were advocates of Whitehead's speculative philosophy, and his work had engaged to some extent with Whiteheadian ideas (Gross 2008, chs 4&5). After the hugely influential work co-authored with Bertrand Russell, *Principia Mathematica*, Whitehead, who was originally a mathematician, had turned to philosophy and pursued metaphysical ambitions on a truly Hegelian scale. To some American philosophers in the 1950s, Whitehead had come to be regarded as a bastion of "speculative" metaphysics against the incursion of positivistic versions of the earlier form of analysis introduced by *Principia Mathematica* brought to the US by European logical positivists seeking refuge from the rise of Nazism. A few years out of his doctorate, however, Rorty was taking "the linguistic turn" seriously, replacing Whiteheadian ideas with an approach derived from Sellars. These relations were

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<sup>8</sup> This is, I think, behind the common assumption shared by Rorty that Hegel's metaphysics is committed to an end point at which "subject" and "object" eventually achieve identity. The theory of recognition, however, has, by this time, essentially changed the meaning of these two concepts beyond recognition.

complex, however, as he seemed to be spurred by the prospect of developing ideas he saw as being held in common by these seemingly very different thinkers.

In *Process and Reality*, Whitehead had proposed a strikingly simple but powerful diagnosis of the problems of modern philosophy. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, a new “subjectivist” epistemological principle had been introduced into philosophy in line with the revolution within physics. But those committed to this “principle of subjectivity” had retained the philosophical categories of substance and property from the earlier Aristotelian metaphysics. Not only were the objects *known* still conceived in the traditional Aristotelian way, as in Locke, for example, the modern notion of the knowing subject had itself been built upon the category of a substance, albeit an immaterial one, the properties of which were its *representational states*. This produced an incommensurable set of beliefs and whole philosophical project, according to Whitehead, had to be rethought, his own processual “philosophy of organism” as set out in *Process and Reality* being just such an attempt. Rorty’s later critique of the trope of the mind as a “mirror of nature” might be seen as an extension of Whitehead’s critique, but without the possibility of Whitehead’s *positive* answer. Rorty’s new alternative was seen as allowed by the “linguistic turn”.<sup>9</sup>

In the early 1960s, as a junior faculty member in the philosophy department at Princeton, Rorty became identified as the proponent of a radical “eliminative materialist” philosophy of mind.<sup>10</sup> The linguistic turn recapitulated Whitehead’s critique: knowledge was not to be thought of as the mind’s representation of external “objects”, that is, substances qualified by particular properties. But without this, the modern notion of *mind* had no real role to play. Rorty’s starting point was behaviouristic: a subject’s “mental states” were to be understood in terms of that subject’s dispositions to act, including dispositions to utter sentences. While the *meaningfulness* of such sentences had to be accounted for, this was to be conceived *not* because they expressed inner “thoughts”, but because they were subject to further linguistic acts, those of metalinguistic interpretation conceived as an interpreter’s translation of the subject’s utterance into their own language.

From this analysis of verbal behaviour, radically eliminative materialist consequences for the mental were drawn. While typically materialists had been challenged to explain various features of mindedness that were taken to be fundamental—the “what it is like” of phenomenal consciousness, or the “aboutness” of intentional states, for example—Rorty argued that there was no distinctive “mark of the mental” that had to be accounted for by the interpreter. By the time of his 1979

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<sup>9</sup> In “The Subjective Principle and the Linguistic Turn” Rorty takes Whitehead’s solution to rely upon a type of knowledge that is not expressible in language. Rorty was later to edit a book (Rorty 1967) on the methodological linguistic turn in philosophy.

<sup>10</sup> See especially the essays making up chapters 6, 8 and 10 of Rorty 2014.

*Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, the mind had simply become an “invention” that we could do without.<sup>11</sup>

Relieved of its commitment to an ontology that includes intentional subjects, the Kovèvean-Hegelian “struggle for recognition” becomes a cultural struggle between speaking bodies over who can *impose* the norms of speaking on others—a struggle to mould the categorical framework or vocabulary within which claims of speaking *correctly* will be assessed. And if “getting it right” here consists simply in adherence to the norms of the existing vocabulary, then the imposition of a *new* vocabulary cannot be assessed in relation to those pre-existing standards of correctness. This will, of course, raise problems for the conceptions of the *truth* of claims made *across* vocabularies, leading Rorty to face accusations of an indefensible relativism. In comparison to Hegel, the achievement of *freedom* through Proustian redescription would seem not to be accompanied by the achievement of *truth*. Here, however, I want to keep the focus on truth about the psychological.

Applied in a Proustian way to the description of the attitudes of others, it would seem that there could be *no genuine gap* between the intentions ascribed to others, and any “facts” of the mental lives of those to whom intentions are being ascribed—there are only the facts of the other’s interpretable *expressions*. And the same will be said to one’s own self-attributions, as here there can be no *non-linguistically formed* material which one’s own descriptions will attempt to capture. In a struggle between incommensurable mutual interpretations, then, neither of the antagonists could appeal to the *facts* of their states of mind against which the interpretations of others might be measured. The resolution of these struggles would seem to only result in a normative situation based on nothing more than “victor’s justice”.

Just as Rorty’s account of Hegel is in the pragmatist spirit of Dewey, he links the idea of Proustian redescription to Dewey as well. Imposing a new vocabulary is an aspect of the function of “breaking the crust of convention”. Thus, in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, for example, the *point* of the “edifying” philosophy he there promotes is described as that of “perform[ing] the social function which Dewey called ‘breaking the crust of convention,’ preventing man from deluding himself with the notion that he knows himself, or anything else, except under optional descriptions” (Rorty 1980, 379). That knowledge of oneself (“or anything else”) is always knowledge *under a description*, is an expression of Sellars’s psychological nominalism, “the denial that there is any awareness of logical space prior to, or independent of, the acquisition of a language” (Sellars 1997, 66). But that such descriptions are always “optional”, suggests something stronger. One’s acceptance of *any description* over another is optional because the new description brings with it the

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<sup>11</sup> Thus the opening chapters are entitled “The Invention of the Mind” and “Persons without Minds”.

criteria under which both are to be judged: there is no independent categorical framework within which each description can be assessed.

Rorty's rejection of the relevance of intentionality (with a "t") is accompanied by a similar dismissal, at a linguistic level, of the relevance of intensionality (with an "s"), leaving him happy to accept the strongly *extensionalist* meta-logical assumptions of Quine and Davidson. Again this attitude is rooted in his work of his early analytic period as expressed in the paper "Empiricism, Extensionalism, and Reductionism", from 1963. There Rorty engaged with the thesis of extensionalism, the thesis, as he describes it, that "one can construct a language (a) which is adequate to express any given body of knowledge about observable fact, and (b) in which predicates which apply to all and only the same things can be substituted for each other *salva veritate*" (Rorty 2014, 97). Extensionalism had "stirred the hearts" of the logical empiricists of earlier decades, but recently, he notes, had fallen into disrepute, and among the problem areas facing extensionalism were the "referentially opaque" description of mental states as traditionally conceived. In this sense, intentional contexts in a linguistic setting are like other "modal" ones. If the name "Tully" refers to the same person as does "Cicero", then all occurrences of "Tully" should, on the extensionalist thesis, be able to be replaced with "Cicero" without change of truth value. But, as Rorty points out using the example from Quine, the substitution of "Tully" for "Cicero" in "Philip believed Cicero denounced Cataline" may fail "because Philip does not know that Tully and Cicero are the same man" (Rorty 2014, 99).

In this paper, however, Rorty, suggests the extensionalist thesis can be saved by being "disentangled" from the empiricist and the reductionist theses with which it had been associated: "the confusion between the theses of extensionalism and of reductionism is responsible for most of the contemporary distrust of extensionalism" (Rorty 2014, 96). One path beyond the problems of "intensional contexts" is to "distinguish carefully enough between things, their names, names of these names, and so forth" (Rorty 2014, 99). This sounds very much like the path taken by the likes of Tarski and Carnap with their object language–metalanguage distinction, and Rorty will appropriate this within a framework he takes from Sellars and Davidson.<sup>12</sup>

This early endorsement of extensionalism, I suggest, sets the tone for his later Proustian redescriptionist approach to mental states, which is dependent upon his subsequent "elimination" of intentionality as a "mark of the mental". Mental talk can, one way or the other, be eliminated without loss by the use of a new vocabulary, as long as the new vocabulary is itself thought of as in principle similarly eliminable by some other. Just as talk of phlogiston had been eliminated by a new vocabulary

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<sup>12</sup> In the later "Davidson between Wittgenstein and Tarski" (Rorty 1997), Rorty is less concerned with Davidson's extensionalism, but his treatment of the intentional, and the "intensional", throughout this period seems just as accepting of the default extensionalism that he had earlier defended.



containing terms like oxygen and oxidization, so to can be intentional terms, like “believe” or “desire”, thought of as naming “internal” acts.<sup>13</sup> But Quine’s eliminativist approach to “intensional” contexts like modal and doxastic ones was at the time being challenged from *within* the linguistic turn by a host of critics arguing that such “modal” phenomena were ineliminable. In fact, I suggest that this turn within the analytic framework opened the space for approaches to mindedness from the later Wittgenstein closer to that found in Hegel himself, approaches largely ignored by Rorty. Once more, I want to return to the seminal paper from Rorty’s early career in which he chose Sellars over Whitehead.

## 2. Alternate Paths from Whitehead – Egocentricity without metaphysical egos.

At the conclusion of “The Subjectivist Principle and the Linguistic Turn” comparing Whitehead’s and Sellars’s responses to the dilemma caused by the modern conception of the mind as an immaterial substance with representational properties, Rorty ends with a brief comparison between these two positions. Both acknowledge the insight that all human judgments are perspectival, to be made from a particular point of view, but both attempt to make this starting-point compatible with the realist assumption that such judgments are nevertheless judgments about a mind-independent world. Nevertheless, Whitehead and Sellars go about this in different ways, and the limitations of Whitehead’s position stems from the fact that it involves the postulation of entities that cannot be given expression in public language.

Whitehead’s critique of the traditional ontological idea of an “unrepeatable” substance and its “repeatable” properties that gets incorporated into, but is ultimately incompatible with, the modern subjective condition of knowledge had required him “to construct a new category of entities – entities which can only be described in token-reflexive terms” (Rorty 2014, \*). This was the category of “actual entity” or “actual occasion”. Actual entities are, as successors to Lockean substances, “unrepeatables”, and are “the final real things of which the world is made up” (Whitehead 1978, \*). But actual entities, unlike traditional substances, cannot be conceived of as independent of experience; rather they are “drops of experience, complex and interdependent” (Whitehead 1978, \*). This means that actual entities are only unrepeatables when *existing in the present*, that temporal location at which the experiencing subject is located. When some *present* entity *becomes* a past one, it ceases to exist as such. As an object of memory rather than immediate experience, it

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<sup>13</sup> Thus Rorty sees no difference between the ways new theories or paradigms can replace old, and the way new ways of talking about another’s mental states can replace their original vocabulary.

must be treated as a complex of abstract *repeatables*, Whiteheadian analogues of traditionally conceived properties. Rorty summarises:

Whitehead (and here he was at one with the idealists) thought that the notion that there were unrepeatable and knowable entities could be saved from Lockean lines of argument only by disentangling the notion of “being unrepeatable” from that of “being a substrate of repeatables,” identifying the former notion with that of “being an experience”, and conceiving of the latter as an abstraction from the former. But in order to abide (as the idealists did not) by the insistence of common sense that, in every experience, there is a difference between the experience itself and the object of this experience, and that the latter can exist independently of the former, Whitehead had to find a new model of the relation between experience and the object of experience. (Rorty 2014, 73)

Whitehead’s peculiar type of ego-centric version of realist metaphysics, in which an entity is only fully real *in the present* is, Rorty suggests, hopeless as a way beyond traditional ontology.

For to make sense of “entity which *logically* can exist only at time *t*”, one needs to give a sense to the notion of an entity whose temporal location is not a mere “accident” of it, but is essential to it – so that the statement “A is at time *t*” is a necessary truth about A. Now it may be thought that this notion is just unintelligible. It does seem that our grammar is such that if we say “A is at time *t<sub>i</sub>*” we may also say “It is a logical possibility that A could have been at time *t<sub>j</sub>*”. The contingency of statements about temporal locations seems to be part of the very fabric of temporal discourse. (Rorty 2014, 75)

Rorty notes that there is only “one sort of expression which is a necessary truth about the temporal location of a concrete entity: ‘I am here now’ *is* a necessary truth about me” (Rorty 2014, 75), and to the extent that the “I” of “I am here now” provides a model for a Whiteheadian “actual entity”, Rorty seems to be rehearsing yet again a critique that Hegel, in Chapter 4 of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, had directed to the self-contradictory stance of “self-certainty”. Hegel’s exemplification of this stance with the Fichtean formula “I = I” has something of the same flavour as Rorty’s description of this Whiteheadian attempt at foundational truth. Moreover, Rorty points out that in order to be communicable, statements about such entities, even where those statements contain such ego-centric reflexive terms such as “my”, “now”, etc., need to employ *non-indexical* ways of characterising the objects they are about. If Whitehead’s unrepeatable actual entities “are characterizable in terms of ordinary speech at all, [they] must be characterized as entities which can only be referred to by expressions of the form ‘my ... now’, where ‘...’ is replaced by expressions of the

form “experienced togetherness of —, —, —, etc.’ These latter blanks, it must be noted, are filled in *not* with token-reflexive expressions, but with names of past, and thereby repeatable, actual entities” (Rorty 2014, 75).

As in Hegel, an attempt of a knowing subject to express their own mental contents necessarily brings in reference to external, worldly items—that is, necessarily involves *objectification*. Any immediate token-reflexive “feelings” that are in the process of “conrescence” into the actual entity in its *presentness* must also be able to be identified with the *non-present* abstract properties of *past* things. They are “filled in”, he goes on, “with expressions which stand to ‘my ... now’ as ‘Smith was at spot *s* at time *t*’ stands to ‘I am here now’ (uttered by Smith at *s* at *t*)” (Rorty 2014, 75).

But Rorty’s extensionalist assumptions in his writings of the 1960s clearly flatten the more linguistically complex conception of recognition that can be discerned in Hegel. The linguistic expressions of all apparently ego-reflexive intentional states for Rorty are to be thought of as redescribable in an extensionally conceived metalanguage. That the sentence tokens of the object language are “meaningful” is not to be taken in the sense that they are expressive of the speaker’s mental states. All that is required for a sentence to be meaningful is that (1) occurrences of the token can be coordinated with the subject’s non-linguistic behaviour and (2) that it can be translated into a sentence of the interpreter’s language. This was to be linked by Rorty in the early 1970s to Davidson’s approach of the “field-linguist’s” radical interpretation of the utterances of members of some exotic tribe,<sup>14</sup> but the basics of the approach resting on the idea of translation into a sentence of an extensional metalanguage Rorty had learned from Sellars in the early 1960s, and the approaches of both Sellars and Davidson start from Tarski’s account of “truth in a language”. Thus, quoting Sellars, we take sentences of the form “‘...’ means —” as “the core of a unique mode of discourse which is distinct from the description and explanation of empirical facts as is the language of prescription and justification” (Rorty 2014, 88; Sellars 1958, 527).

The issues here indeed directly engage with the necessary role played by an external perspective onto mental contents in Hegel’s characterization of the recognitive conditions for the existence of self-consciousness and consciousness, and yet the language–metalanguage structure Rorty employs still seems to render his analysis one-sided in relation to Hegel. Importantly, while Hegel insists on the necessary reciprocity of the recognitive relation, Rorty seems to assume that statements in the metalanguage are themselves not dependent upon the ego-centric

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<sup>14</sup> The Kojèvean theme of struggle is all too apparent in Rorty’s adaptation of Davidson’s account of radical interpretation when he likens the mutual copings of radical interpreter and exotic tribe member trying to make sense of each other’s strange noises as “coping with each other as we might cope with mangoes or boa constrictors – we are trying not to be taken by surprise.” Rorty 1989, 14.

statements of the *object language* in the way those of the latter are dependent on those of the former. However, in the decades *after* Rorty's paper, many came to challenge the assumption that ego-centric or "indexical" sentences such as "the meeting starts now" can *in principle* be always replaced by their non-indexical counterparts (Perry 1979). More generally, the 1960s and 70s were the years in which issues concerning temporal, alethic modal, intentional, indexical and other "intensional" contexts came flooding back into analytic philosophy, challenging the extensionalist semantics of the likes of Quine and Davidson. Among these were approaches that at a linguistic level reasserted the sorts of "presentist" and "actualist" considerations exemplified in Whitehead, but articulated within a framework more in line with "the linguistic turn". When we look to Hegel, we find that, in contrast to Rorty, Hegel himself seems to insist on the non-eliminability of intensional considerations. While acknowledging the presence of *both* indexical or modal judgments, and extensional or non-modal ones, Hegel's account of judgment provides the resources for an account of the recognitive relation that is richer than Rorty's.

### 3. Hegel on Intensional and Extensional Judgments

The crucial role played by *modal* notions within Hegel's account of judgments and syllogisms in the *Science of Logic*, Book III, is apparent in the difference between what he calls an *Urteil* or judgment and a *Satz*, by which he seems to mean here something like an *actual sentence token* considered in the context of a simple *reporting* usage. Thus, considered as a mere *Satz*, the sentence "Aristotle died at the age of 73 in the fourth year of 115<sup>th</sup> Olympiad" will have a structure in which *both* subject and predicate are considered as name-like singular terms: "what is said of a singular (*einzelnen*) subject" says Hegel, "is itself only something singular (*nur etwas Einzelnes*)" (Hegel 2010, 553). Considered as something like the juxtaposition of two *names*, Hegel's "*Satz*" looks something like what Wittgenstein in places in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* also calls a "*Satz*"—that is, a *Satz*-sign [*Satzzeichen*] considered "in its projective relation to the world" (Wittgenstein 1922, 3.12). However, for Hegel the *Satz* considered in such a *projective* way is itself neither true nor false, but *correct* (*richtig*) or *incorrect* (*unrichtig*), and as the capacity for being *true or false* is the mark of a judgment, a *Satz*, considered in this way, is *not a judgment*. In short, judgments cannot be understood *extensionally*. For a *Satz* to count as a judgment or *Urteil*, it must be used in more than in a simple reporting sense. Specifically, it must form part of a larger piece of inferential reasoning: "There would be in it an element of judgment", writes Hegel, "only if one of the circumstances, say, the date of death or the age of the philosopher, came into doubt .... In that case, the figures would be taken as something universal, as a time that, even without the determinate content [*bestimmten Inhalt*] of Aristotle's death, would still stand on its own filled with some other content or simply empty" (Hegel 2010, 553).

The idea that for the *Satz* to function as a judgment *one* of its terms must express an inference-articulating universal is further exploited in Hegel's treatment of the *types* of judgment. Hegel first distinguishes judgments of *determinate being* (or "thereness [*Dasein*]") (Hegel 2010, 557–68) from judgments of *reflection* (Hegel 2010, 568–81), it being clear that this is a distinction between perceptual and inferentially elicited judgments. Hegel says of the former that the *subject* is "determined as universal by the predicate" and so *becomes* universal, while the predicate is "determined in the [singular] subject" and "is therefore *a singular*" (Hegel 2010, 560). In short, in the very act of *judging*, the initial logical roles of subject and predicate terms have been *reversed*.

The singular predicate of the developed judgment of determinate being, such as "the rose is red",<sup>15</sup> acts in a name-like way to pick out the *particular* redness *inhering* in *some specific rose*—we might say, pointing to a rose before us—*that rose's* particular way of *being* or *looking* red.<sup>16</sup> With the predicate as a *singular*, we will be tempted to think of it as expressing something like a Kantian *intuition*, the referent of which conceived as an *individual, concrete property instance*—*this* instance of redness that is conceived as *inhering* in *this* rose. But as predicated *of* the subject, the predicate "red" *cannot* be simply thought of as semantically simple in that way; it has an *internal* structure that emerges on consideration of the judgment's negative form. Starting as a mere *Satz*, the positive judgment "is *not true*" but has its truth in the negative judgment" (Hegel 2010, 562). When one says, for example, "the rose is *not* red", negation here will only be taken as applying to the *determinateness* of the predicate. In saying that the rose is *not* red one does *not* imply that the rose is not *coloured*.<sup>17</sup> Rather, "it is ... assumed that it has a color, though another color" (Hegel 2010, 565).<sup>18</sup> If a rose *is* red then it is *not* yellow, *not* pink, *not* blue and so on, and if it is *not* red, it is either yellow *or* pink *or* blue, and so on.<sup>19</sup> This shows that the *meaning*

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<sup>15</sup> Hegel switches between the examples "the rose is red" and "the rose is fragrant". For simplicity sake, I will keep to the former as no logical point hangs on the difference between examples.

<sup>16</sup> C.f., "'The rose is fragrant.' This fragrance is not some indeterminate fragrance or other, but the fragrance of the rose. The predicate is therefore *a singular*" (Hegel 2010, 560).

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

<sup>18</sup> Here Hegel draws on features of the logical structure of perceptual judgments later pointed out by the Cambridge logician and Russell-critic, W. E. Johnson, when he called such predicates the *determinants* of some general *determinable*. Johnson 1921, Ch. 11). Prior notes the non-extensional nature of this relation in Prior 1968, 94–5.

<sup>19</sup> Moreover, what counts as a determinable of any entity depends up what *sort* of entity it is. While numbers can be characterized as either odd or even, but *not* as

of the predicate in the simple judgment “the rose is red” cannot, after all, be given *demonstratively*, nor independently of an account of the types of inferences of exclusion into which that judgment can enter. The judgment of determinate being *becomes* a judgment of reflection.

Judgments of reflection are, in contrast, *subsumptive* judgments, and here the conventional singular-subject, universal-predicate order has been restored, in that the property predicated of the subject is now a universal in the standardly abstract sense, what Hegel calls an “essential universal”, that might be *truly said* of a *variety* of different things *across* different genres. In this, the subject term of the judgment of reflection contrasts with that of the judgment of determinate being, which was an Aristotelian *instance of a kind*.<sup>20</sup> The irrelevance of kind terms in subject place in the judgment of reflection will mean that its ultimate subjects will have the characteristics of a bare “singulars”, allowing a domain of singular unqualified things to be classified under *different* abstract universals with the use of explicit quantification (Hegel 2010, 570–5). Here, predication is conceived along the line of class membership and so is extensional.

Hegel’s two judgment forms exactly reflect the duality of categorial forms, the running together of which Whitehead sees as underlying the metaphysical problems of modernity. “The notions of the ‘green leaf’ and of the ‘round ball’” he notes, “have generated two misconceptions: *one* is the concept of vacuous actuality, void of subjective experience; and the *other* is the concept of quality inherent in substance” (Whitehead 1978, 167). These former of these “misconceptions” clearly corresponds to Hegel’s judgments of reflection, the later, to his judgments of determinate being. Whitehead continues that it is because this difference is blurred in ordinary language that it “penetrates but a short distance into the principles of metaphysics”. The underlying suggestion is of a fundamental distinction within experience that cannot be represented in language—the assumption of which Rorty had been critical. But Hegel should in no sense be thought of as simply having produced some fixed inventory of opposing logical forms—a feature of the static *Verstand*, the understanding, of which he is always critical. The distinction plays a role within a wider processual (or “pragmatic”) account of judgment.

As Hegel’s presentation develops, the distinction between judgments characterized by the different *inherence* and *subsumption* forms of predication is now repeated at higher and higher levels, generating an array of increasingly complex judgment types, and ultimately types of *sylogisms*. The generation of these higher

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either red, or blue, or yellow, or ..., roses can be characterised as either red, or blue, or yellow, or ..., but not as either odd or even.

<sup>20</sup> The “singularity” of the *predicate* of the judgment of determinate being had required that the *subject term* be a universal.

forms presupposes the successive *Aufhebung*, that is, negation but preservation of features of inherence and subsumption conceptions of predication. If we think of the *Aufhebung* of a judgment of inherence by a judgment of reflection as a type of translation into an extensional metalanguage, this *Aufhebung* is captured by Rorty. But the following step in Hegel would represent the sentence of the metalanguage as equally subject to translation *back* into the original object language.<sup>21</sup> I have argued elsewhere that the *concrete* “syllogism of necessity” in which this development results should be understood as a concrescence of actual judgments of *mutually recognizing* agents involved in socially mediated reasoning (Redding 1996, 156–8),<sup>22</sup> and such a recognitive context gives retrospective sense to the duality of logical forms found in the earlier sections. Those judgmental contents an agent attributes to another on the basis of their linguistic behaviour could only be understood as having “reflective” form of *subsuming* judgments, but the immediate perceptual judgments of the things of the agents own surrounding world will have the form of judgments of determinate being. Moreover, as Whitehead pointed out, the same considerations will apply to the logical shape of objects of present experience and those recalled from the past. This is why for Hegel *neither* form can be reduced to the other.

#### 4. Conclusion

In the early 1960s Rorty had turned to analytic philosophy for a way out of the problems found in Whitehead, who had seemed to have offered an Hegelianism without the unwanted idealist metaphysics. Seemingly by the early 70s, however, Rorty had come to take the best practitioners of analytic philosophy as exemplifying its self-undermining dynamic. In short, Rorty’s increasing rejection of the world of analytic philosophy hadn’t precluded commitments to quite specific doctrines within that tradition, commitments underlying his continuing appropriations of Sellars, Quine and Davidson. Surely Rorty, as a good Hegelian historicist, would have acknowledged that even his mode of *anti-philosophising* reflected “its time” in thought.

During this time, however, and again in line with an Hegelian dynamic of the development of thought, alternatives to the truth-functional, extensionalist assumptions of Rorty’s heroes had appeared on the scene. To mention one specifically

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<sup>21</sup> In this, Hegel follows Leibniz who had treated intensionally understood sentence forms as translatable into extensional forms and vice versa. In contrast, Rorty accepts the reductionistic translation of intentional to extensional sentences—a path that leads from Russell through Tarski and Quine to Davidson.

<sup>22</sup> In fact the *process* by which the syllogism has become contentful need not seem mysterious since the process in which judgments and syllogisms have been acquiring content had been at work from the start of the Subjective Logic. It had been the alternating “intensional” and “extensional” steps of the development that had brought an initially independently conceived “being” into thought.

in relation to issues of time and intentionality, Arthur Prior, the inventor of “tense logic”, had challenged the reduction of intensional modal talk to extensional talk, and had treated non-modal extensionally understood sentences as an *outgrowth* of the intensionally understood modal ones: “It is not that modal logic or tense logic is an artificially truncated uniform monadic first-order predicate calculus; the latter, rather, is an artificially expanded modal logic or tense logic” (Prior 2003, 246).<sup>23</sup> Prior had, on the basis of a paper on time (Findlay 1941), nominated his former teacher, John N. Findlay as the “founding father of modern tense logic” (Prior 1967, 1), but Findlay had himself been deeply influenced by both the later Wittgenstein and Hegel (Findlay 1985), and had come up with his idea on tense in relation to the work of the earlier British Hegelian John McTaggart.<sup>24</sup> It would seem that there were alternative paths out of 1950s “ordinary language” philosophy than those that proceeded through Tarski, paths that perhaps offer better opportunities for the revival of the Hegelian historicist thought that Rorty sought. However, were this to turn out to be the case, it wouldn’t detract from Rorty’s achievement, for surely he had pushed such a dialectic forward to a degree that was possibly unmatched in late twentieth-century philosophy.

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<sup>23</sup> Prior had nominated Findlay as the “founding father of modern tense logic” (Prior 1967, 1).

<sup>24</sup> On the seminal role played by Prior in the emergence of modal logic and modal metaphysics in the 1960s see Copeland 2002.



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