

The Art of Nature: Hegel and the *Critique of Judgment*

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Abstract

This essay examines the reasons for Hegel's frequently professed claim that Kant's *Critique of Judgment* simultaneously reveals the internal limits of critical philosophy and opens the door to his own system of speculative idealism. It evaluates Hegel's contention that the conceptions of aesthetic experience, organic purposiveness, and the intuitive intellect developed in the third *Critique* together conspire to undermine the epistemological and metaphysical foundations of the theories of nature and freedom advanced in the first and second *Critiques*. Finally it explains how Hegel understands his logic and real philosophy as a realist and quasi-naturalistic alternative to Kant's subjective idealism, one that purports to generate a system of categories adequate not only to dead matter but also to organic life and free self-conscious spirit.

Key words: Hegel; Kant; idealism; aesthetics; teleology

Introduction

From the earliest days of his philosophical career, Hegel expresses dissatisfaction with the dualisms that structure Kant's critical philosophy: in the theoretical philosophy, those of sensibility and understanding, intuition and concept, and appearance and thing-in-itself; in the practical philosophy, those of desire and reason, inclination and duty, and causal necessity and the freedom of the will. Frequently he suggests that Kant simply posits these distinctions dogmatically. This charge strikes many contemporary readers as curious and misleading since in both his theoretical and practical philosophies, Kant attempts explicitly to supplant dogmatically posited assumptions about the nature of world and moral reality with a critically secured account of the transcendental conditions of objective cognition and moral action.

The charge of dogmatism levelled against Kantian philosophy was, however, by no means unique to Hegel. Reinhold, Schulze, and Maimon initiated this line of criticism in the early 1790s, and it was their lead that was taken up and developed by Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel.¹ Reinhold's criticisms of Kant are particularly instructive as they constitute a virtual inventory of the objections to critical philosophy which are now more commonly associated with Hegel's name. Reinhold's two underlying complaints against Kant were that he failed to live up to his own ideals both of criticism and of science.² The ideal of criticism demands that thinking should be fully autonomous, accepting nothing as simply given but insisting instead on the self-authorization of all claims to truth and rightness. The ideal of science, as Kant writes in the first *Critique*, demands that 'our diverse modes of knowledge must not be permitted to be a mere rhapsody, but must form a system' (B860).

The ambition to fulfil the ideals of criticism and science drives Hegel's work, establishing simultaneously the background for his critique of Kant's transcendental idealism and the basis of his own novel system of absolute idealism. Hegel's specific objections to the foundational arguments of the first and second *Critiques* are well known. In connection with the first *Critique*, Hegel disputes the legitimacy of Kant's division of the theoretical faculties into sensibility and understanding; the adequacy of the metaphysical deduction of the categories from the traditional table of judgments and its failure to show either the immanent connection between the categories or their common origin in a fundamental principle; the warrant for his assertion of the transcendental ideality of the objects of possible experience; the grounds for his distinction between appearances and things-in-themselves; and the satisfactoriness of Kant's conception of dialectic (and, by extension, of his resolution of the antinomies and paralogisms). With respect to the second *Critique*, Hegel charges that Kant's categorical imperative is empty and formal; that his strict opposition of happiness to morality is untenable; and that the practical postulates project morality into an abstract and unattainable beyond.

Hegel's critique of Kant's theoretical and practical philosophies have been dealt with at great length and by defenders of both Kant and Hegel.³ A significantly smaller body of literature deals with Hegel's critical response to the third and last of Kant's major works, the *Critique of Judgment* (1790). This situation is due in part to the fact that Kant scholars have, at least until recently,⁴ devoted relatively little attention to the systematic place of the third *Critique* in Kant's critical corpus. The practice instead has been to approach the contents of the third *Critique* in piecemeal fashion, treating Kant's theory of aesthetic judgment and his analyses of the experiences of beauty and sublimity as decisive chapters in the history of aesthetics and his theory of teleology as an unusual sideshow in the history and philosophy of natural science, one whose

conclusions concerning judgments of purposiveness remain respectable, nevertheless, insofar as they do not challenge the mechanistic conception of nature advanced in the first *Critique*.

Many of Kant's immediate successors, including Hegel, viewed the third *Critique* quite differently: it was understood not only as the culmination of Kant's critical philosophy but also as an admission by Kant of the limitations of his earlier works and of the need to remedy their shortcomings. It did so by raising to prominence the question of whether philosophy as a science must assume the form of a unified system of thought. In the *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant writes of the

expectation of bringing some day into one view the unity of the entire pure rational faculty (both theoretical and practical) and of being able to derive everything from one principle. The latter is an unavoidable need of human reason, as it finds complete satisfaction only in a perfectly systematic unity of its cognitions.⁵

The third *Critique* tries to satisfy this need of reason by showing that the faculty of judgment provides the mediating link between understanding and reason, between the concept of nature and the concept of freedom, between the known sensible world and its unknown but nevertheless thinkable supersensible ground. Kant reveals this mediating link to consist in judgment's a priori principles of purposiveness, which permit the aesthetic and teleological estimation of the phenomenal world of nature (and history) as a symbol of morality and ectype of freedom,⁶ or what is the same, as the territory over which the higher cognitive powers of understanding and reason harmoniously legislate.⁷

It is hardly surprising that Hegel should have been drawn to Kant's most explicit and sustained attempt to systematize his critical philosophy. For Hegel, as is well known, systematicity is not simply the supreme virtue of philosophical thinking but is its *sine qua non*. As he states famously in the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*: '[t]he true shape in which truth exists can only be the scientific system of such truth.'⁸ The basic difference between Kant and Hegel's conceptions of system might be expressed as follows. Despite his demand for a genuinely unified system derived from a single basic principle, Kant in fact operates with what we might call a 'back-end' conception of system. His efforts at systematization are directed towards the pre-systematically obtained results of transcendental inquiry. In the third *Critique*, accordingly, Kant attempts only to harmonize the conclusions of the first *Critique* with those of the second *Critique* by way of a critique of the faculty of judgment. This examination of the faculty of judgment also affords him the post hoc opportunity to incorporate within his system accounts of the possibility of aesthetic experience and of teleological judgments about nature and history,

accounts not provided by the earlier works. Hegel, by contrast, works with a 'front-end' conception of system. For Hegel it is simply not possible to obtain truly *philosophical* results antecedently to or independently of systematic explanation.⁹ The specific and exacting demands of Hegel's systematicity requirements are laid out in the *Science of Logic*. In the Introduction to that work Hegel argues that logic is an absolute science and that as such it differs fundamentally from all positive sciences (be they empirical or pure), which are thoroughly conditioned and hence non-absolute. For science to be absolute and unconditional, it cannot be based on dogmatically posited first principles, on presumed methods or structures, on given contents, or on stipulated definitions and axioms.¹⁰ It cannot posit a priori distinctions between form and content, method and object domain, but must instead generate whatever distinctions it utilizes immanently and justify its use of these distinctions internally. If philosophy is to form a system, in other words, it must be presuppositionless, autonomous, self-justifying, internally unified, and self-sufficient.¹¹ Hegel contends that his own holistically conceived system of philosophy successfully fulfils these requirements and in doing so realizes the deepest ambitions of critical philosophy itself.

With this conception of system in mind, it becomes easier to understand what motivates Hegel's criticism of the dualisms that structure Kant's critical philosophy. In the *Difference* essay Hegel asserts programmatically that '[d]ichotomy is the source of the need of philosophy'.¹² For Hegel dichotomy always serves as an index of abstraction and incompleteness. At the same time, dichotomy is that which spurs thought to adduce a more embracing context in which the seemingly opposed or heterogeneous elements find their proper place and are revealed as interdependent moments of an internally differentiated whole. Generally stated, the task of reason is to resituate the abstractly posited findings of common sense, understanding, and the empirical sciences within increasingly amplified categorial contexts. This activity of reason, which Hegel calls dialectic, bears an important similarity to the Kantian conception of reflective judgment. Reflective judgments are those in which 'only the particular is given and judgment has to find the universal for it'.¹³ The structural similarity between reflective judgment and dialectical reason is that both attempt to adduce the whole that enables one to contextualize and so make sense of an isolated part (or set of parts) whose significance is unclear.¹⁴ By assigning to reflective judgment a merely regulative rather than a constitutive cognitive function, however, Kant restricts the activity of reflective judgment to systematizing dimensions of experience which, while not specified by the principles and laws generated by the first and second *Critiques*, are nevertheless entirely restricted by them. The project of systematization pursued in the third *Critique* thus in no way compromises the foundational principles of critical philosophy. From Hegel's vantage this

is the great shortcoming of Kant's conception of reflective judgment: in failing to reach back to its own first principles, it succumbs to dogmatism and betrays the critical spirit itself.

Hegel seizes on a more radical possibility opened up by the third *Critique*: that of using the forms of experience investigated in the third *Critique* to challenge the previously established principles and laws of Kant's theoretical and practical philosophies. Hegel believes that in the third *Critique* Kant isolates two aspects of our experience of the world whose possibility cannot be accounted for adequately within the framework of the first *Critique*: those involved in estimating aesthetic objects and those at work in understanding purposiveness in nature. Whereas Kant attempts to save the phenomena of aesthetic experience and objective purposiveness by supplementing the principles of understanding and practical reason with the a priori principles of reflective judgment, Hegel appeals to these same phenomena as a means of calling into question the constitutive principles of the first and second *Critiques*. Why, Hegel asks, does Kant exclude beauty and purposiveness in nature from the domain of objective experience? Might these exclusions say less about the phenomena themselves and more about the internal deficiencies of Kant's deductions of the conditions of possibility of experience? As we shall see, Hegel believes that Kant's own faithful phenomenological descriptions of aesthetic experience and objective teleology should have led him to reconsider the rigidly mechanistic metaphysics of nature of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the other-worldly metaphysics of freedom of the *Critique of Practical Reason*. Eschewing the static Leibnizian model of pre-established harmony that underlies Kant's effort to reconcile the concepts of nature and freedom, Hegel takes his own task to be one of elaborating a richer categorial framework than Kant provides, one capable of embracing within a single system of thought the principles both of mechanism and of purposiveness, of inorganic and organic nature, of causal necessity and of self-determination. Only this account will be true to the spirit of critical philosophy, Hegel contends, because it alone will truly satisfy reason's need for system.

The remainder of this essay is divided into three main sections. In the first, I examine Hegel's critique of Kant's theory of aesthetic experience. Hegel believes that Kant's account of the possibility of aesthetic experience calls into question certain central presuppositions of the transcendental deduction of the first *Critique* and, by extension, of Kant's argument for transcendental idealism. His principal target is, in the first instance, Kant's heteronomy thesis or the a priori distinction between pure concepts and pure intuitions that sets up the need for the transcendental deduction. In attempting to subvert the heteronomy thesis, Hegel looks to Kant's account of the productive imagination, especially in its role of producing aesthetic ideas, claiming that here Kant properly identifies the

'common root' of sensibility and understanding. This argument itself forms a part of a larger strategy, which is to dispute the 'subjective idealism' of critical philosophy.¹⁵ In the second section, I take up Hegel's analysis of Kant's theory of reflective teleological judgments of objective purposiveness. Here Hegel attacks not so much the form of Kant's transcendental arguments as their content. In the 'Critique of Teleological Judgment', Kant recognizes that organic beings cannot be properly accounted for by the mechanistic categorial framework outlined in the first *Critique*. The reason is that organisms show themselves as intrinsically purposive, self-organizing beings. Hegel faults Kant for not revising his categories and principles of nature in such a way as to accommodate these features of organisms, falling back instead on the non-constitutive principles of reflective judgment, a move which robs these features of any objective status. As we shall see, however, the phenomenon of organic life not only calls into question the mechanistic assumptions of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. It also provides the genuine bridge to the concept of freedom. The capacity for self-organization exhibited by living things, Hegel argues, is a natural and unconscious mode of self-determination, one that precedes but also forms the basis of the self-conscious and spiritual form of self-determination exercised by the free will. Finally, I shall investigate Hegel's critique of the Kantian idea of an intuitive intellect. Whereas Kant uses the idea of an intuitive intellect negatively and merely as a means of clarifying the nature of our finite cognitive capacities, Hegel sees in this idea a vague, figurative gesture towards the notion of a categorial system no longer hampered by the dualisms of Kant's epistemology and metaphysics. This holistically conceived categorial system does justice to both organic life and human freedom and provides a realist alternative to Kant's subjective idealism.

The Speculative Significance of the Aesthetic

For the early Hegel, the promise of a unified system of philosophy would be fulfilled through a radicalization of Kant's aesthetic theory. In 'The Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism' (1796), Hegel writes:

I am now convinced that the highest act of Reason [*Vernunft*], the one through which it encompasses all Ideas, is an aesthetic act, and that truth and goodness become kindred only in beauty – the philosopher must possess just as much aesthetic power as the poet. Men without aesthetic sense are our philosophers of the letter. The philosophy of the spirit is an aesthetic philosophy.¹⁶

Schiller's *Letters on Aesthetic Education* (1795) inaugurate the interpretation of Kant's third *Critique* that finds continued expression in Hegel's

conception of an 'aesthetic philosophy'. Schiller attempts to advance beyond Kant's merely reflective theory of the unity of nature and freedom through his concept of the 'play impulse' (*Spieltrieb*). Derived from Kant's account of the play of the imagination and understanding occasioned by the contemplation of beautiful forms, Schiller's play impulse forms the basis not only of an aesthetic theory but also, and more importantly, of his visions of the unified human soul and of the harmonious and just society. For Schiller, health in the soul and in the state must be understood in terms of freedom: to this extent, Schiller remains very much a Kantian and an Enlightenment thinker. In opposition to Kant (and to Plato), however, Schiller claims that freedom cannot be properly understood in terms of the rational domination of natural desires and inclinations. Play provides a new model for conceiving freedom because in play the opposed faculties of reason and sensibility are at last reconciled and made whole. 'For, to declare it once and for all, man plays only when he is in the full sense of the word a man, and he is only wholly man when he is playing.'¹⁷

Underlying Schiller's reconceptualization of freedom in terms of play, however, is an even more revolutionary claim concerning the relationship between appearance (*Schein*) and truth. Challenging one of the philosophical tradition's most deeply held assumptions, Schiller argues that aesthetic appearance, far from being a source of error and dissemblance, is in fact the privileged site of truth. As that which induces play, aesthetic appearance ushers humankind into the truth, which consists precisely in the concrete reconciliation of sensuous nature and supersensuous freedom.¹⁸ In its exaltation of the aesthetic, Schiller's thought breaks with Kant and the Enlightenment tradition, and displays its proximity to the Romantic notion of the 'literary absolute'.¹⁹ In this its most radical form – which Schiller himself by no means embraces unambiguously²⁰ – Romanticism challenges philosophy's claim to present the truth by means of rational discourse: the poetic word displaces the philosopher's *logos* as the bearer of truth.

While the concept of freedom as reconciliation and the reassessment of the relationship between truth and *Schein* endure as important components of Hegel's mature philosophy, the Romantic valorization of the aesthetic as the privileged locus of truth and the only path to system proved a short-lived element of his thought. Already by the time of the *Difference* essay (1801) and *Faith and Knowledge* (1802), Hegel renounces the primacy of the aesthetic. As a consequence, his understanding of the philosophical import of the third *Critique* assumes a new form. Particularly striking is the fact that in all his discussions of the *Critique of Judgment* from the Jena writings onwards (with the one notable but unsurprising exception of the *Lectures on Fine Art*), Hegel looks to this work neither with an eye towards developing a philosophy of art nor as a means of

articulating a Romantic-style aesthetic philosophy. As I have already suggested and hope to explain more fully in what follows, the reason Hegel now puts such great store on the third *Critique* is that he sees in Kant's analysis of reflective judgment quite specific intimations of the theory of the Concept which he develops in his system.²¹ While Hegel's aesthetic theory forms an essential part of this system, it is very much a *subordinate* part and one whose claims are ultimately unintelligible in isolation from the more general metaphysical and ontological theses defended therein.

Schiller's theory of play remains significant for Hegel because it identifies a mode of being that is undivided, whole, and free in the Hegelian sense of being at home with itself in the world. Schiller, however, merely takes up and amplifies the far more general thesis of the third *Critique* which is that human beings are somehow 'fitted' to the world. It is this thesis that becomes the principal focus of investigation for the mature Hegel. Kant argues that while we cannot *know* of the purposive accord between ourselves and the world, we nevertheless can and do *think* as if this were the case when we make aesthetic and teleological judgments. The third *Critique* attempts to show that our faith that reason's purposes can be realized in the phenomenal world is in fact rewarded by certain aesthetic and teleological presentations of nature. These presentations display nature as hospitable, on the one hand, to reason's practical idea of the highest good and, on the other, to its theoretical idea of systematic totality. In our aesthetic experience the beauties of nature present themselves as if they were somehow destined for our minds and designed to solicit our disinterested pleasure. This experience of natural beauty thus hints that morality's ideal of the highest good, the condition in which the disinterested pursuit of virtue is rewarded by the empirically conditioned satisfactions of happiness, is in fact attainable. In our theoretical endeavours we posit an accord between ourselves and nature when we assume – as Kant claims we must – that the manifold of empirical laws, which we are incapable of deducing straight away from the a priori principles of nature, were somehow grasped in advance as necessarily forming a coherent and organized body of laws. Since teleological judgments are reflective rather than constitutive, Kant insists that they neither schematize reason's idea of system nor play a constitutive role in empirical inquiry. He does, however, argue that in teleological judgment the imagination produces a symbol of reason's idea of system. This symbolized rational idea serves as an image of the final end of theoretical inquiry, where nature would at last have been comprehended systematically as the specified totality of the a priori principles of experience.²² As we shall explore in greater detail below, this symbolic image of a completed system produced by the reflective imagination is nothing other than the idea of the intuitive intellect.

Hegel's system attempts to convert the 'as ifs' of Kant's third *Critique* into just so many 'it is sos'. According to Hegel, Kant's analysis of beauty undermines the three fundamental and interrelated epistemological theses that support Kant's conclusion that reason's supersensuous idea of freedom cannot be known as an appearance. The first is Kant's heteronomy thesis, which claims that concepts and intuitions are distinct forms of representations that derive from two different faculties of the soul, understanding and sensibility. The second is the central argument of the transcendental deduction, namely, that the specific categories derived in the metaphysical deduction are the a priori conditions of possibility of objects of experience. The third is Kant's argument for transcendental idealism, which attempts to establish the transcendental ideality of objects of experience (i.e. their status as mere appearances) and which opens the door thereby to the theory of noumenal freedom defended in the second *Critique*. In the following passage from *Faith and Knowledge*, Hegel suggests how Kant's theory of beauty poses a challenge to these three foundational arguments of the first *Critique*:

Since beauty is *the Idea as experienced* or more correctly, as intuited, the form of opposition between intuition and concept falls away. Kant recognizes this vanishing of the antithesis negatively in the concept of a supersensuous realm in general. But he does not recognize that as beauty, it is positive, it is intuited, or to use his own language, it is *given in experience* [*für die Erfahrung gegeben ist*]. (FK, 87/323–4, my italic)²³

The background for Hegel's claims here lies in Kant's account of the role of the imagination in producing aesthetic ideas. Kant argues that in our cognitive experience of nature, the productive imagination schematizes the categories of the understanding in accordance with the a priori forms of intuition. In artistic expression, by contrast, the imagination produces not schemata but symbols. Whereas a schema is a direct intuitive presentation of a concept, a symbol is an indirect, analogical, or figurative presentation of a concept. Thus an aesthetic idea is 'a presentation of the imagination which prompts much thought, but to which no determinate thought whatsoever, i.e. no [determinate] concept, can be adequate. . . . It is easy to see that an aesthetic idea is the counterpart (pendant) of a *rational idea*, which is, conversely, a concept to which no *intuition* (presentation of the imagination) can be adequate' (CJ, 182/314). Aesthetic ideas provide no direct cognition but rather 'strain after something lying out beyond the confines of experience, and so seek to approximate to a presentation of rational concepts (i.e. intellectual ideas), thus giving to these concepts the semblance of objective reality' (ibid.). Because aesthetic ideas strive above all to present reason's idea of

freedom, Kant believes that the beautiful in general may be understood as the 'symbol of morality' (*CJ*, 228/353). It is important to observe that Kant's claim that reason assumes the 'semblance of objective reality' in aesthetic ideas informs not only his conception of artistic activity (genius) but also his interpretation of natural beauty. The experience of natural beauty induces our faculty of judgment to consider the whole of phenomenal nature as a product of a supersensuous intelligence, i.e., of God's genius. Natural beauty may be understood, accordingly, as 'that cipher through which nature speaks to us figuratively in its beautiful forms' (*CJ*, 168/301). What natural beauty figures or symbolizes, as we have seen, is the possibility that our moral purposes might actually harmonize with nature's purposes and hence be realized in the phenomenal world. Through his theory of natural beauty and aesthetic ideas, then, Kant fulfils his promise of reconciling the concepts of nature and freedom, albeit only symbolically and as a claim of mere reflective judgment.

Hegel's argument in the passage above seems to be as follows: Kant's theory of aesthetic imagination suggests that reason's idea of freedom (*qua* beauty) is *sensuously intuited* in aesthetic experience. If the idea of freedom were actually given in the presentation of the beautiful, then the argument of the transcendental deduction would be called into question, since here we would have an *experience* whose possibility cannot be understood as a specification of the a priori categories of the understanding. The experiential field made possible in the schematizations of the twelve categories is such that it does not admit the phenomenal appearance of freedom: what appears necessarily appears as causally determined. Moreover, if in the presentation of the beautiful the *idea of freedom* is intuited or experienced, then the argument for transcendental idealism would likewise appear to be vitiated, since here we would have an experience of that which is otherwise said to be beyond the bounds of the experienceable. Finally, and with reference to the heteronomy thesis, Hegel believes that the antithesis between concept and intuition breaks down with Kant's identification of the productive imagination as the source of schemata and aesthetic ideas.²⁴ According to Hegel, schemata and aesthetic ideas are neither concepts nor intuitions, at least according to Kant's usual definitions. Hegel thus conjectures that in his theory of the imagination Kant identifies the 'common root' of sensibility and understanding alluded to mysteriously at A15/B29 of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. This inference leads Hegel to assert in *Faith and Knowledge* that the transcendental imagination must be recognized

as what is primary and original, as that out of which subjective Ego and objective world first sunder themselves into the necessarily bipartite appearance and product, and as the sole In-itself. The power of imagination is the original two-sided identity.

(*FK*, 73/308)²⁵

It is no easy task to make sense of Hegel's claims here about the transcendental imagination. In what follows I shall argue that the 'original two-sided identity' of which Hegel speaks above in connection with the transcendental imagination cannot be properly understood independently of Hegel's logical theory of the Concept. Failure to do so leads to a variety of common misunderstandings of the nature of Hegelian idealism. Hegel is not arguing, for example, that the human intellect should somehow be reconceived along the lines of Kant's productive imagination and that our experience of the world is more like the interpretative field opened up by an aesthetic idea than the law-governed territory legislated for a priori by the schematized concept.²⁶ If this were the upshot of Hegel's critique of the third *Critique*, then Hegel's speculative idealism indeed would be a form of aesthetic philosophy. Also mistaken is the supposition that Hegel's claim that the transcendental imagination is the primordial origin of subject and object supports the interpretation of his idealism as a form of Neoplatonic metaphysics, one in which absolute *Geist* spontaneously emanates nature and finite mind. The problem with both these interpretations is that they preserve intact a projectivist conception of mind that is incompatible with Hegel's conceptual realism.²⁷

Before explaining more fully why these interpretations are faulty, I should like to point to one further position frequently attributed to Hegel in light of his critique of the heteronomy thesis and his position on Kant's theory of aesthetic ideas. Hegel explicitly rejects Kant's claim that the aesthetic idea does no more than *symbolize* the underlying unity of nature and freedom. On his view Kant recoils from the profound implications of his discovery by according it the status of a mere 'ought to be'. According to Hegel, the aesthetic idea does not merely symbolize the ideas of reason: it is the actual, visible, and immediate manifestation of reason in the sensible world.²⁸ This claim is of course the cornerstone of the philosophy of art developed in Hegel's later philosophy of absolute spirit: the thing of beauty does not merely symbolize the idea but instantiates it immediately. The task of speculative idealism more generally conceived is to comprehend systematically and in the form of thought the unity of nature and free purpose that appears immediately in the thing of beauty and in more mediated forms in higher manifestations of spirit.

Hegel's dismissal of the Kantian claim that art and natural beauty merely symbolize the ideas of reason and his redefinition of the beautiful in art as the 'sensuous appearance of the Idea' have led some to suppose that Hegel's philosophy of art effects a return to classicism or rationalism in aesthetic theory. To take but one recent example, Luc Ferry argues that with Kant 'beauty acquires an independent existence and ceases being the mere reflection of an essence furnishing it with its authentic meaning from without'.²⁹ With Hegel, on the other hand, '[s]ensibility ... loses the autonomy it had acquired with Kant, so that aesthetics becomes once

again, in a very *classical* way, the expression of an idea in the field of the sensible' (29).

The difficulty with this interpretation of Hegel's aesthetic theory, like the projectionist theories of mind alluded to above, is that they inaccurately ascribe to Hegel an expressivist theory of reason which has its immediate roots in Herder and its deeper sources in the long tradition of Neoplatonic metaphysics.³⁰ Nature and history are rational, on this reading of Hegel, because they are expressive embodiments of reason itself. Or, to use Kantian terms, the claim of Hegel's speculative idealism appears to be that reason *schematizes* itself in nature and history and that we, as absolute knowers, know this to be the case. Hegel's critique of Kant consists more generally, then, in breaking down the distinction between the constitutive and the regulative (or reflective) uses of reason, and extending the claims of reason beyond the critical bounds established by Kant. This move is repeated in Hegel's critique of Kant's theory of aesthetic ideas and issues in a full-blown metaphysical theory of beauty according to which the beautiful in nature and art are sensuous expressions of the ideas of supersensuous reason.

What this interpretation fails to recognize, however, is that Hegel's critical reassessment of Kant's theories of the imagination and aesthetic ideas, initiated in *Faith and Knowledge* and developed more explicitly in his later writings, is animated by a more general critique of the theory of concepts that underlies rationalism and classicism and that in Hegel's view remains very much intact in Kant's critical philosophy. In this theory concepts are conceived either as universals that subsist independently of the individuals that instantiate them or, as in Kant's epistemology, as forms of unity that impose order on the matter of sense. The relationship between concepts and instances is established by a schematizing mechanism of some sort, be it the transcendental imagination or the demiurge.

Hegel's theory of the Concept challenges both this traditional theory of concepts and the theories of mental activity that accompany it. Three crucial and interconnected aspects of Hegel's theory of the Concept need to be emphasized. First, in this theory Hegel espouses a form of conceptual realism.³¹ Concepts are real because, in addition to being epistemically determinative of objects, as Kant properly emphasizes, they are ontologically determinative of them. Indeed, it is only because concepts make things what they are that they may be known as what they are. What prevents Hegel's theory at this point from collapsing into a form of transcendental solipsism (according to which the pure 'I' actively produces all that is) is the further claim about the 'location' of these concepts. Concepts are not in the mind; they are *in the world*.³² In its assertion of the extramental reality of conceptual structures, Hegelian idealism breaks decisively with the various forms of psychological idealism that issue from the epistemological programmes of the modern rationalist and empiricist traditions.³³

Second, Hegelian Concepts are concrete universals. This notion of concrete universality specifies further the sense in which concepts are real. Concepts are not only ontologically or metaphysically the most real things in the universe; they are also real in the sense that they do not exist apart from their particularizations. Here again we hear echoes of Aristotle's critique of Plato: Hegel contends that Kant hypostatizes universals in his theory of the categories in much the same way as Plato does in his theory of the Forms.

Third, Hegel's theory of the Concept is holistic and anti-dualist. Speculative logic articulates the system of thought-determinations, the system that Hegel refers to simply as the Concept. The Concept, as Hegel writes in the *Science of Logic*, 'is to be regarded not as the act of self-conscious understanding, not as the *subjective understanding*, but as the [concept] in its own absolute character which constitutes a *stage of nature* as well as of *spirit*' (SL, 586). In asserting that the Concept underlies both nature and spirit Hegel rejects metaphysical dualism and indicates his intention to defend a version of metaphysical monism which refuses to recognize any absolute break between mind/spirit and nature.

Hegel's discussions of Kant's accounts of beauty, imagination, and aesthetic ideas have a largely negative function: they are meant to point to deficiencies internal to Kant's epistemology and metaphysics. Hegel regards Kant's analyses of organic life, intrinsic purposiveness, and the intuitive intellect as more properly speculative. The reason, as we shall see, is that they bring into view the active and concrete universality of the Concept.

From Reflective Teleology to the Active Concept

Kant states in §23 of the *Critique of Judgment* that the reflective principle of purposiveness 'expand[s] our concept of nature, namely, from nature as mere mechanism to the concept of that same nature as art, and that invites us to profound investigations about [how] such a form is possible' (CJ, 99/246). In drawing attention to Kant's notion of 'nature as art', Hegel does not mean to revive a creationist metaphysics in which nature is understood as a product of a divine artisan. In the *Encyclopedia Logic* Hegel refers to this conception of extrinsic purposiveness as merely 'finite' and chastises modern philosophical thought for conceiving purposiveness in 'representational' terms as an external maker who, standing apart from inert and motionless matter, imposes form on this shapeless stuff.³⁴ Here we do not yet have a true concept of purpose in view since the 'purpose' attributed to nature is in fact merely the effect of an external cause. When purposiveness is conceived on the model of extrinsic purposiveness, in other words, it reduces simply to another form of efficient causality.³⁵

Hegel believes that Kant's account of intrinsic purposiveness isolates the true concept of purpose and verges on a proper grasp of the structure of self-determination characteristic of the Concept. In his discussion of 'organized beings' in the third *Critique*, Kant admits that living things cannot be explained fully in terms of mechanical laws and principles of the first *Critique*. The structure of organization in living things is 'one in which everything is a purpose and reciprocally also a means' (*CJ*, 255/376). Organisms are intrinsically purposive in the sense that they constitute a 'system of purposes' in which nothing is 'gratuitous' and nothing happens 'by chance' (*CJ*, 306/420; 256/376). Echoing Kant's observations, Hegel argues that 'within the living [being], the purpose is a determination and activity that is immanent in its [bodily] matter, and all of its members are means for each other as well as ends' (*EL*, §57, 103). As distinct from an extrinsic cause, which produces an effect other than itself, the indwelling purpose of an organic being 'does not pass over, but *preserves* itself, in its operation; i.e., it brings only itself about and is at the *end* what it was in the *beginning* or in its originality: what is truly original comes to be only through this self-preservation' (*EL*, §204A, 280). Living beings are intrinsically purposive, then, precisely because they are not 'brought about' by something other than themselves. They are, rather, self-moving in the manifold senses of that traditional Aristotelian term: i.e., self-developing, self-organizing, self-preserving, and to varying degrees, self-sufficient.

Hegel's remarks about living beings and intrinsic purposiveness are of decisive importance for clarifying his theory of the concrete universality of the Concept. A living being is, according to Hegel, an 'active Concept' or a 'universal that is inwardly determined and determining' (*EL*, §57, 103). Hegel amplifies his position, with explicit reference to Kant's 'Critique of Teleological Judgment', in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*:

In the organic products of Nature we perceive this immediate unity of the Concept and reality; for in a living creature there is perceived in one unity the soul, or the universal, and existence or particularity, which is not the case with inorganic nature. Thus there enters into the Kantian philosophy the conception of the concrete, as that the universal Concept determines the particular.³⁶

These statements reiterate several important things about concrete universals: first, that a universal is concrete if and only if its particulars are self-positing or inwardly articulated; second, that this logical relationship between universality and particularity is exemplified by the functional and purposive relationships between the organic whole and its parts; and third, that Hegelian Concepts or concrete universals are not merely mental entities but real structures of the world.

Because Hegel subscribes to this realist conception of universals, he rejects without qualification Kant's reduction of the principle of nature's intrinsic purposiveness to a merely subjective maxim of reflective judgment. Insofar as it subjectivizes purposiveness, rendering it a feature of our faculty of judgment rather than a feature of the world, Hegel again emphasizes that Kant's philosophy must be deemed a form of subjective idealism.³⁷ By contrast, the concept of purposiveness that Hegel introduces in *Faith and Knowledge* and attempts to justify in the logic and philosophy of nature is objective: organic things are themselves purposive or, to use Hegel's preferred phrase, self-determining. The aim of Hegel's theory of the Concept is to grasp the logical form of this structure of self-determination. By providing a categorial reconstruction of the idea of intrinsic purposiveness, Hegel thus intends to identify a set of categories that are not only absent from Kant's first *Critique* and metaphysics of nature but that are necessary if philosophical thought is to remain responsive to the actual presentations of empirical reality.³⁸ Secondly, Hegel's reconstruction of the categories of organic being works to undermine the disjunction in Kant's critical philosophy between nature determined strictly by mechanical causality and free purpose defined exclusively with reference to the will's capacity to act on the basis of concepts. Non-human organisms certainly do not act explicitly or consciously for the sake of concepts, but they are nevertheless purposive in being self-organizing and self-preserving. The categories of organic being are thus of decisive significance for Hegel because they provide the transition from nature to freedom by enabling a gradualist account of the emergence of self-consciousness and freedom out of the realm of nature.

Hegel summarizes both his objections to Kant's theory of reflective judgment and his alternative account of the self-determining, concrete universality of living things in this difficult passage from the *Science of Logic*:

In ascribing [the teleological principle] to a reflective judgment, [Kant] makes it a connecting middle term between the universal of reason and the individual of intuition; further, he distinguishes this reflective judgment from the determining judgment, the latter merely subsuming the particular under the universal. Such a universal which merely subsumes, is an abstraction which only becomes concrete in something else in the particular. End [*Zweck*], on the contrary, is the concrete universal, which possesses in its own self the moment of particularity and externality and is therefore active and the urge to repel itself from itself. The Concept [*Begriff*], as end, is of course an objective judgment, in which one determination, the subject, namely the concrete Concept, is self-determined, while the other is

not merely a predicate but external objectivity. But the end relation [*Zweckbeziehung*] is not for that reason a reflective judging that considers external objects only according to a unity, as though an intelligence had given this unity for the convenience of our cognitive faculty; on the contrary it is the absolute truth that judges objectively and determines external objectivity absolutely. Thus the end-relation is more than judgment; it is the syllogism of the self-subsistent free Concept that unites itself with itself through objectivity.

(*SL*, 739, translation slightly altered)

The ambition of Hegel's critique of Kant's theory of reflective judgment, at least in his logic and philosophy of nature, is to dissolve the genuine insights of Kant's transcendental epistemology into a realist ontology. The fundamental limitation of Kant's transcendental idealism is that it restricts itself to our subjective acts of judgment. In his account of the 'objective judgment' Hegel shifts attention from these subjective acts to a realist consideration of the being and motion of living things themselves. Hegel is concerned not with how we take organic things to be but rather how organic things determine themselves to be.³⁹ He thus contrasts the abstract universality of the concepts employed in mere subjective judgments with the concrete universality of the ends that, in organic systems (or, to use Hegel's terminology, in 'objective syllogisms'), determine the functions and movements of the various component parts of the living thing.

There are far-reaching metaphysical implications to Hegel's realist defence of the objective purposiveness of organic systems. Most importantly, Hegel believes that his demonstration that the Concept first assumes concrete form in living things calls into question the absoluteness of Kant's distinction between the laws of nature and the laws of freedom: for Hegel it is the phenomenon of life itself that points beyond the great gulf between nature and freedom. In his speculative theory of life, Hegel both spiritualizes Kant's philosophy of nature and, crucially, naturalizes his philosophy of mind and freedom.⁴⁰ For Hegel, nature is not – as Kant's first *Critique* would have it – something 'dead' and absolutely determined: not only mind or the subject but also nature or the object is something (implicitly) self-determining.⁴¹ What Kant's critical philosophy of nature proves unable to grasp, as a result both of the subject-object duality and the mechanistic theory of categories that structure it, is that in life the subject and the object subsist as an as yet undifferentiated unity. Living things are neither exclusively subjective nor exclusively objective. The organism is rather the object that is on the way to becoming a subject: it is the Concept as it is in itself but not yet in and for itself.

In the *Philosophy of Nature* Hegel accentuates both the realist underpinnings of his theory of the Concept and the pivotal significance of the phenomenon of life for speculative philosophy.

Living being is perpetually exposed to danger, and always bears something alien within it. Unlike inorganic being, it can sustain this contradiction. Speculation subsists in this resolution, and it is only for the understanding that the contradiction remains unresolved. Consequently, life may only be grasped speculatively, for it is precisely in life that speculation has existence. This continual action of life is therefore absolute idealism, for that which it becomes is another term, and yet is perpetually being sublated. If life were realistic, it would respect that which is external to it, but it is perpetually checking the reality of this other term, and transforming it into its own self.

Life is therefore the primary *truth*; it is superior to the stars, and to the sun, which although it is individualized, is not a subject. As the union of the Concept with exteriorized existence, in which the Concept maintains itself, life constitutes the Idea; this is also the meaning of Spinoza's proposition that life is adequate to the Concept, although this is of course still a completely abstract expression. Life is not merely the resolution of the opposition between the Concept and reality, but of oppositions in general. Life has being where inner and outer, cause and effect, end and means, subjectivity and objectivity etc., are one and the same.⁴²

This passage reveals the extent to which Hegel's conception of dialectic has its origins in his analysis of life. As that which 'always bears something alien within it', as the resolution of 'oppositions in general', and as that which is 'perpetually checking the reality of this other term, and transforming it into its own self', life is itself intrinsically dialectical and cannot, consequently, be adequately comprehended by the understanding but only by reason and through dialectical thinking.⁴³ But this passage also indicates that there is something misleading about speaking of dialectical thinking as a cognitive activity external to its subject matter. In stating that '[t]his continual action of life is therefore absolute idealism', Hegel refuses to make a distinction between the structures of thinking and that which is thought about. The reason for this refusal is that philosophical science (*Wissenschaft*) (as distinct from phenomenology) is a reconstruction, not of *our* thoughts about the world, but of the thoughtful character of the world itself, i.e., of the Concept. Life *is* absolute idealism not because life provides a paradigm for the 'dialectical method' of absolute idealism, but because the conceptual structures that absolute idealism reconstructs in the form of knowledge are already gathered together (and hence 'conceptualized') in the pre-cognitive and proto-self-conscious structures of life itself.

Comprehending the Intuitive Intellect

The realism of Hegel's absolute idealism must be borne in mind if we are to understand the final element of his speculative critique of the third *Critique*, his analysis of the intuitive intellect. In Kant's account of the intuitive intellect Hegel discovers further rudiments of the theory of the Concept that he articulates in his logic and real philosophy. In §76 and §77 of the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant introduces the idea of an intuitive intellect as a heuristic device for clarifying the essentially discursive and finite character of human understanding. Our understanding, Kant argues, is characterized by the fact that (1) it distinguishes between the possibility and the actuality of things, and (2) it 'moves from the analytically universal to the particular' (*CJ*, 291/407). Both of these peculiarities of human intelligence derive from the fact that our cognition is conditioned by sensuous intuition. According to Kant, what we conceive in the concept is merely possible, while the touchstone of actuality is sensuous givenness. For an intuitive intellect, however, the distinction between possibility and actuality would disappear: what it conceived would be actual and what it intuited would be immediately comprehended. Its knowledge would thus be unconditioned. Moreover, our understanding moves from the analytic universal to the particular because the human mind, though it organizes the sensuous manifold according to the a priori forms of intuition and understanding, does not determine nature in its particularity. Because the particularity of nature is contingent with respect to the categories, we must await the subsumptive work of judgment to demonstrate the accordance of the particular with the universal. An intuitive intellect, on the other hand, would present a whole or a synthetic universal that contains within itself the specific determinations of the particular.

In criticizing Kant's idea of the intuitive intellect Hegel makes use of the 'limit argument' better known from his critique of the Kantian thing-in-itself. According to this argument, in positing a limit for itself thought has already moved beyond and comprehended this limit.⁴⁴ Thus, regarding Kant's distinction between the discursive intellect (which knows only appearances) and the intuitive intellect (which knows things-in-themselves), Hegel writes in *Faith and Knowledge*:

[Kant] himself thinks an intuitive intellect and is led to it as an absolutely necessary Idea. So it is he himself who establishes the opposite experience, [the experience] of thinking a nondiscursive intellect. He himself shows that his cognitive faculty is aware not only of the appearance and of the separation of the possible and the actual in it, but also of Reason and the In-itself. Kant has here before him both the Idea of a Reason in which possibility and actuality are absolutely identical and its appearance as cognitive faculty wherein

they are separated. In the experience of his thinking he finds both thoughts. However, in choosing between the two his nature despised the necessity of thinking the Rational, of thinking an intuitive spontaneity and decided without reservation for appearance.

(FK, 89–90/326)

Kant's appeal to the intuitive intellect, in other words, points at once to his recognition of the finitude of the discursive intellect and to his understanding of reason's drive towards the unconditioned. According to Hegel, the reason why Kant claims that we can only *think* the idea of the intuitive intellect but cannot *know* as an intuitive intellect is that he has antecedently defined knowledge and experience in terms of a discursive intellect with its heterogeneous roots of sensibility and understanding. As we have seen, Hegel points to Kant's transcendental imagination in an effort to show that the division between sensibility and understanding breaks down even within the first *Critique* itself.⁴⁵ But what are we to make, then, of Hegel's apparent counterclaim that, simply by virtue of having cast doubt on Kant's arbitrary division of mind into sensibility and understanding, we have somehow magically acceded to the status of an intuitive intellect?

Hegel is not, as is sometimes assumed, making the wildly idealist claim that reality springs forth spontaneously and absolutely from the thinker's mind (be this God's or Hegel's), with no 'receptive' element at all.⁴⁶ At least in the mature system,⁴⁷ his claims about the intuitive intellect should be understood less as epistemological claims than as logical and ontological ones. They form a piece, in other words, with his overarching demand for an account of nature and freedom no longer restricted by the dogmatic mechanistic assumptions of Kant's metaphysics of nature on the one hand, and the dogmatic voluntaristic assumptions of Kant metaphysics of freedom on the other. This monistic account of nature and freedom would be *of* an intuitive intellect (but not *by* an intuitive intellect) because, on Hegel's view, that is what the world-whole is: the synthetic or concrete universal that contains within itself the specific determinations of the particular.⁴⁸ Kant's intuitive intellect is thus just another name for the world-whole or the actual Concept. The task of logic is to reconstruct the pure form of the self-developing Concept; the task of real philosophy is to reconstruct the self-determination of the Concept in the objective realms of nature and spirit.

Paul Guyer has argued that Hegel's reinterpretation of the *Critique of Judgment* reveals the radically different *Weltanschauungen* to which Kant and Hegel subscribe.

For Kant it is, [to] be sure, necessary for us to strive to be free through reason and morality, but it is in some sense contingent that

the world is receptive to our freedom as well as to the production of art capable of representing this freedom. For Kant, neither our harmony with the world around us nor our harmonious representation of our relation to the world is as an inevitable outcome of the evolution of the spirit as Hegel would have it.⁴⁹

Now, while Guyer is undoubtedly right to say that Kant and Hegel have very different worldviews, I believe that his characterization of Hegel's worldview is misleading. On the interpretation of Hegel which I have developed in this essay, the aim of Hegel's critique of the third *Critique* is to undermine the motivating sources of Kant's belief that nature is only contingently receptive to our freedom. Hegel believes that he can accomplish this first, and negatively, by showing that the concept/intuition distinction upon which Kant's critical philosophy is founded and which gives rise to his understanding of the relationship between nature and freedom breaks down in Kant's own discussions of the imagination, aesthetic ideas, natural and artistic beauty, organisms, and the intuitive intellect. Second, and positively, Hegel proposes a revised understanding of the relationship between nature and freedom based on his theory of the Concept. Guyer claims that the substance of this understanding is that for Hegel it is 'guarantee[d] that we must reach an accommodation with nature' (99). I believe, on the contrary, that this is not Hegel's position but represents merely an extension of the Kantian position that Hegel seeks to displace. Kant, as we have seen, construes the relationship between nature and freedom as an external one. He believes, moreover, that the coincidence between nature and freedom that would constitute the highest good is, from the standpoint of our finite intellects, only a contingent possibility. The most that we can do is console ourselves with the *hope* that this relationship is in fact necessary. This hope leads reason to form the idea of an intuitive intellect that would actually comprehend this necessity. Although we cannot occupy the position of this intuitive intellect, the beautiful in nature provides us with hints that our hope is well founded and that a supersensuous ground of nature and freedom does indeed exist.

In the section on 'Actuality' in the *Encyclopedia Logic* Hegel suggests – in a series of passages in which it is difficult not to hear anticipations of Nietzsche – that Kant's philosophy of freedom, with its pious hope for a supersensuous reconciliation of nature and freedom, has its roots in resentment.⁵⁰ Although Hegel does not use the word 'resentment' (he speaks instead of 'the standpoint of unfreedom'), he describes the concept well: this is the view in which 'we shift that blame for what befalls us onto other people, onto unfavorable circumstances, and the like' (*EL*, §147A, 223). The resentment at work in Kant's thought is, of course, more global: it is that of nature by freedom, and of contingency by a will that wishes

that its sovereignty were actually unconditioned. More fundamentally still, it is the resentment that drives our thinking to divide ourselves into two warring halves – one contingent, the other necessary; one natural, the other free – and to identify our true self with that which is unsullied by the contingent and natural.

While it is not possible in the context of this essay to provide a detailed analysis of Hegel's theory of concrete freedom, I should like to suggest that it is here that Hegel's alternative worldview emerges most clearly. Within this worldview, philosophical thought articulates a concept of freedom that ceases to be resentful and that ceases to look for 'guarantees' of its merely external accommodation to nature because it has come to understand the immanent dialectical relationship between freedom and nature, and between contingency and necessity.⁵¹ True freedom, according to Hegel, cannot be conceived in simple opposition either to external (causal) necessity or to contingency. True freedom 'presupposes' both necessity and contingency and 'sublates' both within itself (*EL*, §145A, 218–19; §158A, 233). Hegel means several things by this: (a) that nature, to the extent that it displays the self-organizing structures of the Concept, is itself implicitly free; (b) that spirit, as the realm of freedom for itself, is not abstractly other than nature, but has emerged out of nature and contains nature within itself; (c) that freedom does not reside in a separate faculty or have a noumenal source but is the result of complex series of physiological, psychological, social, and historical processes; (d) that freedom should not be understood as freedom from causal necessity, but rather as a capacity to use causal powers to achieve self-positing ends; and (e) that freedom does not involve simple liberation from contingency and chance but rather emerges through a cumulative process of learning from misfortune and of developing habits, practices, and institutions that render free beings less vulnerable to contingent happenings in nature and history. All these senses of freedom converge in Hegel's definition of freedom as 'being with oneself (or at home with oneself) in an other' (*Beisichselbstsein in einem Andern*) (*EL*, §24 A2, 58). Living things are free (in pre-practical and pre-theoretical terms) insofar as they are not simply determined from without by external forces but have (preconsciously) organized themselves as self-sustaining wholes and in self-positing relations to an external environment. Spirit is practically free insofar as it has made a home for itself within the field of nature from which it has arisen and on the basis of which it realizes its purposes. Spirit is theoretically free insofar as it has comprehended itself not as an abstract subject set over and against hostile substance, but – to recall the famous phrase from the *Phenomenology of Spirit* – as substance that is just as much subject.⁵² These manifold forms of natural and spiritual freedom are not, according to Hegel, merely to be hoped for: they are facts of the world to be recognized, described, and explained.

Conclusion

In summary, then, Hegel believes that Kant's accounts of beauty and organic being in the third *Critique* explode the restrictive conceptions of experience and nature articulated in the first *Critique*. Although beautiful things and organisms present themselves as undeniable facts of our experience, the holistic and purposive structures which they exhibit phenomenally cannot be accounted for in terms of Kant's actual theory of nature. The mere presence of these phenomena within the field of experience thus reveals the 'finitude' of the Kantian categories. These categories have explanatory force only for the finite realm of matter in motion; they prove wholly inadequate to the 'infinite' structures of life and spirit, which for Hegel include not only beautiful things and organisms, but most importantly, the ego or self-determining subjectivity.⁵³ Kant's strategy of supplementing the theory of categories defended in the first *Critique* with the subjective maxims of reflective judgment points, of course, to Kant's own recognition of the limits of his philosophy of nature. However, Kant's steadfast adherence to the founding – and in Hegel's view, dogmatic – presuppositions of his critical philosophy prevents him from entertaining the more radical and philosophically necessary project taken up by Hegel in his logic and real philosophy: that of developing an alternative theory of categories, one adequate to the being not only of dead matter but also to that of life and free spirit.

Underlying this new theory of categories, moreover, is the realist account of concepts that Hegel opposes to the psychological account characteristic of Kant's subjective idealism.⁵⁴ What Hegel discerns in Kant's discussions of the productive imagination, aesthetic ideas, and the intuitive intellect is the dim outline, not of some supra-individual *subject's* concept, but rather of *the* Concept. Although the Concept is knowable by the human mind, it is by no means reducible to a mental state. Moreover, since the Concept is not the possession of subjective mind, it cannot play the role of constituting objectivity ascribed to it by transcendental idealism. Hegel's Concept, in other words, does not project the world for itself in the way that the transcendental ego projects the phenomenal field of nature for itself. This is because the world is, according to Hegel, nothing other than the self-determining Concept itself. Our subjective thinking does not impose a structure on the world: it recognizes – or elevates into self-consciousness – the conceptual structure of the world itself.

Finally, while Hegel does believe that the evolution of spirit out of nature and in history has occurred through the subduing of contingency, he does not claim that this subduing and the actualization of freedom it has necessarily effected are metaphysically guaranteed by God or any other transcendent agent. For Hegel it is the world itself that organizes itself into purposive wholes – organisms, ecosystems, social communities,

and historical traditions – and in doing so actualizes the freedom of the Concept. The necessity which Hegel discerns in this process of free self-actualization is neither prognostic nor merely a matter of faith; it is recognitive and consists in the knowledge provided by the reflective reconstructions of the pure Concept in logic and of the actual Concept in the philosophies of nature and spirit.

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Notes

- 1 Frederick C. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 227–8; Samuel Atlas, *From Critical to Speculative Idealism: The Philosophy of Solomon Maimon* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), pp. 279–84; Tom Rockmore, *Hegel's Circular Epistemology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 16–43.
- 2 Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, p. 240.
- 3 For some recent defences of Kant against Hegel's criticisms, see Karl Ameriks' 'Hegel's Critique of Kant's Theoretical Philosophy', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 46 (1985) and 'The Hegelian Critique of Kantian Morality', in Bernard den Ouden and Marcia Moen (eds) *New Essays on Kant* (New York: Peter Lang, 1987); Paul Guyer, 'Thought and Being: Hegel's Critique of Kant's Theoretical Philosophy', in F. C. Beiser (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Sally S. Sedgwick, 'On the Relation of Pure Reason to Content: A Reply to Hegel's Critique of Formalism in Kant's Ethics', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 49 (1988) and 'Hegel's Critique of Subjective Idealism in Kant's Ethics', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 26 (1988). For a collection of essays largely more sympathetic to Hegel, see Stephen Priest (ed.) *Hegel's Critique of Kant* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987). On Hegel's critique of Kant's theoretical philosophy, see Robert Stern, *Hegel, Kant and the Structure of the Object* (London: Routledge, 1990). On Hegel's critique of Kantian ethics, see Allen Wood, *Hegel's Ethical Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) and Kenneth R. Westphal, 'Hegel's Critique of Kant's Moral World View', *Philosophical Topics*, 19(2) (Fall 1991).
- 4 Two recent notable exceptions are Rudolf Makkreel's *Imagination and Interpretation in Kant* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990) and John H. Zammito's *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
- 5 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 3rd edn, trans. Lewis White Beck (New York: Macmillan, 1993), p. 95. Similarly, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St Martin's, 1965), Kant writes:

If we consider in its whole range the knowledge obtained for us by the understanding, we find that what is peculiarly distinctive of reason in its attitude to this body of knowledge, is that it prescribes and seeks to achieve its *systematisation*, that is, to exhibit the connection of its parts in conformity with a single principle.

(534/B673)

- 6 Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 45.
- 7 Kant characterizes the problematic taken up by his critique of the faculty of judgment most succinctly in the Introduction to the third *Critique*. See Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, trans. W. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), pp. 14–15/175–6. Hereafter cited as *CJ*, followed by page number(s).
- 8 G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 3.
- 9 This is the real meaning of Hegel's famous complaint against Kant that he attempted 'to learn to swim before he ventured into the water'. G. W. F. Hegel, *The Encyclopedia Logic*, trans. T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), §10, p. 34. Hereafter cited as *EL*, followed by section and page number(s).
- 10 Hegel's break with Reinhold shows up most clearly in the *Difference* essay and consists in his repudiation of a foundationalist strategy of epistemic justification. In what proves perhaps the most decisive move in the development of his speculative idealism, Hegel proposes instead a non-foundationalist strategy of circular justification. This strategy is intimately connected with Hegel's conception of system. See Rockmore, op. cit., ch. 3.
- 11 Hegel's claims about the presuppositionlessness and autonomy of his system are not meant to suggest that nothing can be known about the world (or about knowing) prior to systematic philosophy. In the *Encyclopedia Logic* Hegel makes clear that systematic thinking 'presupposes' – though in a hermeneutic rather than an epistemic sense – the findings of the common sense, understanding, and the empirical sciences (*EL*, §16, pp. 39–41 and §80, pp. 125–8). In the *Philosophy of Nature* he reiterates this claim even more forcefully: 'It is not only that philosophy must accord with the experience nature gives rise to; in its formation and in its development, philosophic science presupposes and is conditioned by empirical physics' (*Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, ed. and trans. M. J. Petry (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970), Vol. 1, §246, Remark, p. 197). Thus it is not only possible to garner a great deal of knowledge about the world prior to comprehending philosophically that which one knows; philosophical comprehension itself depends on the results of empirical inquiry, as these are the very source of the thought-determinations with which it works. While the thought-determinations of speculative logic are not arrived at independently of empirical reality, they are not justified by appeal to experience. The claim that a category is *necessary* for thought is, as it were, won for that category only by situating it within a complete system of thought-determinations. The philosophical system justifies the results of human inquiry, not foundationally, but by rendering explicit and with increasing degrees of comprehensiveness the interrelated and successively more complex networks of categories deployed in the natural, human, and philosophical sciences.
- 12 G. W. F. Hegel, *The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, ed. and trans. W. Cerf and H. S. Harris (Albany: SUNY Press, 1977), [p. 89].
- 13 Kant, *CJ*, pp. 18–19/179. Kant identifies both aesthetic and teleological judgments as species of reflective judgment. In aesthetic judgments the sought universal is the common feeling which serves as the non-conceptual ground of the universality and necessity of judgments of taste. In teleological judgments about nature the sought universal is the idea of a technic of nature or of nature's purposiveness for our power of judgment, an idea, Kant argues, which we must presuppose in order to conceive of nature as a coherent system

of empirical laws.

- 14 In 'The Hermeneutic Significance of the *Sensus Communis*' (*International Philosophical Quarterly* (June 1997) I have explored this topic more fully by examining the relationship between Kant's theory of reflective judgment, Hegel's conception of the activity of reason, and the theory of hermeneutic understanding advanced by Hans-Georg Gadamer.
- 15 On Kant's critical philosophy as a form of subjective idealism, see Hegel, *EL*, §42, Addition 3, pp. 85–6.
- 16 G. W. F. Hegel, 'The Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism', trans. M. J. Inwood, in M. J. Inwood (ed.) *Hegel: Selections* (New York: Macmillan, 1989), p. 87.
- 17 Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*, trans. R. Snell (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1965), p. 80.
- 18 For a detailed analysis of the relationship between beauty and appearance in Schiller, as well as of Schiller's influence on the post-Kantian idealists, see Cyrus Hamlin, "'Schönheit als Erscheinung": Schiller and Hölderlin between Kant and Hegel', in Hans-Friedrich Fulda and Rolf-Peter Horstmann (eds.) *Hegel und die 'Kritik der Urteilskraft'* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1990).
- 19 On the concept of the 'literary absolute', see Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, trans. and intro. by Philip Barnard and Cheryl Lester (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988).
- 20 This ambiguity is perhaps most clearly illustrated by the presence of two conflicting models of moral progress in Schiller's *Aesthetic Education*. The first, the 'three levels theory', sees humanity progressing from a natural condition, to an aesthetic condition, and finally to a condition of moral freedom. The second, the 'synthesis model', asserts that nature and freedom are reconciled in the aesthetic. See Reginald Snell, *op. cit.*, Introduction, pp. 14–16.
- 21 As Stephen Houlgate observes in *Freedom, Truth and History* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 128:

the mature Hegel's disagreement with his aestheticising contemporaries concerns not art as such, but the question of whether wholeness and concreteness in our thinking can only be achieved through an aesthetic mode of discourse, or whether purely conceptual or 'abstract' thought can be brought to concreteness, too.

- 22 Makkreel, *op. cit.*, provides a detailed reconstruction of the role of the imagination in reflective judgments of taste and objective purposiveness. My account is indebted to his analysis of Kant's theory of the reflective specification of the categories.
- 23 Cf. *EL*, §55, Remark, p. 102: 'But the *presence* of living organizations and of artistic beauty shows the *actuality* of the *Ideal* even for the senses and for intuition.'
- 24 In point of fact Kant means to claim none of these things about the presentation of the beautiful. He does not argue that the beautiful enables a direct intuition of reason's ideas, but only that it symbolizes them. And a symbol, as Kant makes quite clear in §56 of the *Critique of Judgment*, is not a schema. Second, he does not claim that we 'experience' freedom in contemplating the beautiful in nature but rather that natural beauty testifies (and primarily at the level of feeling, not cognition) to the possibility that the ends of nature harmonize with the ends of freedom. This is not an experience as defined by the first *Critique*; it is at most a thought for which there is some evidence,

whose possibility is accounted for in the transcendental deduction of aesthetic judgments, but whose actuality remains wholly indemonstrable. Finally, Kant's account of the possibility of aesthetic experience at no point calls into question the argument for transcendental idealism. While judgments of taste about the beautiful are a priori, they are not a synthetic a priori judgments of experience and make no objective claims. In aesthetic judgment the presentation is referred, not to an object, but to the subject's disinterested feeling of pleasure. The universality and necessity that attach to aesthetic judgment thus take the form of the a priori claim that this presentation will elicit the same feeling of pleasure from all other judging subjects. The beautiful symbolizes the moral because, like the moral law, it organizes a community of disinterested judging subjects with respect to a ground that lies beyond the transcendently ideal order of objective appearances.

- 25 Cf. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson (New York: Humanities Press 1955) Vol. III, p. 441 and p. 473. Hereafter cited as LHP III followed by page numbers.
- 26 See Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. Richard Taft (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).
- 27 Frank Farrell outlines the history of the projectivist theory of mind in *Subjectivity, Realism, and 'Postmodernism': The Recovery of the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), ch. 1.
- 28 'As if', Hegel writes in *Faith and Knowledge*, 'the aesthetic Idea did not have its *exposition* in the Idea of reason, and the Idea of reason did not have its *demonstration* in beauty' (G. W. F. Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, Ed. and trans. W. Cerf and H. S. Harris (Albany: SUNY Press, 1977) 87/323; my italic).
- 29 Luc Ferry, *Homo Aestheticus: The Invention of Taste in the Democratic Age*, trans. Robert De Loazia (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 28.
- 30 Charles Taylor's influential exposition of this view is found in the first chapter of his study *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975). A similar position is defended by Michael Inwood in *Hegel* (London: Routledge, Kegan & Paul, 1983).
- 31 My account here is indebted to Thomas E. Wartenberg's essay, 'Hegel's Idealism: The Logic of Conceptuality', in Beiset, *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*. In characterizing Hegel's theory of the Concept, I prefer the term 'conceptual realism' to Wartenberg's 'conceptual idealism'.
- 32 As a rule, Hegel uses the term 'representation' (*Vorstellung*) to talk about mental states and reserves the terms 'concept' (*Begriff*) and 'thought' (*Gedanke* or *Denkbestimmung*) for the real conceptual structures of the world.

Thought is an expression which attributes the determination contained therein primarily to consciousness. But inasmuch as it is said that understanding, reason, is in the objective world, that mind and nature have universal laws to which their life and changes conform, then it is conceded that the determinations of thought equally have objective value and existence.

G. W. F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969), p. 51. Hereafter cited as *SL*, followed by page number(s).

- 33 A point made by Wartenberg, op. cit., p. 117.
- 34 Hegel, *EL*, §§57–8, p. 103 and §§204–5, pp. 279–82.
- 35 Hegel clearly rejects the interpretation of 'creation' in terms of the model of extrinsic purposiveness.

[T]he Concept is what truly comes first, and things are what they are through the activity of the Concept that dwells in them and reveals itself in them. This comes up in our religious consciousness when we say that God created the world out of nothing or, in other words, that all finite things have emerged from the fullness of God's thoughts and from his divine decrees. This involves the recognition that thought, and, more precisely, the Concept, is the infinite form, or *the free, creative activity that does not need a material at hand outside it in order to realise itself.*

(*EL*, p. 241, my italic)

- 36 Hegel, *LHP*, III, pp. 471–2 (translation slightly altered).
 37 Hegel, *SL*, p. 738; *LHP* III, p. 472.
 38 Hegel disputed the adequacy of the 'dead' or purely mathematical conception of matter that Kant attempts to derive from the categories of the first *Critique* and sought to introduce dynamical conceptions of matter and force which he believed were required to make sense of the full range of natural phenomena, including organisms. See Kenneth R. Westphal, 'On Hegel's Early Critique of Kant's Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science', in Stephen Houlgate (ed.) *Hegel and the Philosophy of Nature* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995).
 39 Hegel's realist objections to Kant's merely reflective treatment of life are reiterated in the *Aesthetics*: 'Now this ideality is not at all only *our* reflection on life; it is *objectivity* present in the living subject himself, whose existence, therefore, we may style an "objective idealism"'. G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Arts*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), Vol. I, p. 123.
 40 Frederick Beiser has emphasized the centrality of *Naturphilosophie* to Hegel and Schelling's critique of transcendental idealism. Both thinkers, he argues, should be seen in the tradition of 'vitalistic materialism', which

goes back to Bruno and the early free-thinkers of seventeenth-century England. . . . If it seems strange to regard Hegel as a materialist, given all his talk about 'spirit', then we must lay aside the usual mechanistic picture of materialism. We also must not forget that for Hegel, spirit is only the highest degree of organization and development of the organic powers within nature. If it were anything more, Hegel would relapse into the very dualism he condemns in Kant and Fichte.

(Frederick C. Beiser, 'Introduction: Hegel and the Problem of Metaphysics', in Beiser *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, pp. 8–9)

A highly interesting account of Hegel's alternative to traditional mechanistic and vitalist theories of life is provided by David Lamb in *Hegel: From Foundation to System* (The Hague: Martinus Nihoff, 1980). Lamb likens Hegel's categorial account of the organism to the account of 'organismic biology' developed in Bertalanffy's General System Theory (pp. 117–25).

- 41 See Burkhard Tuschling, 'Intuitiver Verstand, absolute Identität, Idee: Thesen zu Hegels früher Rezeption der "Kritik der Urteilskraft"', in Fulda and Horstmann, op. cit., p. 185.
 42 G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, ed. and trans. M. J. Petry (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970), Vol. III, p. 10; translation slightly altered.
 43 Cf. Tuschling, op. cit., p. 185.
 44 Paul Guyer quite rightly points out the fallaciousness of this argument:

But this form of argument, which was introduced into modern philosophy in Descartes's *Third Meditation* but can be traced all the way to Plato and Augustine, is not only one of the oldest arguments in the philosophers' book, it is also one of the worst. It simply is not true that one must recognize the existence of something that does not have a certain property in order to conceive of that property as a defect or limit.

(‘Thought and Being’, p. 204)

- 45 It is presumably for this reason that Hegel makes the otherwise perplexing claim that the ‘transcendental imagination is itself intuitive intellect’ (*FK*, 89/325).
- 46 Pippin rejects this Neoplatonic interpretation of Hegel as well. The Hegel who emerges from his reconstruction, however, is a transcendental idealist, not a realist of the type which I have been describing. See Robert B. Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfaction of Self-Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 39.
- 47 This qualification is important because of Hegel's adherence, in his writings prior to 1804, to the Fichtean-Schellingian notion that the absolute is disclosed in a non-discursive act of intellectual intuition. Later Hegel consistently repudiates both the idea of aconceptual intuition and the strategy of discovering a single foundationalist principle for the philosophical system. See Kenneth R. Westphal, ‘Kant, Hegel, and the Fate of “the” Intuitive Intellect’, in S. Sedgwick (ed.) *The Idea of a System of Transcendental Idealism* (forthcoming, 1997).
- 48 As evidence of this position I would point to *EL*, §55, Remark, p. 102, where Hegel states:

The outstanding merit of the *Critique of Judgment* is that Kant has expressed in it the notion and even the thought of the *Idea*. The notion of an *intuitive understanding*, of *inner purposiveness*, etc., is the *universal* concurrently thought of as *concrete* in itself. It is only in these notions that Kant's philosophy shows itself to be *speculative*.

- 49 Paul Guyer, ‘Hegel on Kant's Aesthetics: Necessity and Contingency in Beauty and Art’, in Fulda and Horstmann, op. cit., pp. 82–3. See also Guyer's more detailed analysis of Kant and Hegel on the intuitive intellect in ‘Thought and Being’, pp. 198–205.
- 50 Westphal makes a similar observation about Hegel's proximity to Nietzsche in ‘Hegel's Critique of Kant's Moral World View’, p. 138.
- 51 See George di Giovanni, ‘The Category of Contingency in the Hegelian Logic’, and John W. Burbidge, ‘The Necessity of Contingency: An Analysis of Hegel's Chapter on “Actuality” in the *Science of Logic*’, both collected in Lawrence S. Stepelevich (ed.) *Selected Essays on G. W. F. Hegel* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1993). See also Stephen Houlgate, ‘Necessity and Contingency in Hegel's *Science of Logic*’, *The Owl of Minerva*, 27(1) (Fall 1995).
- 52 G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 10. Cf. *EL*, §213, p. 287.
- 53 In ‘The Dialectic of Teleology’ (*Philosophical Topics*, 19(2) (Fall 1991)), W. deVries argues that by restricting teleological explanation to a merely regulative or subjective heuristic function Kant effectively renders self-knowledge impossible. Kant of course acknowledges this point in the Paralogisms, with

reference to the transcendental ego. But the issue, as deVries believes Hegel recognizes, is far more encompassing and disruptive. In the first place, if it is true that organic beings can only be understood in terms of a concept of teleology (with, for example, its subconcepts of purpose, function, internal relations, etc.), then Kant renders the scientific treatment of organic being in general (biology) impossible (pp. 53–4).

The other, and I believe deeper, argument Hegel aims at the Kantian position is that it makes it impossible for knowledge to be self-reflective, for knowledge to know what knowledge is. The objection can be generalized into the assertion that Kant's position makes any knowledge of spiritual (that is, intentional or psychological) phenomena impossible, for all spiritual phenomena, including the process of knowledge, are essentially teleologically characterized.

(p. 54)

- 54 See Wartenberg, *op. cit.*, for a clear and thoughtful discussion of the nature of Hegel's 'conceptual idealism' and its irreducibility to a form of subjective idealism. See also Kenneth R. Westphal, *Hegel's Epistemological Realism* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989), esp. chs 10 and 11.