

*nisstheorie*, in English "Theory of Knowledge" (Epistemology).

This separate treatment of the phenomena of human thought has its ultimate origin in the fact that in the course of ages a distinct and unique structure of thought has been built up which defies criticism, is based on self-evidence, and excludes almost entirely that admixture of error and ambiguity which appears to be common to all other regions of human inquiry.

This structure is the language of mathematics, which deals only with definite quantities in Space, Time, and Number, and is originally based upon spatial relations, without which neither numbers nor intervals of time could be clearly fixed, on which probably also all logical and abstract distinctions are ultimately dependent. This explains why all the great thinkers who have employed the dialectical method have in one form or other betrayed a great liking for the mathematical sciences, and have frequently introduced mathematical methods into their discussions. Kant maintained that true science exists only so far as mathematics can be introduced.

Hegel himself was not a mathematician, but he desired to introduce into philosophy the same strictness as had been obtained in mathematical doctrine by the use of simple definitions, self-evident axioms, and the processes of formal logic. Recognising that formal logic could not deal with the higher content of abstract thought, he attempted to create a higher logic which would be capable of doing this. Had he joined to his purely logical distinctions likewise