

Some Notes on the Notion of Identity in Reflexion (4)

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Introduction

In the preceding papers we have endeavoured to make clear some of the most fundamental differences to be found between the two kinds of logical notion of identity in the propositions of "A is A" and "A is B". In pursuit of the clarification of the essence of identity in reflexion, we have examined that there lies in the formal identity of "A is A" an inner necessity to get involved in its own contradiction.

We have also found that this negative relativity of identity is the very essence of all the relations in reflection and that out of this negative reflexivity in reflexion there must emerge nothing other than the new aspect of the absolute identity in ground.

The logical recognition we have gained is of such abstract nature that at first sight it may appear quite hard to realize how they can bear any relation, if any, to the actual reality in which we live. But the first thing we should bear in mind is that any reality that is thought to exist for us is valid only as the reality in recognition, or that whatever reality appears to be the most immediate is, in fact, the one already mediated by logic. The kind of reality to which we would like to give a logical consideration covers quite a few of the philosophical topics of vital importance, such as, to name only a few, freedom vs. necessity, infinite vs. finite, the particular vs. the universal, or time vs. eternity. It is - so it seems to me - how we think of the nature of identity and non-identity that really matters in all of these time-honoured themes of philosophy. Is the logic of reflexive relation the only possible logic that can be thought to account for the true relationship between the two notions, say, of time and eternity? Won't it be possible to find a new reality based on the

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logic of the absolute identity which has dawned upon us through our pursuit of the nature of reflexion ?

So, in this paper we would like to throw a light on some of the philosophical problems arising from the logical clarification of reflexion and ground.

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In terms of abstract logic, the Hegelian position amounts to claiming that: A is non-A. This formidable challenge to established logical principles is rooted in an ontological, that is to say, metaphysical assumption. This metaphysical assumption is the core of the Hegelian philosophy: the absolute is reason, ... The whole argument of the Science of Logic stands and falls with this metaphysical basis which shows that its problem is derivative of the more basic problems of religion. (1)

(Carl J. Friedrich, in "The Philosophy of Hegel")

IV. The Finite and the Infinite in Real Identity

14-5 As is already seen in the notion of the absolute identity of freedom and necessity, the freedom which is true and real is not the ideal one that fails to be positive in the presence of the other, i.e., necessity. To be free means holding self-identity in the midst of necessity. And the notion of necessity, if it is a true one, will lose the definition as the simple otherness of freedom. The same can be said of the true relation of the finite with the infinite.

14-6 That something is infinite means that it is in self-identity, because anything that can really be identical with itself is free from any external limitation and bound.

14-7 The notion of identity is concerned, therefore, with the problem of infinity in reflexion, or rather with the essential identity of the finite with the infinite.

14-8 On what logical ground can we say that the finite is identical with the infinite, or that the infinite is identical with the finite in the self-identity with its own other ? Here again, we are faced with the logical possibility of "the absolute identity" in the position of non-identity by reflexion. "A=A=nonA" , or "A=non-A=A" .

14-9 We have already shown some of the essential characteristics to be discerned in the identity in reflexion.

- (1) Reflexion, which is the position of A in A or the immediate coming back of A to A, is what makes the identity possible. Without this initial act of reflexion, no identity would be conceivable at all. A is A, and only in this inner self-identity is A infinite.
- (2) Identity in reflexion is, however, the simple and empty identity of A with A, not the real identity of A with non-A.
- (3) The reflexion of A itself would be abolished but for the position of the reflected otherness, i.e., non-A.
- (4) That A is posited as A means that A stands essentially in reflexive relatedness to non-A. With the position of A, there is at the same time something other than A anti-posed. A can not be in purely inner identity with itself, which means that A can not be infinite any longer.

Everything that stands in reflexive relation can not be infinite in the true sense. By reflexive relation is meant the essential non-identity between A and non-A. This identity is not to be regarded, therefore, as the real infinite identity in which A is posited as being

identical with non-A.

(Put differently, infinite is a thing in itself when it has got rid of the determination of being posited in reflexive relation. It is something quite indefinite, i.e., non-finite. Likewise, a thing can be defined as the finite, only in so far as it is posited in relation as the reflexive other of the infinite.)

15 Once out of reflexion, a thing can not be defined either as being finite or as being infinite. Either definition comes only from reflexion or the position of the absolute other.

15-1 Identity is not the immediacy or the being of a thing. It ought to be taken as the mediated position in reflexion.

(One takes the identity too much for granted that he is most likely to ignore the fact that the identity is essentially a position in reflexion. It is self-evident, he might say, that the infinite is infinite, just because it is infinite. Nothing could be more certain. To be noted, however, is the fact that this statement is only valid on condition that the definition itself of being infinite is already the product of reflexion. Unless the sufficient reason be made clear why something is really infinite, that is to say, without the full recognition of the possible ground of reflexive identity, all reasoning about the identity or non-identity of the infinite with the finite will lose its own footing on which it can stand.)

15-2 Is there any need to repeat here that a notion of self-identity in the identical proposition of $A = A$ is nothing but a product of reflexion? Whatever stands in this identity is essentially ideal, negative and apparent.

15-1 The possible identity of the finite with the infinite can not present itself, except in so far as the finite as the reflexive position gets absolutely negated.

15-2 The finite turns out, in its absolute negatedness, to be just the opposite of what it is. It is the non-finite, which is in effect the same thing with the infinite itself.

(As a matter of fact, what is posited only in reflexion is certain to vanish, if and when the reflexion as such has gone to the ground. The two opposites, the finite and the infinite, are both the products of reflexion, and this absolute incompatibility with each other is the truth of all that stands in reflexion. $A=A \neq \text{non-}A$. But this holds true, in so far as it is in negative reflexivity.)

15-3 As regards the two opposites that appear in reflexion, we have already seen that it can not be asserted in any way that A is non-A.

In denoting A as the object of reflexion, we can not say that A is what A is not.

15-4 As is already seen, reflexion is quite free from any substance, and everything that is posited in reflexion is groundless. Reflexion, which is the absolute negative itself, has nothing whatever on which it can exist on its own. The one and the only way by which it can subsist is the logical tension, as it were, in the dual negation in relation.

15-5 It is true that something is finite only in the posited relation to the non-finite. Or, the very definition of the finite is possible only by the position of the infinite. These two are so inextricably related to each other that each of them depends for its own sustenance on the posited existence of the other. We must not fail to recognize, however, that as long as they are posited in relation, there can be no identity possible between the two. And, there is neither the real identity, nor even the ideal one conceivable between the two opposites in reflexion. For the truth of reflexive relation lies, as we said before, in the essential non-identity of the reflecting and the reflected. In this sense the finite is by no means the infinite, and vice versa.

- 15-6 In the absolute nothingness of reflexion, however, we no longer see reflexion at play. The initial position of something as the finite, the firm insistence on the identity of the finite, and the severe discrimination and exclusion of all otherness from the simple identity, all these workings of reflexion have now ceased to be predominantly active.
- 15-7 As against the ideal negativity of $A=A \neq \text{non-}A$, the reality of the possible identity between A and B is to be found in the absolute identity of A with non-A, in whose total indifference a thing is not yet posited either as A or as non-A. Then, what can it be referred to in a place of "reflexive nothingness" ? In this place of nothingness devoid of reflexion, it can be neither as A nor as non-A called, or rather it is the both.
- 15-8 The finite, freed from the negativity of reflexion, is now nothing other than the non-finite. Or, more precisely, the finite is not yet posited as the finite, nor is the infinite posited as the infinite. Which means that both of the reflexive two are absorbed in the absolute indifference. How is it thought to be possible to confirm, out of this abyss of nothingness, as it were, the true reality in the absolute indifference, or identity.
- 15-9 The very definition of finite and infinite is the one that has come from reflexion. When and Where there is no such reflexion, there is no distinguishing between finite and infinite.
- 16 Here we have had two kinds of logic. And a clear distinction can be made between the two types of logic. One is "logica reflexiva" , which is the logic of either-or, and the other is "logica speculativa seu rationis" , which is the logic of neither-nor. The former is the logic of relative negativity, while the latter is the logic of absolute negativity. Or, the former is the logic of relative identity, and the latter is the logic of absolute identity.

- 16-1 Generally speaking, the identity in relative relation is negative and exclusive, in which the totality as such is reflexively divided into the two spheres of ideal totality and real one.
- 16-2 In reflexion where A is posited as A, A is posited simultaneously as something that is not non-A. That A is A means that A is not non-A. Furthermore, that A is not non-A means that A is posited in the reflexive relatedness to non-A. To be sure, two spheres (relative totalities) of A and non-A are possible only in relation.
- 16-3 One might assert here that the truth is in the relation, in the sense that the relation is the totality. But the relation which stands for the truth in totality should by no means be taken to be the relation of reflexive negativity whose nature is in the total exclusion of the other.
- 16-4 The truth of reflection comes out only where it has vanished. Put differently, the truth of relation is in the self-negation, which means that relation is not the totality as such, but it is in the totality.
- 16-5 Totality is the nothingness of reflection in which ,far from being exclusive and negative, every relation can now be free and mutual. A is not only A itself, but it is at the same time B itself, that is to say, non-A.
- 16-6 Viewed from the logical standpoint of pure nothingness of reflexion, things or the state of affairs in which we live take on quite a different aspect from those in the light of reflexive Understanding we have been so much accustomed to.
- 16-7 That A is B means principally that A is non-A, which means that something is just the opposite of what it is. All this possibility of speculative logic leads us onto the metaphysical thought on the

essential identity of the opposites.

16-8 Now we have got many philosophical questions that we have to think about. The chief question is how it is possible to come to terms with the absolute opposition of the ideas, such as time and eternity or life and death. There lies far beyond our way of meditation that leads us to inquire into the logical nature of the absolute identity in Ground.

note

- (1) "The Philosophy of Hegel" edited by Carl J. Friedrich. Introduction, The Modern Library, New York .1953.

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