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Kant and German Idealism

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Alfredo Ferrarin

Reason in Kant and Hegel

Das ist nun das dritte Werk der Alten, das ich sehe, und immer derselbe große Sinn. Eine zweite Natur, die zu bürgerlichen Zwecken handelt, das ist ihre Baukunst…
J. W. Goethe, *Italienische Reise*

Abstract: In this paper I want to compare and contrast Kant and Hegel on reason. While both emphasize the close connection between reason and its ends, motivations and needs, and denounce a futile understanding of reason as a formal, instrumental, or simply logical reasoning, they diverge on how to interpret reason's restlessness, teleology and life. After a section illustrating some uncritical assumptions widespread among readings of Kant, I move to a treatment of their respective views on reason's self-realization (the relation between thought and the I, concepts and intuitions, faith and history), and conclude by showing the main differences in their respective understandings of method, dialectic, limit and ideas.

1 Thought without realization. Introduction

I have recently written two books, one on Kant and one on Hegel.[1] As I was completing them, I realized something I had not clearly or explicitly thought out at first. As I wrote my Kant book, I realized that I was often trying to respond to Hegel's critique of Kant. The sketch of Kant's idea of reason that surfaced with greater and greater necessity to my mind was indebted to what I interpreted as Kant's possible reply to what I began to identify as Hegel's onesided reading, if not misunderstanding, of Kant.

As I wrote my Hegel book, while deploring that Hegel never took seriously the Doctrine of Method of the first Critique or even the Dialectic which he was one of the few (and first) to praise, I realized that Hegel tried to solve, or give a very different version of, some problems which I had isolated as internal to the Doctrine of Method itself.

1 *The Powers of Pure Reason. Kant and the Cosmic Idea of Philosophy*, Chicago 2015; *Il pensare e l'io. Hegel e la critica di Kant*, Rome 2016.

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Eventually realizing something we had not thought out at first is a case in point. Sometimes what drives our ideas are motivations we are not aware of, and the spontaneity of mental life is beyond the control of our will. The tension between natural and constructive metaphors for reason is one obvious example of a resilient, surd, possibly insoluble core that forms human reason's lot and therefore returns at decisive moments in the history of philosophy. In the Doctrine of Method, Kant often portrays reason according to two models which are far from overlapping: the model of the organism and the model of the architect. Reason is a seed (*Keim*) out of which an organism grows and develops internally as a system, and it is an architect who plans an edifice of laws, the system of reason's a priori cognitions. That reason should be an end to itself and that it should set itself ends involves two concepts of teleology as different as the finality of a human being qua natural and qua will transcending nature. In one respect reason is subject to a force it does not make (and possibly even know), and every member of a species naturally follows a predetermined course; in the other, reason is self-making and presupposes individuality as the distinction of oneself from the species as one introduces change by producing something new. Life is for every organism of a distinct species the same, but the architect's deliberate and intentional construction of an edifice is an individual project. This non-identity between organism and architect, between species and individual, between life and will, cannot be taken as a mere inconsistency on Kant's part. It is a decisive tension that keeps Kant's reason alive.

Part of this tension can be rephrased as follows: reason works through the transcendental apperception and the I-think, but is irreducible to individual self-consciousness and to the subject of thinking. Often, and starting with Fichte and Hegel, we tend to conflate the problems of a philosophy of reason with those of a philosophy of subjectivity, and the two again are by no means the same. In fact, I think that this non-identity between reason and subjectivity may well be the fundamental problem Kant bequeaths to post-Kantian philosophy.

Kant discovers that the alternative between analysis and a priori on the one hand, and synthesis and experience on the other, is a false one. Reason is an a priori synthesis. It is neither a formal and subjective arrangement of contents coming from without nor is it affected by experience, for it generates its own contents. As such, it does not inhabit a realm of forms alternative to reality, but has a force that allows it to extend itself to the world in the shape of a legislation over nature and freedom. It is because the question of reason's powers begins thus to be raised that Kant speaks of its instincts, interests, needs, destiny, ends; and Hegel, who pushes this new thought to its extreme consequences, speaks of reason's impulse to realize itself in the world. In both Kant and Hegel the separation between eros and logos cannot hold any more; in fact, what we find is an eroti-

cized logos, or, in early modern philosophy's terms, a recasting of the relation between *cogito* and *conatus*. Even before – specifically in the second Critique – reason is recognized as of itself practical, in both Kant and Hegel reason seems animated by a drive to be; and for it to be is for it to exercize itself.

Both denounce defective understandings of reason. Kant speaks of *vernünfteln*, Hegel of *räsonnieren* to denote an insubstantial and futile use of reason which, more absorbed by its own distinctions than by the necessity to follow the thing at hand over which it ineffectually "hovers", adopts a formal, technical or instrumental argumentation. What is thereby lost in Kant is reason's relation to its ends, in Hegel reason's relation to reality. In both, the defective use of reason construes it as one of its several functions as it reduces reason to the understanding, so that what is thereby lost is the inner articulation of reason in its different modes of activity.

What I realized as I wrote the Hegel book is that the tension internal to ideas, which in the Architectonic of the *Critique of pure Reason* are both a seed and a design, is mirrored in Hegel's logic. Hegel inherits Kant's tension in the duplicity of thought qua spontaneous force that at first moves unconsciously and qua absolute self-consciousness. Thought is for Hegel reason's force and life, a logical instinct driven by the desire to be-at-home in the world, and at once the knowledge of its self-realization in the world. Naturally Hegel's solution to the problem of the relation between thought and I, between reason and subjectivity, differs from Kant's, and Hegelians may well point out the advantage of making thematic life and with it the relation between internal and external teleology as integral to the Idea's immanent development. However that may be and if in the end it is more important to show the differences between Kant and Hegel than their points of contact, however, I think it is crucial to see how their divergences are best understood as the result of what is initially the common ground they share. In order to see that, calling into question some assumptions of Hegel's critique of Kant is indispensable.

This is the backdrop of my discussion of the meaning of reason in Kant and in Hegel.

2 The standard reading of Kant

Let me begin with a few points about the Doctrine of Method. Key to Kant's new conception of reason is its teleology. Philosophy consists more in the promotion of reason's ends than in logical self-consistency or in the instrument of mankind's progress. Reason is a legislative, end-setting, self-organizing, architectonic, unifying and autonomous power. The problem that moves Kant in his concep-

tion of reason is a metaphysical one, and critical inquiries serve the ultimate metaphysical need of reason. This is why I think we must challenge the widespread tendency to ascribe mentalistic premises to Kant and to treat the problem of skepticism (the response to Hume) as the issue that animates critical arguments. In my book I have tried to show the limits of what I have called the standard reading of Kant. This widespread form of interpretation has failed to do justice to Kant's philosophy primarily because it is infected with several uncritical and unjustified reductionist assumptions. Two are particularly egregious: a compartimentalization of the first Critique, and an isolation of each Critique from the others.

Five reasons why the standard reading falls short, all of which result from these assumptions, are the following. First, it misunderstands pure reason's finitude by construing it as the situatedness of human nature. Second, it assumes an implicit positivism, which in turn legitimates its dismissal of ideas and noumena through the reduction of the Transcendental Dialectic to the thesis that we cannot know things in themselves. Third, it ascribes to reason the presence of inert and given forms, akin to natural or innate faculties we are endowed with, and cannot grasp that reason is activity and a priori synthesis. Fourth, it operates with an impoverished notion of philosophy as conceptual analysis that prudently stays away from all concerns with ends and worth and cannot recognize the pervasive importance of cosmic philosophy or the subordination of scientific cognitions to it. Fifth, it conflates concepts and ideas. The formation, function, identity and goals of concepts and ideas differ sharply. The standard reading does not respect this crucial difference. Nor does it recognize the even more fundamental fact that the different functions are adopted by pure reason according to its different needs and ends because it portrays reason all too often in the terms of the understanding: adopting a method from without, functioning as a tool for ends it has not determined, being subjected to criteria of truth and effectiveness it finds as ready-made.

At the same time, it must be acknowledged that the standard reading is substantially justified on textual grounds. Scholars can always appeal to statements made by Kant himself supporting their simplifications. For, unfortunately, it is Kant himself who all too often frames questions concerning reason in terms of understanding, especially after 1781. It is Kant who proves indecisive and ambivalent on the role of ideas and the status of cognition. When he retrospectively summarizes what he has accomplished in a certain text, Kant can be incredibly misleading. Furthermore, Kant's fine distinctions hide numerous ambiguities, oscillations, and occasional contradictions.

It would therefore be quite unfair to blame Hegel for misconstruing Kant's philosophy, when all Hegel does is carry some statements made by Kant to

their ultimate conclusions. It must be acknowledged and affirmed with the utmost forcefulness that Kant is the first who progressively reduces the complexity of the 1781 *Critique of pure Reason* to the impoverished version we all are familiar with, until in the Introduction to the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, in one of the most incredible retrospective judgments on his trajectory, he makes the design and the accomplishments of the first version of the *Critique of pure Reason* unrecognizable.

To be sure, then, Hegel does simplify Kant's thought. But one point must be presupposed. However many serious reservations we may harbor on Kant's philosophy, in both the *Logic* and the *Encyclopaedia* Hegel writes that there cannot be any hesitations that it is on its ground that we build the new philosophy (*WL* 1:59 / *SL* 62, *EA* §12 / *ENZ* §20).

Hegel appropriates the transformation of metaphysics into logic that Kant has inaugurated with the Transcendental Analytic (*WL* 1:45 / *SL* 51), and recognizes the great novelty of Kant's reason. In particular, he concedes that Kant is the first to distinguish thematically between an infinite thought and a finite cognition, between abstract understanding and reason as unity of opposites (cf. *ENZ* §45 and Z, §467 Z). The problem, he thinks, is that Kant conceives of understanding and reason as of two independent faculties (*WL* 2:262 / *SL* 590, *ENZ* §60 A). By distinguishing a Transcendental Analytic regarding concepts from a Transcendental Dialectic regarding ideas, Kant separates two aspects of the same rational activity and assigns them different functions and criteria. Kant separates reason and understanding because he separates the constitutive work of pure concepts in experience from the regulative function of reason that opens up the problem of the unconditional and of totality, and he treats reason as the source of error.

True, contradiction had been too long ascribed to the realm of illusion, while Kant has gone beyond the notion that it is simply inconsistency and the appearance of arbitrariness, admits Hegel: now dialectic is no longer the logic of error and eristics separated from the analytic, the logic of truth; now contradiction is internal to reason. Dialectic is a necessary activity of reason ("*ein notwendiges Tun der Vernunft*", *WL* 1:52 / *SL* 56). Analytic and dialectic are equally indispensable for the system of pure reason. Unfortunately, though, for Hegel Kant remains disappointing because he hastens to solve the contradiction by distinguishing respects and points of view and basically denying we are talking about an actual internal contradiction.

Even more disappointing is Kant's conflation of original synthetic unity of apperception and the I of representation, by which Hegel means the subject of a finite consciousness as opposed to objects. In this manner critical reason takes its bearings by a preliminary separation of form and content and seems

to limit itself to respecting the untouchable core of experience. This is why Hegel speaks of timidity: reason sacrifices its highest ambitions because it wants to rely on the perspective of sensible experience, a finitude it leaves unaltered. According to Hegel, we face the paradox that reason, exalted as an absolute tribunal, is then voided and made powerless.

After this premise, I would like now to pass on to what I understand to be the novelty of Hegel's reason in comparison to Kant's.

3 Hegel's move beyond Kant

In §214 of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* we read that reason is properly speaking idea, i.e., the unity of finite and infinite, concept and reality. Here is already a first difference from Kant: in Hegel reason is not a faculty in any sense of the word. Even when it may appear to be a faculty, e.g., as observing reason or examiner of laws in the *Phenomenology*, reason is the certainty of consciousness to be in actuality, and therefore it is the instinct (*Trieb*) of thinking that looks for itself in the world. Reason wants to find and possess itself; it wants to rule the world, be at home in it (*Beisichselbstsein*). This is the most basic trait of Hegel's reason.

If reason is properly idea, and idea is the unity of concept and actuality, this unity appears realized in different degrees. Were it not so, that is, if everything actual were identical to its concept, it would be impossible to speak of finitude or of anything defective in actuality; and it would be impossible to speak of the normative function of the concept which we always and unwittingly recur to when we judge a friend or a work of art as a true friend and a true work of art, that is, when we measure the work or the friend against their standard, model or *Sollen* (*ENZ* §24 Z 2). This is the speculative understanding of truth, the agreement of a content with itself. "Actual" is therefore not everything that happens to be; but nor is it a Platonic world at rest and closed in upon itself, forever engrossed in its unmoved perfection. On the contrary, "actual" is the *movement of adequation* between concept and finite existence. In this sense we must acknowledge that key for every philosophical examination is the relation between concept and actuality, and that speaking of reason implies asking the question of its relation to actuality.

When reason appears in the form of consciousness, that is, as a finite I opposed to the world, an opposition takes place between consciousness, now understood as the source of concepts, and actuality, taken as the given. Here reason appears as a degree (*ENZ* §467 A), i.e., one activity of consciousness among others. Here the content remains indifferent to its form. In turn, once reason realizes that it is not a finite consciousness opposed to a no less finite world but is spirit,

Geist, the formative principle of the world in which it is beginning to feel at home (once, that is, the opposition is sublated), reason is "the truth of the opposition" (ibidem). "Truth" means that we finally get the authentic relation: no longer the external one between a given content and a form imposed on it from without, but the universal that particularizes itself and produces its own content. This is why actuality appears to reason as its own, as posited, as something reason has freely produced. For Hegel the defect of Kant is that he instead opposes the mere form of thinking to matter, and thereby to truth. Thinking in Kant receives the material and limits itself to shaping it, and thus cannot go beyond itself (*WL* 1:37 / *SL* 44–5).

Let me dwell on this point for a moment. Kant would have found many of these criticisms one-sided. What Hegel does not see is that appearances and nature in general are already translated into their laws by pure reason. Form is not opposed to content, in fact, transcendental logic is nothing but their identity, in the concept of an object in general. An appearance is nothing but the relations that unite it, says Kant in the Amphiboly. His principle *forma dat esse rei* can hardly be reduced to an empty form, an inert vessel to be filled by the given sensible content. Differently stated, Kant does not think of the objective content as pre-existing, given before and independently of the conceptual form.

When Hegel claims that his logic is the "system of pure reason" (*WL* 1:44 / *SL* 50) and writes that as the law of appearances form *is* content (*ENZ* §133), he believes he is criticizing Kant, not making claims analogous to Kant's. In Hegel the law as a constant image of fleeting appearance, its calm copy (W 3:120 / *PhS* 90–1, *WL* 2:153–54 / *SL* 503–504), and the inversion of the world that appears (*WL* 2:161 / *SL* 509), is the law that reflection *discovers* in nature. He believes that this holds for all modern philosophies of reflection, including Kant, who might want to retort that law is actually the product of a law-giving reason which generates contents by operating on its own forms. This is what it means for it to posit laws of nature, which are not the inverted world, but its inner form.

At other times Hegel finds in themes and points that Kant brings back to life against modern philosophies of reflection a defective expression. Hegel uses it to return to its genuinely speculative formulation, which he finds in Aristotle. Let the example of finality work as a case in point: for Hegel Kant overcomes the antinomy of necessity and external teleology but does not arrive at the Aristotelian conception of an immanent finality in nature. Having myself written a book on Hegel and Aristotle, I can hardly criticize Hegel for it, and yet I would like to point out that Kant has not discussed finality only in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. In the Architectonic, as I mentioned, it is Kant who speaks of reason as an organism, of its system as an edifice to build and at once as a living being that develops out of itself, with regard to the concept of a teleology of reason,

teleologia humanae rationis. And when in the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel writes that reason is an activity according to ends,[2] it is in order to praise Aristotle against Kant and the moderns: in Aristotle we find a Subject as pure negativity, the unmoved that is itself mover (ibidem).

Likewise, when Hegel contrasts the system of sciences to their aggregate and calls philosophy a science of freedom because it does not rely on given contents but organizes them freely by giving necessary shape to their configuration (*EA* §5 A, *ENZ* §12 A), he does not realize he is echoing the Doctrine of Method. If a system is the true scientific form and the comprehensive totality of all rational cognitions, for both Kant and Hegel properly speaking only philosophy can be science.

For both, reason is restlessness, need and search for logos. And yet, for Kant restlessness is the symptom of reason's need for order; reason's interest can be either practical or speculative; and its hope is the highest good that is not of this world but presupposes faith in ideas – or postulates for practical reason – that cannot be brought back to any form of knowledge. By contrast, for Hegel the need is philosophy's need, and that is the production of a unification, a *re-conciliation*, and thereby a return to itself from a separation. Such interest is both practical and speculative, or, better said, it is the unification of theory and practice; lastly, beyond this world there is no other life, so that the concept of hope has a completely different weight and role to play than in Kant.

For Kant, if reason's need is that of finding itself in its laws, its final motivation is quite clearly in the Doctrine of Method the desire for wisdom, so that the basic inspiration of the *Critique of pure Reason* is the Socratic self-knowledge of reason, which is knowledge of its limits: knowledge of non-knowledge as a science, as Kant puts it (*KrV* A 758/B 786). For Hegel instead every activity of reason is but its own manifestation in the world, and as a result it is to Aristotle (*his* Aristotle, of course) rather than to Socrates that he feels close: philosophy has left behind the name of desire for knowledge to become accomplished knowledge.

The destiny of Kant's reason is to explore new ways and venture across a vast ocean leaving behind what is familiar (*Refl.* 5073 AA 18:79 – 80). In Hegel reason discovers it is, or must become, at home everywhere; it is just a matter for it to realize that by transforming what is familiar into what is known (he has a famous pun on the relation between *bekannt* and *erkannt*). Hegel's reason therefore has a latitude and depth that Kant's reason neither can nor aspires to have. To begin with, for Hegel reason is the tendential unity of theory and prac-

2 "*das zweckmässige Tun*", W 3:26: "purposive activity" at *PhS* 12.

tice, and thereby of ideas and the passions that tend to realize it, whereas in Kant the gap between reason and passions is as unbridgeable as that between reason and history. Hegel's reason does not rule the world because it gives it a lawlike structure, but because it promotes and objectifies itself in the world: it makes the world its home. Its end is that of producing freedom in objective spirit, and with that historical progress.

Reason's relation to faith changes accordingly. Faith and reason are no longer alternative in any way. In German the term *Glaube*, as we know since Jacobi's reading of Hume on belief, encloses in itself both senses of faith, faith in transcendence and subjective faith or trust. In Hegel faith begins to take on the unitary sense of subjective certainty; and this is first of all the certainty that modern individual freedom is the founding principle of institutions and the mores of a people, including its religious community (*Gemeinde*). Therefore legislation is no longer the activity of a reason that is embodied but trans-individual; it is rather the result of the work of each and every one. On the one hand, this gives the individual's political responsibility a much greater weight; on the other, it is as objective, actual, shared and even reified that reason can be what Kant in the Architectonic called the form and end of the whole. As a consequence, the relation between individual and objectivity is no longer framed in Enlightenment Republican terms as in Kant (to get out of the state of minority we must adopt the maxim of *Selbstdenken*), but in the form of something substantial that must recognize itself as a subject. Hegelian individuals, that is, are pervaded by norms and reasons belonging to an objective tradition that they have not created but in which they were born, and that they must validate by participating in the activities of their community and State. The individual becomes co-creator of objective norms insofar as he or she uses them; and must make fluid and appropriate that which tradition has handed down to him or her as a reified whole.

For Hegel self-conscious reason realizes itself in the life of a people (W 3:264 ff. / *PhS* 211 ff.); in fact, reason is called the resolution to finitude (*Grundlinien* §13 / W 7:64), its self-realization in concrete forms. This does not mean that Hegel's reason realizes itself thoroughly in history, because it is only in absolute spirit, that is in an ahistorical dimension, that it considers itself retrospectively and *knows* itself as realized. But it does mean that its relation to history, including the relation between philosophy and its history, changes dramatically. In this respect Kant's sketch of a History of pure reason at the end of the Doctrine of Method is the ideal transition of three philosophical positions (dogmatism, scepticism, critique) that has nothing historical. One could say it is as little historical as the three positions of thought concerning objectivity in the Preliminary Concept of the *Encyclopaedia* Logic. There, Hegel has empiricism, with its sceptical results and up to Kant himself, supersede the dogmatic metaphysics of the

understanding (Hegel then adds the further and final stage of immediate knowledge). In his history of philosophy Hegel uses several Kantian notions, from the concept of systematic and organic development guided by an idea to reason as autonomous self-determination and internal end which does not depend on sciences but gives them their form and end. But, given his very different relation between truth and history, it is not surprising that Hegel both stresses Kant's ignorance in the history of philosophy and founds an altogether new discipline of which Kant had no inkling.

4 Conclusion

In conclusion I would like to emphasize the most significant transformations of key aspects of reason from Kant to Hegel. In light of what precedes, we can better understand how certain fundamental concepts change. The concepts of reality and actuality, which for Kant were different categories of quality (*Realität*) and relation (*Wirklichkeit*) but in general denote givenness, become for Hegel reason's self-realization. In Kant the problem of the objective reality of our concepts is treated in the Transcendental Deduction and the Analytic of Principles through the difference between logical and real use of reason. Pure concepts obtain meaning and reference, and thus objective reality, through exhibition (*Darstellung*). This is the translation of a logical concept into a schematized concept, i. e., a concept that finds its reality and reference to possible experience in an intuition. In general, this is the way Kant gives an account of the mediation between abstract and intuitive planes, between rules and their application (to experience as well as to action). In Hegel the problem becomes that of the reality of the concept; it is the concept *in the singular* which realizes itself in different modes. The *Darstellung des Begriffs*, which in Kant is typical of the construction of mathematical concepts and of schematism, in Hegel means the self-objectivization of the concept which acquires a spatio-temporal reality. Curiously, Hegel takes up – unwittingly, as I suggest – certain themes from Kant's philosophy of mathematics. The *Selbstthätigkeit*, which in Kant designated the spontaneous activity of mathematical concepts as exhibition in intuition, in Hegel becomes the fundamental and immanent trait of organisms, their very manner of being: here internal finality, which is instinctual, takes the place of the constructive and deliberate activity. And the genetic definition, which in Kant concerned mathematical concepts alone in their difference from pure and empirical concepts because only mathematics gives rise to real objects it sees arise through its construction, is for Hegel the standard definition of each concept. For every determination is a

determinate negation, that is, the nothingness of that from which it results, and must be expounded in its genesis.

Everything changes, naturally. The subject of the process of the concept's self-realization is no longer reason qua I-think, a self-affection that makes pure concepts sensible and concrete. It is rather thought – qua objective thought, *das Logische*, the unconscious and natural thought deposited in tradition, language, history and objective spirit – that must be brought to self-consciousness. If a historical moment is a rational concretion, in reason we do not face a form and a concept as opposed to matter, but forces and movements animated by a logic we must understand. The relation between essence and manifestation changes: whereas for Hegel essence is taken as active and is its appearing, without which it is neither actual nor knowable, for Kant their difference can never be cancelled, and the relation concerns the facticity of our subjective faculties.

The Kantian problem of schematism is taken up at different levels by Hegel. He thinks reason must alternate and integrate concept and representation, familiar and known (bekannt – erkannt). Purifying concepts familiar from representation is philosophy's specific work; but giving a sensible content to concepts – in Kant's words, exhibiting them in concreto – is no less important. For the true must be expressed sensibly in order to be able to speak to everyone. This is why God has made Himself flesh, and the speculative has given itself a visible shape. A movement shuttles back and forth between two sides of meaning: philosophical, essential meaning, as opposed to the concrete exemplification and fulfillment of empty intentions with concrete associations. And this movement helps both.

And yet, it is not a complementary or symmetrical movement. Philosophy's work is an effort at purification, while the desire to clothe bare concepts is a concession to the subjective need to come down from the conceptual to the representational level of examples and illustration of concepts. If the movement were symmetrical, Hegel would not call representations the "metaphors of thoughts and concepts" (*ENZ* §3 A), whereby "metaphor" is not Ricœur's living metaphor but denotes a defect: the crystallization of thought into images and sensible figures from which we as philosophers must divest it to grasp it purely.

This two-way movement involves several cultural and symbolic aspects in a broad sense, and it is in the Lectures on Philosophy of religion, over and above the Introduction to the Berlin Encyclopaedia and in scattered writings from the Berlin years, that Hegel talks about this translation from one medium to another. This movement can be illustrated by the relation between absolute spirit and world; this relation is philosophically analyzed in the system, but it can also be translated for the sake of representation into the popular theme of the creation of the world, the descent to earth of the divine. What Kant treated under the

rubric of the symbol and of analogy in the Prolegomena and the third Critique, especially §59, becomes in Hegel the problem of the different modes of embodiment of the divine.

Finally, in Kant the problem of exhibition is used in the Critique of the Power of Judgment to introduce the concept of a technique of nature. Nature is seen as if it had been made by an intelligent creator in view of ends, i. e., as if it had to exhibit in its harmonious forms a rational design. In this way the relation of concepts, intuitions, time and imagination which structured the first Critique is now recast in the context of reflecting judgment as the cluster of problems including a bridge between particular and universal, the symbol, aesthetic ideas and conformity to ends. Hegel takes up this concept of exhibition in his reading of the intuitive understanding and in the extension of the concept of reason to include imagination, genius and aesthetic ideas (e. g., *GuW* W 2:322).

When in a construction you alter even only a small detail or element, says Kant, the whole acquires a totally different configuration. So, as the global frame of concepts defining reason changes between Kant and Hegel, so do, among others, the concepts of method, of dialectic, of limit and ideas. Let me turn now in conclusion to these concepts.

(1) *Method*. For Kant as for Hegel method is not a structure or procedure that is ready-made and imported into philosophy from without, as, e. g., mathematics in modern physics or in the very proof-structure of philosophies such as Spinoza's or Wolff's. For both Hegel and Kant method is the arrangement and form that reason gives its contents and cognitions; for both, that is, method and object do not fall asunder, unlike in all disciplines other than philosophy.

For Kant method is the design and plan of the whole, the scientific form that guides the organization of cognitions (*KrV* A 707/B 736, *V-Lo/Dohna* AA 24:780). This naturally means that you cannot treat determinate contents apart from their organization. Incidentally, this implies that Kant's critics from Schopenhauer to Adickes to Kemp Smith and Lehmann, who wish to liberate the living core of Kant's philosophy from the external and baroque fetters of the system or its ornaments (*Zierraten*), show a remarkably poor understanding of Kant's philosophy.

Likewise, Hegel writes that the method is the consciousness of the form of its inner movement (*WL* 1:49 / *SL* 53, W 3:47 / *PhS* 28). Possibly appealing to the etymology of method, Hegel writes in the Logic that the method is "the way" for the construction of concepts (*WL* 1:49 / *SL* 53).

Even here, unfortunately, Hegel never considers Kant an example or a precursor or a positive role model. He writes in the Logic: "[H]itherto, philosophy has not found its method" (*WL* 1:48 / *SL* 53). He thinks we must adopt a new concept of scientific treatment in which science does not borrow any direction from

without but lets the content move and progress without imposing upon it any external reflection (*WL* 1:16 / *SL* 28). About this first point I think we must conclude that the difference between Kant and Hegel is that for the former the method is architectonic, for the latter it is the immanent objective development animated by determinate negation.

(2) The transformation of the meaning of method grounds the shift in meaning of *dialectic*. In Hegel we no longer have, as in Kant, a dialectic. Hegel introduces the substantivization of an adjective and speaks of *das wahrhaft Dialektische* (*WL* 1:51 / *SL* 55) as one element or moment of every concept. In other words, the Dialectic is no longer one section opposed to the Analytic as the logic of illusion is opposed to the logic of truth. The dialectic is no longer simply the seat of antinomies and paralogisms and ideal, i. e., the inability on the part of reason proper to know its objects. For Hegel it constitutes the second moment of development of each concept, the negative side of determinacy. Hegel writes in the Logic: "[I]t is in this dialectic as it is here understood, that is, in the grasping of opposites in their unity or of the positive in the negative, that speculative thought consists" (*WL* 1:52 / *SL* 56). The consequence is that it is not only transcendental ideas that are dialectical, or reason insofar as it does not pay attention to the limits of its use: every concept has a negative-dialectical and determinate moment (*WL* 1:217–18 / *SL* 191, *ENZ* §81). About this second point I think we must conclude that the dialectical moment is the soul of the scientific progress. A necessary mutual relation links method and dialectic, while nothing of the sort holds for Kant.

(3) This transformation is tied in turn to that of *limit*. Both Kant and Hegel follow Aristotle's notion of *peras*. A limit is the principle of determinacy of every thing, and at the same time that in which every thing knows its end and is no longer what it is – in Hegel because it has its immanent moment in its other and in negation (*ENZ* §92), in Kant because it sends us beyond itself.

For both the limit is the negation of the thing. But for Hegel *Grenze* and *Schranke* are equivalent,[3] while Kant separates them neatly: the limit (*Grenze*, *terminus*) is formal and constitutive, while the boundary (*Schranke*, *limes*) refers to an indeterminate magnitude that can change size over time. Unlike a boundary, which can be seen, as in scientific progress, as something that scientific research works to push back progressively so as to increase our cognitions, the limit does not change over time and is understood as essential to distinguish parts and whole. It is of decisive importance for the philosopher who must gain consciousness of reason in its internal division and articulation.

3 In the *Encyclopaedia* Logic but not as markedly in the *Science of Logic*.

In the *Prolegomena* the limit has a symbolic meaning in an etymological sense. In Greek *sumbolon* was the half of a severed whole which, if made to match its other half, allowed for the reconstitution of the whole. For this reason it helped recognize in the broken half its necessary complement (significantly, it is the word used by Aristophanes in the *Symposium* to talk about the circular beings that Zeus cut in halves). Put differently, for Kant the limit is constitutive of the two heterogeneous realms (the sensible and the supersensible) internal to reason, which is assumed as their unity (*Prolegomena* §57). The question of the limit is crucial to understand reason in its internal division, and fundamental for reason's self-knowledge, because only by focussing on the limit reason knows why it cannot know.

In Hegel, on the contrary, the limit is no longer the essence of reason in its inner division. It is rather the essence of all determinacy and of the finite in general. This is why he says that everything is contradictory, not only some ideas of reason as it is caught in its illegitimate and transcendent use.

(4) *Ideas*. Ideas, in turn, have no being in Kant. They are concepts of reason, which depend on its use and their referent. The idea of God can be used in an empty and deceitful rational theology or in an ethico-theology which is necessary to reason. In Hegel instead the idea is not the idea of something. In fact, it is the several ideas that are the determination of the one idea; and the idea is the substance and subject of its own realization. For Hegel's idea the problem is not the ambivalence between a legitimate regulative use as opposed to its lack of reality, as in Kant. The problem, if anything, is the necessity for it to objectivize itself in the finite and to be appropriated by subjective spirit until it knows itself in us.

Abbreviations and Notes on Translation

[*AA*] Kant, Immanuel (1910–): Akademie-Ausgabe (Kants gesammelte Schriften, ed. Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Berlin.
[*KrV*] Kant, Immanuel: Critique of Pure Reason (A: 1781 / B: 1787).
[*EA*] Hegel, G. W. F.: Enzyklopädie der Philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse (1817), followed by § (number of section), A (Remark, Anmerkung), Z (oral addition, Zusatz).
[*ENZ*] Hegel, G. W. F.: Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften (= W 8–10).
[*Grundlinien*] : Hegel, G. W. F.: Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts (= W 7).
[*GuW*] Hegel, G. W. F.: Glauben und Wissen (= W 2).
[*KU*] Kant, Immanuel: Kritik der Urteilskraft (= AA 5).
[*PhS*] Hegel, G. W. F. (1977): Phänomenologie des Geistes; Phenomenology of Spirit, A. V. Miller (trans.), with analysis and Foreword by J. N. Findlay, Oxford (= W 3).
[*Prolegomena*] Kant, Immanuel: Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik (= AA 4).

[*Refl.*] Kant, Immanuel: Reflexionen (= AA 14 – 19).
[*SL*] Hegel, G. W. F. (1969): Hegel's Science of Logic, A. V. Miller (trans.), with Foreword by J. N. Findlay, London and New York.
[*V-Lo/Dohna*] Kant, Immanuel: Lectures on Logic, notes by Dohna-Wundlacken (= AA 24:693 – 784).
[*W*] Hegel, G. W. F. (1969 – 71): Werke in zwanzig Bänden, E. Moldenhauer and K. M. Michel (eds), Frankfurt a. M. (followed by the volume and page numbers).
[*WL*] Hegel, G. W. F.: Wissenschaft der Logik (= W 5 – 6).

I have used the following *Cambridge Edition* translations:

Kant, Immanuel (1998): Critique of Pure Reason, P. Guyer and A. W. Wood (eds), Cambridge.
Kant, Immanuel (2002): Critique of the Power of Judgment, P. Guyer and E. Matthews (eds), Cambridge.

Elise Frketich

Reinhold's *Elementarphilosophie:* A Scholastic or Critical Philosophical System?

Abstract: Karl Leonhard Reinhold (1757–1823) is hailed as one of the most influential thinkers of early post-Kantian philosophy. He is best known for popularising critical philosophy through his *Letters on the Kantian Philosophy*, first published in the *Teutsche Merkur* (1786), and for restructuring it into a kind of axiomatic-deductive system in the *Elementarphilosophie* (1789–1794). An axiomatic-deductive system is based on one or several self-evident principles from which all subsequent principles are deduced. Reinhold's restructuring of Kant's critical project was highly influential for Fichte and the early Schelling, and thus, for the transition from Kantian critical philosophy to German Idealism. Most Reinhold scholars interpret the system of the *Elementarphilosophie* as belonging to the pre-critical tradition. Counter to this view, I consider the possibility that Reinhold was influenced by the idea of a philosophical system put forth by Kant in the *Architectonic*. I proceed by first discussing Kant's criteria of both a pre-critical and a critical system, before assessing which the *Elementarphilosophie* can best be described as. I conclude that although Reinhold's system is more adequately classified as a critical than as a pre-critical system, it must ultimately be viewed as something new.

1 Introduction

Karl Leonhard Reinhold (1757–1823) is hailed as one of the most influential thinkers of early post-Kantian philosophy.[1] He is best known for popularising critical philosophy through his series of *Letters on the Kantian Philosophy*, first published in the *Teutsche Merkur* (1786), and for restructuring it into a kind of axiomatic-deductive system in his first mature phase, the *Elementarphilosophie* (1789–1794).[2] An axiomatic-deductive system is based on one or several self-evi-

1 See, e.g., Beiser (1987, 226); Marx (2011, 1).

2 I follow Fabbianelli in viewing the *Elementarphilosophie* to consist in the following works: (1) *On the Rectification of Former Misunderstandings of Philosophers* (volume 1, 1790) (*Beiträge*), and (2) *The Foundation of Philosophical Knowledge* (1791) (*Fundament*). This view excludes the second volume of the first work (1794) since Reinhold, due to heavy criticism, introduced

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dent principles from which all subsequent principles are deduced. Reinhold's restructuring of Kant's critical project was highly influential for Fichte and the early Schelling, and thus, for the transition from Kantian critical philosophy to German Idealism.

Reinhold restructures Kant's critical project because, on his view, it lacks a stable foundation and, therefore, is not scientifically certain. He argues that it rests on a circular fallacy whereby the two stems of cognition it distinguishes, sensibility and thought, presuppose each other, while neither is sufficiently independent to ground the other.[3] This raises the question: does Reinhold adhere to the idea of scientific certainty prevalent throughout the rationalist tradition[4] or rather to Kant's description of scientific certainty of a critical philosophical system? If the former were the case, it would be apt to say that Reinhold reinserted a rationalist model of scientific certainty into critical philosophy. If the latter, it could be said that, although Reinhold is faithful to a critical brand of scientific certainty, he sets the trend for German Idealism to develop the spirit and not the letter of Kantian philosophy.

Current scholarship on Reinhold usually addresses this question in terms of the distinction between the "scholastic" (*Schulbegriff*) and the "cosmopolitan concept" of philosophy (*conceptus cosmicus* or *Weltbegriff*) as expounded by Kant in the third chapter of the *Transcendental Doctrine of Method*, the *Architectonic of Pure Reason*.[5] While the former concept is clearly employed by Reinhold

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enough changes into the system represented in it to call it "the new *Elementarphilosophie*". Likewise excluded is the *Essay on a New Theory of the Human Capacity for Representation* (1789). Though this work provides Reinhold's most detailed discussion of the different faculties of reason, I view it as formative, rather than as a part of a core discussion of Reinhold's *Elementarphilosophie*; in it Reinhold does not yet explicitly mention the term "*Elementarphilosophie*", nor does he provide anything but a preliminary formulation of what will become his first principle. See Fabbianelli (2003). All references to the *Beiträge* will use the 1790 edition pagination.

3 *Fundament* 129 – 130. Jacobi and Maimon both raise this argument prior to Reinhold, and Fichte follows suit. Strawson represents this objection in the contemporary debate. Strawson argues that Kant's theory of synthesis is based on two unverifiable and untestable premises: (1) Synthesis is an "antecedent condition of experience", and (2) The "antecedent occurrence of disconnected impressions as materials for the process [of synthesis] to work on" exist (Strawson 1999, 32). The consequence of these two premises is experience. However, these two premises do not follow from an analytic argument from experience, and thus, as its combined antecedent, they cannot be made true by their consequent (Strawson 1999, 32).

4 I am referring especially to Leibniz, Wolff and Baumgarten, but also to Descartes.

5 "*Conceptus cosmicus*" is Kant's Latin equivalent to "*Weltbegriff*", which complicates the matter of translating the term into English (*CPR* A 838/B 866). I follow the Cambridge edition translation of this concept into "cosmopolitan". For arguments for this translation, see Hinske (2010, 263 – 275).

scholars to refer to pre-critical metaphysical systems, usually characterised by the axiomatic-deductive method[6], the latter is employed to refer to what Kant envisages as a future system of critical philosophy[7].[8] However, what is lacking in the literature on the *Elementarphilosophie* is an adequate analysis of these concepts, such that an accurate classification of Reinhold's system can be provided.

I will argue that Reinhold's *Elementarphilosophie* should neither be classified under the scholastic, nor under the cosmopolitan concept of philosophy. In order to support this claim, I will first elucidate both concepts. I will maintain that the former is characterised by, what I will call, the "empirical method", which seeks to establish metaphysical principles of the most general characteristics of experienced objects. In order to show that, surprisingly, on Kant's terms, rationalist philosophers likewise employ the empirical method, I will illustrate it with several examples from Christian Wolff's *German Metaphysics*.[9] I will contend that the cosmopolitan concept is characterised by Kant's epistemological revolution, which consists in establishing metaphysical principles on the basis of the modes of human cognition.[10] Due to their essential differences, these two concepts of philosophy are incompatible. Accordingly, it would be erroneous to say that the *Elementarphilosophie* is partially scholastic and partially cosmopolitan.[11] Since Reinhold follows Kant's epistemological revolution, I

6 See, for example, Schrader (1978, XIVf.); Frank (1997, 161); Oittinen (2003, 73).

7 Beiser represents the view that Kant's cosmopolitan concept influenced the *Elementarphilosophie*. Although he does not name this concept explicitly, Beiser refers to it by citing the passages at B 861 – 862 where Kant describes this concept (1987, 240). Bondeli claims that the *Elementarphilosophie* is influenced by Kant's cosmopolitan concept of philosophy because it unifies theoretical and practical philosophy in one system (1995, 19, 74; 2003, 3). Gerten claims that in his *Elementarphilosophie*, Reinhold deepens the ideals of his enlightenment-phase by means of Kant's *Critique*, especially with reference to the *Doctrine of Ideas* and the *Transcendental Doctrine of Method* (*Architectonic*) (2010, 74).

8 In this paper, I will only have space to consider the future system of critical philosophy, as discussed in the *Architectonic*.

9 *Vernünftige Gedanken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen, auch allen Dingen überhaupt* (*German Metaphysics, GM*).

10 While the cosmopolitan concept provides the criteria that Kant's future system of critical philosophy must fulfill, as stated in the *Architectonic*, the *Critique* lays the preparatory groundwork for it (*CPR* A 841/B 869). The *Critique* has discovered the proper modes of cognition of human reason as well as their appropriate uses such that the limits of reason will not be overstepped. Thus, as I see it, the *Critique* relates to the future critical system in the sense that its results will be used within the future system.

11 Heinz and Stolz, for example, state that Reinhold "partially" falls back into scholastic philosophy since he employs, what they call, "monistic premises" (2008, 184), while they otherwise view the *Elementarphilosophie* as being organised according to the cosmopolitan concept. "Mon-

will argue that Reinhold's use of the axiomatic-deductive method, though appearing to constitute a system according to the scholastic concept, rather serves the cosmopolitan concept of philosophy. However, a closer look will reveal that while the *Elementarphilosophie* meets the basic criteria of the cosmopolitan concept, it breaks at least two important rules of critical philosophy at the same time. Thus, I will conclude that a third option must be introduced: Reinhold is doing something new.

2 The Scholastic Concept of a Philosophical System

In his *Architectonic*, Kant considers the general concept of a philosophical system to be exhausted by two sub-concepts: the scholastic and the cosmopolitan concept of philosophy. A system organised according to the scholastic concept does not achieve scientific certainty, on Kant's terms, whereas one according to the cosmopolitan concept does. Instead of discussing the entire outline of the systems organised by each concept, since they are quite similar, I will rather address these two concepts in terms of their unique forms of scientific certainty, as characterised by Kant.[12] I will first take up Kant's characterisation of the scholastic concept.

As I understand it, Kant subsumes all systems of philosophy developed over the course of the philosophical tradition under the scholastic concept. I take this to be supported by the following passage, in which Kant states that "until now" the concept of philosophy has been scholastic:

> Until now [...] the concept of philosophy has been only a scholastic concept, namely that of a system of cognition that is sought only as a science without having as its end anything more than the systematic unity of this knowledge, thus the logical perfection of cognition. (*CPR* A 838/B 866)[13]

istic premises" refer to philosophical principles which unify sensibility and reason, Kant's two stems of knowledge (Heinz and Stolz 2008, 160).

12 For the entire outline of Kant's architectonic, as portrayed in the *Critique*, see: A 845/B 873 – A 847/B 875.

13 All quotations of the *Critique of Pure Reason* are taken from the Cambridge edition (1998), P. Guyer, A. W. Wood (trans.). All translations of quotations from texts which have not been translated are mine.

Kant, here, claims that all pre-critical philosophical systems strive towards logical perfection. As I understand it, the logical perfection of knowledge is the goal of achieving knowledge of objects in the world according to their use and connection in a coherent cosmology (*CPR* A 60/B 85). For the philosophical tradition, the gold standard for achieving logical perfection was some form of Aristotle's theory of a demonstrative science. It is an axiomatic-deductive system comprised of syllogisms in the form of any of the fourteen syllogisms recognised by Aristotle as valid.[14] Aristotle provides six criteria for the premises of a demonstration from which knowledge can follow. The premises must be "true, primary, immediate, better known than, prior to, and causative of the conclusion".[15] That a premise must be true means that it must correspond to something that is the case; the starting point of a demonstration must be a fact. As I understand it, this starting point is what leads Kant to characterise the scholastic concept as attaining scientific certainty by the "empirical method".

To better understand why Kant classifies all pre-critical systems as "scholastic", even the rationalist ones, which are commonly taken to turn away from the empirical method, I will explain this "empirical" characterisation more closely. As was common during his time, Kant calls knowledge of a fact, "historical" cognition. Historical cognition is cognition from that which is given (*CPR* A 836/B 864). Since historical cognition is based on the given, it can be called "empirical". However, because it pertains to a specific mode of cognition, the class of propositions known by this mode is, according to Kant, broader than just the class of propositions about objects in the world; it includes any general principles which have been induced from scientific experiments or even learned in a classroom (*CPR* A 836/B 864). Thus, Kant's empirical characterisation can be attributed to Wolff's method, for example, since Wolff claims that while philosophical knowledge is the knowledge of "the reason of things", the why and

14 Barnes (1969, 123 – 124). For a description of Aristotle's recognised syllogisms, see *Prior Analytics* 25b33 – 29a5.

15 *Posterior Analytics* 71b20. The criteria "primary" and "immediate" can be lumped together as meaning self-evident, not dependent upon any other premises. "Better known than" is the epistemological status meaning universal or more intelligible, in opposition to what is particular. "Prior to" refers to the ontological status of being that which is more fundamental in nature. "Causative of the conclusion" is the reason for the conclusion. "Cause", here, has two meanings: an epistemological and an ontological meaning. The middle term of a syllogism signifies the "cause" of the conclusion and it can be understood in two senses: as a *ratio essendi* or *ratio cognoscendi*, see Ross (1965, 33 – 34). The former means the middle term indicates the ontological cause of the conclusion, whereas the latter simply means it is the ground of knowledge. See also Aristotle *Posterior Analytics* 71b20 – 72a10; Ross (1965, 53 – 54); Barnes (1969, 123 – 124).

how of things as they are (*Prelim. Disc.* §6), it is based on historical knowledge, "the bare knowledge of fact" (*Prelim. Disc.* §7).

On my view, Kant identifies the empirical method of the scholastic concept as its specific difference; it is that which differentiates this philosophical system from a system organised according to the cosmopolitan concept. The empirical method determines how a philosophical system, organised according to the scholastic concept, is built. Crucial to a philosophical system are two aspects, according to Kant: (i) its parts (e.g. logic, ontology, natural philosophy), and (ii) the order among these parts (e.g. ontology is prior to natural philosophy). Both of these aspects of a system are determined by a "schema", which corresponds to an "idea"[16] of how the system should be organised as a whole (*CPR* A 833/B 861).[17] In the following passage, Kant first defines a "schema" as it is relevant to a philosophical system in general, and then contrasts the schema of the scholastic concept with the schema of the cosmopolitan concept of philosophy:

> For its execution the idea needs a schema, i.e., an essential manifoldness and order of the parts determined *a priori* from the principle of the end. A schema that is not outlined in accordance with an idea, i.e. from the chief end of reason, but empirically, in accordance with aims occurring contingently [...] yields technical unity, but that which arises only in consequence of an idea (where reason provides the ends *a priori* and does not await them empirically) grounds architectonic unity. (*CPR* A 833/B 861)

According to this passage, a schema consists of two components: (i) "an essential manifoldness" and (ii) an essential "order of the parts". A schema can best be understood as the basic outline or form of a system. Kant calls both the idea and its schema the "seed" out of which the architectonic grows.[18] Accordingly, I understand the schema to be the essence of the system, the set of essential attributes which determine the development of the system.[19] The plan of the system, in its entirety, follows from the schema, and, thus, is inessential, yet necessary. Accordingly, the parts of the entire plan are like the *propria* (*idia*) of an animal.[20] In line with the theme of the current section, I will presently address,

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16 For a discussion as to why this idea is a transcendental idea instead of a problematic idea, see Kaldis on "Worldhood" (2013, 589–591).

17 Kant uses the term "schema" differently in the *Architectonic* and *Schematism* chapters.

18 Kant calls the idea the seed at A 834/B 862, and the schema at A 835/B 863.

19 My interpretation stands in contrast to, for example, Tonelli's, who thinks that the schema is already the entire outline of the system (1994, 259).

20 "*Propria*" are inessential characteristics which follow necessarily from a specific set of essential attributes. This term was translated into Latin from the Aristotelean terminology "*idia*". For

what I will call, the "empirical schema", that is, the schema which corresponds to the empirical method.

According to Kant, the essential manifoldness of the schema determines the parts of the philosophical system. In terms of an empirical schema, the "essential manifoldness" refers to basic, historically determined objects of investigation. Take, for example, Wolff's *German Metaphysics*. Wolff begins his metaphysics with the Cartesian twofold fact that "we are aware of ourselves and other things" (*GM* §1). While our experience of ourselves is used to establish the certainty of scientific demonstrations in the first part, scientific demonstrations are applied to our experience of things outside of us in the second part. Wolff bases the third part of his *German Metaphysics* on what he takes to be the fact that the soul is a thing which is conscious and perceives (*GM* §192). These three examples from Wolff's metaphysics are, what Kant would call, "empirical" facts.

On Kant's view, the empirical schema is problematic; metaphysical systems which contradict their own terms are the result. Kant argues that despite claims in the past that "metaphysics is the science of the first principles of human cognition", *a priori* cognition has never been cleanly separated from the *a posteriori*.[21] As Kant explains it, "principle" can simply mean any universal proposition, including definitions, suitable to serve as the major premise in a syllogism (*CPR* A 300/B 356). An empirical principle is gained by means of induction or abstraction from experience. By contrast, an *a priori* principle has purely *a priori* origins. I, again, appeal to Wolff's *German Metaphysics*, which provides countless examples of "empirical" principles, to illustrate Kant's point. Take, for example, Wolff's principle that the ground of a thing is its essence (*GM* §34). From the observation that different things have different properties, Wolff induces the principle that there must be something necessary in each thing which explains the properties it has (*GM* §32). This principle has been proven to be necessary in a scientific demonstration which means, on Wolff's terms, it is a phil-

example, being "capable of learning grammar" is a *proprium* of a human being (*Topics* 102a18–31).

21 A 843/B 871. Kant, here, cites Baumgarten's definition of metaphysics verbatim, see Baumgarten (*Metaphysics* §1). As already mentioned, Wolff titles the second chapter of his *German Metaphysics*, "the first grounds of our knowledge and of all things in general". Furthermore, Wolff's metaphysical commitments make this clear. According to Wolff, the laws of logic govern how God thinks all possible worlds; the laws of logic are, thus, embedded in the ontology of each possible world, which includes the actual world, since the latter is the most perfect of all possible worlds. For Aristotle, all metaphysical principles are likewise both logical and ontological, as was seen with the dual role of the premises of scientific demonstrations.

osophical explanation of why things are. Accordingly, one can say that Wolff views it to be *a priori*. However, on Kant's terms, such a principle is not *a priori* given its empirical origin and, therefore, it has no place in metaphysics. On the basis of this argument, Kant concludes that a proper metaphysical system has never been accomplished (*CPR* A 843/B 871).

Kant identifies two general problems with a philosophical system developed out of an empirical schema. First, the parts of a philosophical system based on empirical facts lack proper limits: the scope of its branches is not properly defined (*CPR* A 834/B 862). To illustrate this problem, Kant asks whether the concepts of that which is extended, of a body, of a fluid body, etc., should be included in metaphysics; when the answer is continually "Yes!", it becomes evident that one cannot know where to draw the line (*CPR* A 843/B 871– A 844/B 872). A further example, as discussed, is that *a posteriori* principles are included in metaphysics (*CPR* A 843/B 871). Moreover, knowledge of God and the soul, for example, are justified as unconditioned grounds of conditioned experience (e. g., the soul explains one's experience of perception, for Wolff). Second, the system lacks a completeness criterion (*CPR* A 833/B 861). Since the parts of the philosophical system are based on empirical objects of investigation, there is no non-arbitrary reason for establishing a division within the philosophical system on the basis of one object and not another (*CPR* A 843/B 871). Furthermore, one cannot know whether all of the necessary facts have been dealt with. It would always be possible to discover another fact that ought to be represented by another branch of philosophy. Thus, a philosophical system organised according to an empirically determined schema lacks a completeness criterion.

Finally, Kant maintains that the parts of a system, determined by an empirical schema, are only held together by "technical unity" (*CPR* A 833/B 861). The metaphor Kant uses to illustrate this type of unity is that of a mere aggregate: particles accumulated into a heap or a mass (*CPR* A 832/B 860). The rules of logic governing scientific demonstrations are the glue holding the principles together in an artificial conglomerate. Accordingly, technical unity is the unity of branches of a system striving towards the empirically determined ends of a cosmology and held together according to the laws of logic (*CPR* A 833/B 861).

3 The Cosmopolitan Concept of a Philosophical System

The cosmopolitan concept, Kant's adequate concept of philosophy, organises the philosophical system which unfolds directly out of human reason. Kant introduces this concept as follows:

> There is also a cosmopolitan concept (*Weltbegriff* or *conceptus cosmicus*) [...]. From this point of view philosophy is the science of the relation of all cognition to the essential ends of human reason (*teleologia rationis humanae*), and the philosopher is not an artist of reason but the legislator of human reason. (*CPR* A 838 – 839/B 866 – 867)

According to this passage, the cosmopolitan concept of philosophy organises a system of all cognition striving towards the essential ends of human reason. Kant identifies the highest end of human reason as the "entire vocation of all mankind" (*CPR* A 840/B 868), namely, happiness that is deserved.[22]

The cosmopolitan concept puts Kant's epistemological revolution to the fore. It is determined by the schema, which I call the "rational schema". As discussed, a schema consists in: (i) "an essential manifoldness" and (ii) an essential "order of the parts". On my interpretation, the essential manifoldness of the rational schema is "the manifold cognitions" (*Erkenntnisse*) or the different essential modes of knowledge (*CPR* A 832/B 860). What, then, are these modes of knowledge? Since the *Critique* investigates the different capacities of human reason, along with their appropriate uses, it provides the information necessary to answer this question.[23] That is, it identifies the essential modes of human reason which constitute the rational schema. As I see it, Kant introduces these essential

22 "Happiness that is deserved" unites virtue and happiness together in the highest end for mankind; thus, happiness is proportionate to merit, on Kant's terms. See further: Beiser (2006, 593 – 599). When Kant indicates "general happiness" as the highest end of mankind in the last paragraph of the *Architectonic* (*CPR* A 851/B 879), he uses "happiness" in the unqualified sense. This means that he is referring to the end of theoretical reason, alone; he is not referring to the ultimate end of both theoretical and practical reason, combined, which is "happiness" in the qualified sense, namely, happiness that is deserved. Evidence for this view can be found in a preceding paragraph in which Kant indicates that he sets practical reason aside for the remainder of his discussion in the *Architectonic* (*CPR* A 842/B 870). I owe the wording of this ultimate end, as well as a better understanding of "happiness", to an anonymous reviewer of the *Kant Yearbook*.

23 *CPR* B 27. Mohr identifies the basic divisions found in the *Critique* with the basic plan of the architectonic (2004, 332), which is consistent with Kant's claim that the *Critique* is the prolegomena for his future philosophical system (*CPR* A 841/B 869).

modes in the *Architectonic* when he states that cognitions must first of all be isolated according to their origin (*CPR* A 842/B 870). Accordingly, one begins by distinguishing two fundamental stems of cognition: the rational and the empirical (*CPR* A 835/B 863). By beginning with this essential division, Kant ensures that all *a posteriori* principles are excluded from his system of philosophy. Metaphysics must then proceed on the purely *a priori* side. Without this essential distinction, philosophy will continue to include *a posteriori* principles masquerading as *a priori* principles, as Kant viewed to be the case with pre-critical systems.

After distinguishing cognitions on the basis of their origin, they must be distinguished according to their kind (*Gattung*) (*CPR* A 842/B 870). As I see it, there is one major division according to kind, the resulting concepts of which are subdivided into further kinds. This major division is between theoretical and practical *a priori* cognition. While the former only determines the given object and its concept by means of the forms of cognition, the latter also makes its object actual in the form of, for example, an action (*CPR* B ix – x). Accordingly, the former branches into the metaphysics of nature and the latter into the metaphysics of morals (*CPR* A 841/B 869).

Theoretical philosophy is, then, further subdivided. These subdivisions may initially appear to be based on Kant's four classes of categories, i. e., quantity, quality, relation and modality.[24] However, Kant emphasises that distinguishing types of cognition on the basis of quantity or quality is mistaking the effect for the cause: it would be relapsing into dogmatic method (*CPR* A 714/B 742). Rather, modes of cognition determine their proper classes of objects. Philosophical cognition, for example, is "rational cognition from concepts", and accordingly, investigates objects classed under the category of quality; while mathematical cognition is "cognition from the construction of concepts" and investigates objects of the category of quantity (*CPR* A 844/B 872). Rational cognition from concepts is discursive; it subsumes appearances under concepts according to their real, empirical content (in accordance with the rules of empirical synthesis) (*CPR* A 723/B 751). By contrast, Kant explains concept construction as the method of drawing, for example, a geometrical figure in *a priori* intuition. This figure is an individual, but is able to represent all figures falling under the same concept, and therefore, stands for the universal (*CPR* A 713/B 741). Concept construction is

24 Indeed, Kant organises his *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* according to the four classes of categories. See Friedman's introduction to this text (2004, xiv – xv).

only possible with objects of the category of quantity, on Kant's terms, and therefore, this mode of cognition determines its class of objects.[25]

The schema is not only responsible for determining the parts of the philosophical system, but also for determining the order of these parts. As previously mentioned, the order of the parts strives towards the essential end of human reason: they are teleologically ordered towards happiness that is deserved. This teleological order can be understood as follows. The scope of each branch of philosophy is determined by its appropriate mode of cognition, which, in turn, determines the goal befitting each branch. Each of these goals is, then, a subordinate end with respect to the final purpose of the philosophical system. Accordingly, these intermediate ends are means to achieving happiness that is deserved.

Finally, the idea of the cosmopolitan concept, as the form of a system of human reason as a whole, ensures that there are no parts missing from the philosophical system, according to Kant. That is, the idea of the whole supplies the completeness condition:

> The unity of the end, to which all parts are related and in the idea of which they are also related to each other, allows the absence of any part to be noticed in our knowledge of the rest, and there can be no contingent addition or undetermined magnitude of perfection [*Vollkommenheit*] that does not have its boundaries determined *a priori*. (*CPR* A 832/B 860)

The rational schema yields the one and only architectonic: the outline of a philosophical system organised according to Kant's cosmopolitan concept of philosophy. Given that the rational schema determines a system on the basis of all of the essential modes of cognition, it provides an objective ground to determine that no parts are missing and that all parts are necessary. Thus, the rational schema determines a complete system; it renders Kant's future system of metaphysics scientifically certain.

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25 Kant targets the German rationalist tradition in general, Wolff in particular, when he emphasises the distinction between philosophical and the mathematical cognitions. On Kant's terms, Wolff mistakes philosophical for mathematical cognitions when Wolff treats what Kant thinks should be classified as individual synthetic judgements *a posteriori* as universal synthetic judgements *a priori*.

4 Reinhold's Elementarphilosophie

We have seen that Kant's descriptions of the scholastic and cosmopolitan concepts of philosophy are incompatible: one is organised according to an empirical schema, the other according to a rational schema; one provides an arbitrary division of parts, the other a non-arbitrary division; one does not entail completeness, the other does; one is not scientifically certain, the other is. As a result, Reinhold can only do philosophy according to one of these concepts. One cannot pick and choose a handful of characteristics of Reinhold's system and call them "scholastic" and the rest "cosmopolitan". Therefore, although the *Elementarphilosophie* is axiomatic in structure and is based on one first principle, this does not entail that it is organised according to the scholastic concept of philosophy. For, if it is at the same time argued that Reinhold's system performs Kant's epistemological revolution, it follows that Reinhold's use of the axiomatic-deductive method must be viewed as general logic serving the essential ends of human reason.[26]

Reinhold's method can be traced back to Aristotle's axiomatic-deductive method of a demonstrative science[27] since, in the *Elementarphilosophie*, he dedu-

26 Kaldis similarly writes "the accusation against a scholastic mode of philosophising does not target its systematicity or its analytic rigour, as it is usually taken to be, but rather objects to its not being linked to human beings' highest good" (2013, 600 – 601). Furthermore, my interpretation is compatible with the historical strand running through Reinhold's Enlightenment and *Elementarphilosophie* works. As Ameriks puts it, "if one can show in detail that one's philosophy is exactly one crucial step better than the main previous synthesis, which itself can be shown to have incorporated all of the best of the past, then one has done the best that philosophy can offer" (2010, 121). I am not arguing against the view that Reinhold incorporates philosophical tools from various pre-critical systems. I am rather arguing that the function of these tools changes when they are incorporated into a philosophical system that is organised in a radically new way. Bondeli's reading could be viewed as unproblematic, on my view, because he discusses elements taken from various systems instead of organising concepts of philosophy when he claims, on the one hand, that Reinhold is influenced by pre-critical approaches of deriving a philosophical system from a first principle, but, on the other hand, that Reinhold's first principle reformulates what could be viewed as Kant's first principle: his highest principle of the understanding in §16 of the *Transcendental Deduction* (1995, 19).

27 Reinhold's *Elementarphilosophie* is usually viewed as following Euclid's axiomatic method. Some Aristotle scholars say that Euclid's *Elements* are the best fulfillment of an Aristotelian demonstrative science; Barnes suggests that Aristotle himself holds this view (1969, 128). However, it has also been argued that the premises in Euclid's method need not be true and, as a result, are not real causes of the conclusion; see, Mancosu (1992, 241 – 265). Accordingly, I will describe the method of the *Elementarphilosophie* as "Aristotelian".

ces all philosophical principles from one first principle.[28] To found the *Elementarphilosophie*, Reinhold appeals to a basic fact, namely, the "fact of consciousness" (*Tatsache des Bewußtseins*).[29] The fact of consciousness is a "material" and, therefore, a real, fact (*Fundament* 109). It can be characterised as one's awareness of being conscious. The first principle of the *Elementarphilosophie* corresponds to the fact of consciousness. Reinhold calls it the "principle of consciousness" (*Satz des Bewußtseins*) and formulates it as follows: "in consciousness, the representation is distinguished by the subject from both the object (*Objekt*) and the subject and is referred (*bezogen*) to both".[30] Due to the correspondence between the fact and principle of consciousness, Reinhold says that the principle has "real truth" (*Fundament* 86).[31] Thus, Aristotle's truth criterion of a scientific premise is met.[32]

Although Reinhold's first principle is determined by a basic fact, and although the *Elementarphilosophie* can be described as employing the axiomatic-deductive method, I argue that it is not organised according to the scholastic concept of philosophy.[33] The essential difference is that the fact of consciousness is *a priori*, while the facts of pre-critical philosophical systems are largely *a posteriori*. To this effect, Reinhold argues that his fact of consciousness is prior to all

28 Menson reports that Reinhold does not provide any autobiographical references explaining how he arrived at the requirement of a first principle; he only says that one is necessary for the systematic character of every science (1974, 115 – 117).

29 *Fundament* 78. Reinhold also calls the fact of consciousness a "*Faktum*", which I view to be interchangeable with "*Tatsache*" (*Beiträge* 143 – 145).

30 *Fundament* 78; *Beiträge* 167. Reinhold's principle of consciousness can be explained as follows. The "representation" element is that which is thought or experienced. The "object" element of the principle constitutes the content of the representation and must be given, either in *a priori* or in *a posteriori* intuition. The "subject" element does not refer to a substantial subject, but rather can only be denoted by the minimal description of "the representing one", that to which the representation must be related in order for the representation to be experienced. For a charitable description, see Beiser (1987, 253 – 254).

31 Breazeale characterises Reinhold's fact of consciousness as the Kantian "third thing" necessary to ground any synthetic unity (2006, 42 – 43).

32 Reinhold's first principle also follows Aristotle's other five criteria of a scientific premise. Reinhold takes it to be self-evident, independent of prior principles, primary and immediate. This principle should be ontologically and epistemologically prior to all representations, and, therefore, should be better known than and prior to all other principles comprising the *Elementarphilosophie*. Finally, Reinhold takes it to be causative of all subsequent principles in the sense that they must be derived from it.

33 Baum, similarly, argues that the principle of consciousness is not a "scholastic definition" of any given fact, but rather the starting point of, what Reinhold views as, a clearer presentation of Kant's deduction of the categories (1974, 93).

other facts. He claims that all facts inhere within representations, since, for Reinhold, the representation is the most general form of thought; every concept and idea, every object of the understanding and reason is a representation (*Beiträge* 177). Consciousness is the necessary condition for representing (*Beiträge* 167). Therefore, the fact of consciousness is prior to all other facts. Furthermore, the fact of consciousness is internal, accessible to the knower at all times under all conditions (*Beiträge* 143–144).

One might argue that because the fact of consciousness has been gained historically, it can only be the starting point of a scholastic philosophical system. I agree that the fact of consciousness, as a "fact", is something to which a knower has direct access. However, as I see it, Reinhold's fact of consciousness shows that historical cognition can either be of *a priori* or *a posteriori* origin. One does not learn of the fact of consciousness from without, but rather from within: it originates from human reason. For, as I see it, the fact of consciousness can be enunciated as the fact that I am aware of being conscious of an object (an empirical object or a thought).[34] It is not a direct representation of consciousness as, perhaps, the field within which all representations occur, since I cannot imagine being aware of being conscious without being conscious of an object at the same time. Accordingly, it is the experience of consciousness as intentional: object-directed. Since the fact of consciousness is an experience I am having, it is a historical cognition. Indeed, it has much in common with Wolff's starting point, namely, the fact that "I am aware of myself", which I deemed "empirical" in the sense of being a historical cognition. However, although one could argue that this half of Wolff's initial fact is *a priori* in origin, the other half is *a posteriori*, namely, the fact of things outside of us. Reinhold does not make the mistake of having a partially *a priori*, partially *a posteriori* starting point to his *Elementarphilosophie*. In fact, he excludes all *a posteriori* facts from the *Elementarphilosophie*, in general. Therefore, although both starting points are historical, because Reinhold's is purely *a priori*, it is essentially distinct from that of the scholastic concept of philosophy.

Furthermore, the principle of consciousness is not proven on the basis of induction or abstraction. Rather, it is immediately recognised by reflection upon the fact of consciousness.[35] Reflection is usually the act of taking oneself (the referent of the indexical "I") as one's object. Here, the object is one's conscious-

34 Reinhold does not state the fact of consciousness in any other terms than "the fact of consciousness" or the principle of consciousness which expresses it. Thus, my enunciation of the fact of consciousness as "I am aware of being conscious of an object" is a reconstruction.
35 Reinhold describes "reflection" as the mere comparison or ordering of that which is present in consciousness (*Fundament* 78).

ness. Reinhold contrasts reflection with abstraction, therefore, the resulting principle is not a generalisation, but rather, is on par with reflective consciousness (*Beiträge* 169). The steps of reflection upon the fact of consciousness, on my reconstruction, are as follows:

1) I have enunciated the fact of consciousness as: I am aware of being conscious of an object.
2) Reflection upon this fact is: I am aware that I am aware of being conscious of an object.

On my view, proposition (2), which signifies reflection upon the fact of consciousness, can be mapped onto Reinhold's principle of consciousness. This principle, again, is: "in consciousness, the representation is distinguished by the subject from both the object (*Objekt*) and the subject and is referred (*bezogen*) to both". I understand this mapping process as follows:

1) The first "I am aware" becomes "in consciousness".
2) The second "I am aware" becomes the subject.
3) "Being conscious of" becomes the representation.
4) Finally, the "object" remains the object.

The activities of distinction and reference, represented in the principle of consciousness, constitute the separating out of these parts as well as the subsequent synthesis of the subject and the object elements in the representation.

One final reason why the *Elementarphilosophie* cannot be viewed as organised according to the scholastic concept is that the *a priori* status of the principle of consciousness is essentially different from that of a mathematical cognition, which Kant excludes from pure philosophy (CPR A 841/B 869). Although Reinhold's principle of consciousness holds universally, it does not do so on the basis of concept construction: it is not a singular intuition which represents the universal. Rather, the principle of consciousness gains its universal status, as Reinhold sees it, on the basis of being self-evident.[36] Reinhold thinks that as one reflects upon the fact of consciousness, the principle of consciousness will be immediately recognised and, therefore, the principle will be universally accepted (*allgemeingeltend*) (*Beiträge* 142–145). Thus, on my view, universal acceptance renders the principle of consciousness universal, not *a priori* intuition.[37]

36 Ameriks likewise points to this methodological advantage of universal acceptance (2003, 84).

37 For a discussion of how universal acceptance likewise pertains to Reinhold's Enlightenment ideals, see Ameriks (2003, 77–103).

Breazeale expressly reconstructs Reinhold's concept of reflection, used to arrive at the principle of consciousness, to include what he views to be its necessary presupposition (2006, 54 – 57). He suggests that reflection presupposes some kind of actual matter which becomes the object of a representation. In order to explain this matter, Breazeale suggests that Reinhold's concept of intellectual intuition be employed (2006, 56). Intellectual intuition is introduced, by Reinhold, to explain knowledge of the forms of the capacity for representation. It is a form of non-sensible, *a priori* intuition which is produced by the act of spontaneity of the representing subject (*Beiträge* 245). The knower is, then, in some way conscious of the intellectual intuition as the represented object (*Beiträge* 246). In this case, Breazeale suggests that the object of reflection, which produces the intellectual intuition, be the act of reflecting itself.

What I find interesting about Breazeale's suggestion, is that this is precisely the direction Fichte takes with his *Wissenschaftslehre*. As Bondeli aptly puts it, "Reinhold's concept of intellectual intuition occupies a middle point between the Kantian and the upcoming Fichtean concept" (1995, 144). However, as I see it, Breazeale's reconstruction is unnecessary. First, Reinhold nowhere appeals to intellectual intuition to explain his concept of reflection. Second, Breazeale's suggestion, in fact, runs counter to Reinhold's own project. Reinhold clearly depends on the actuality of the fact of consciousness, and therefore, matter must be involved. However, the type of matter need not be explained from the outset, systematically speaking: a fact, by definition, is self-evident. Nothing more needs to be said about it. Furthermore, if Reinhold were to appeal to intellectual intuition at the ground level of his *Elementarphilosophie*, the system would be rendered circular: intellectual intuition would be deduced from the principle of consciousness and the principle of consciousness would be grounded by appeal to intellectual intuition. Finally, Reinhold explicitly states that the fact of consciousness is the object of reflection, not the activity of reflecting. Thus, I find Breazeale's suggestion to be counter to Reinhold's system.

Given the *a priori* status of the fact and principle of consciousness, I have argued that the *Elementarphilosophie* cannot be classified under the scholastic concept of philosophy. The pre-critical tools of having one first principle as well as employing the axiomatic-deductive method are, thus, subordinated to a new goal.[38] As such, I shall now assess whether the cosmopolitan concept is a better fit.

38 Furthermore, Reinhold opposes the *Elementarphilosophie* to pre-critical philosophy when he criticises the latter for having the unfit principle of non-contradiction as its first principle (*Fundament* 30). Reinhold argues that this principle is ambiguous because the verb "to be", con-

In line with the cosmopolitan concept of philosophy, Reinhold restricts metaphysics to the *a priori*. In the following passage, Reinhold explains how he maintains this strict separation throughout the *Elementarphilosophie:*

> That which is determined in the mere capacity of representation is determined *a priori* in the representing one (*im Vorstellenden*) and, therefore, is essentially differentiated from that which is determined *a posteriori* in the same. This means that only through impressions, the becoming affected of receptivity can be given. The latter is the matter of empirical representations through which the individual and accidental is represented. The former is the matter of pure representation through which the universal and necessary is represented. (*Beiträge* 80)

The concept of representation is the highest concept of the *Elementarphilosophie*. It follows directly from the principle of consciousness because it is only through the role of the representation in the principle of consciousness that its concept can be explained. All subsequent principles are derived from the concept of representation, and, thus, are species of it. Accordingly, they maintain the same threefold form (subject, object and representation), distinguished and synthesised by the same activities of the principle of consciousness. Reinhold, then, locates all that is *a priori*, e.g., form (of the representation) and concept, in the "representing one" (*das Vorstellende*) (the subject element of the principle of consciousness), while he locates all of the *a posteriori* input, e.g. matter and intuition, in the represented one (the object element).

In further agreement with the cosmopolitan concept, Reinhold holds that his philosophical system is teleological in nature.[39] As Reinhold puts it, the purpose

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tained within it, can be interpreted both epistemologically and ontologically (*Fundament* 29). Accordingly, the principle is able to determine both that which is thinkable (that which does not contain a contradiction) and that which exists. The result is being justified in deducing the possible from the actual and vice versa. Without recourse to any prior principles, which could serve to disambiguate the principle of non-contradiction, all principles and definitions derived from it will contain the same ambiguity. Reinhold uses Wolff and Baumgarten's concept of a thing as an example of such a definition: everything which is not contradictory counts as a thing. The solution is to subordinate the principle of non-contradiction to a first principle which can disambiguate it, one which provides it with rules of application appropriate to human reason: the principle of consciousness.

39 Reinhold was well aware of Kant's theory of teleological principles since Kant enclosed his essay *On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy* in a letter sent December 31, 1787. (Reinhold passed this essay on to his father-in-law to be published in the *Teutsche Merkur*, 1788, upon Kant's request.)

of a philosophical system originates in the human spirit (*Fundament* xv).[40] The moral feeling within each rational being presents the philosopher with the goal of philosophy: the highest purpose, "the one, which is necessary of humanity" (*das Eine, was der Menschheit Noth ist*; *Fundament* xvi). This highest purpose of philosophy grounds "the discovery and designation of the last and, as such, universally acceptable grounds of our obligations and rights in this life, and our expectation for the afterlife (*das künftige Leben*)" (*Fundament* xv).[41] The discovery and designation of the grounds of moral life are intended to support just laws and governance, which can, in turn, support the flourishing of individual ethical behaviour, or happiness that is deserved.

In accordance with the final criterion of the cosmopolitan concept, Reinhold distinguishes branches of philosophy on the basis of kinds of cognition. For Reinhold, the various modes of knowledge unfold out of the capacity of representation. The capacity of representation in general is comprised of the capacities of sensibility, understanding and reason. These are distinct capacities with unique functions. The science of the capacity of representation determines the common principles of both the capacities of knowledge and desire, or theoretical and practical philosophy. Due to their common origin, theoretical and practical reason are unified in one philosophical system.

Given that the *Elementarphilosophie* is organised according to the basic rules of the cosmopolitan concept, it seems accurate to conclude that the first principle of the *Elementarphilosophie* can be viewed as a rational schema: the seed out of which the critical philosophical system can grow.[42] If this is true, then, on Kantian terms, the *Elementarphilosophie* could be deemed a complete and scientifically certain system. However, in order to test this conclusion, I must assess whether Reinhold's first principle can really be viewed as a rational schema and whether Reinhold's system is able to develop out of the principle of consciousness in a manner consistent with critical philosophy.

On my interpretation, there are at least two important features of the *Elementarphilosophie* that cannot be viewed as critical. First, a difficulty arises in viewing the principle of consciousness as the rational schema; the problem has to do with

40 Counter to this, Schrader argues that the *Elementarphilosophie* is scholastic because he does not view it as organised according to the essential ends of human reason, but rather, after Wolff and Lambert, according to a first principle (1978, XIV – XV).

41 Nota bene: Reinhold does not overstep Kant's limits of human reason with his views on such topics as the existence of God or afterlife.

42 Baum supports the view that Reinhold's "mere representation" must be interpreted as Kant's transcendental schema (1974, 96). Commentators agree that Reinhold's principle of consciousness is intended to unify Kant's two stems of knowledge.

its dependence upon the fact of consciousness. Reinhold further qualifies his fact of consciousness when he claims that "[it] must be able to accompany all possible experiences and all thoughts of which we are able to be conscious" (*Beiträge* 144). In this passage, Reinhold likens the fact of consciousness to Kant's transcendental unity of apperception when he claims that it "must be able to accompany all possible experiences". Kant describes the transcendental unity of apperception as "the thoroughgoing identity of oneself in all possible representations" (*CPR* A 116). As I interpret him, Reinhold draws this comparison in order to convey that the fact of consciousness is self-consciousness which remains numerically identical throughout all experiences and which is responsible for the unity of experience. However, this comparison is problematic from a Kantian perspective. For Kant, the transcendental unity of consciousness is known indirectly, by way of the various representations which are recognised to be a part of one consciousness (*CPR* B 133). Furthermore, Kant distinguishes between transcendental and empirical consciousness, suggesting that the former is beyond subjective access, while the latter is not (*CPR* B 133). Thus, on Kant's terms, Reinhold's fact of consciousness cannot be viewed as a self-evident fact and, therefore, the principle of consciousness cannot be called a rational schema.

Second, Reinhold employs intellectual intuition to account for philosophical knowledge of the forms of the capacity of representation: sensibility, understanding and reason (*Beiträge* 245). Kant excludes the possibility of any non-discursive, intellectual intuition within human reason by arguing that such an intuition would not stand under the synthetic unity of the categories (*CPR* B 145), and therefore, such a representation would be empty (*CPR* A 256/B 312). As I see it, the method for distinguishing kinds of cognition is relevant to the cosmopolitan concept because they are needed to distinguish the parts of philosophy. It may be possible to finesse compatibility between Reinhold's use of intellectual intuition and Kant's critical rules. For, intellectual intuition, on Reinhold's terms, can only be produced when the faculties are activated by representing some other object. Accordingly, it could be viewed as akin to Kant's method for discovering the pure concepts of the understanding, i. e., by adding an object to them in intuition (*CPR* A 51/B 75). However, such an explanation would, nonetheless, depend upon synthesising intellectual intuition in a representation, which seems counter to Kant's terms. Therefore, since at least two important parts of Reinhold's method overstep what is knowable according to the rules of critical philosophy, it must be concluded that it cannot ultimately be classified under the cosmopolitan concept of philosophy.

Since, as I have argued, the *Elementarphilosophie* is organised neither according to the scholastic, nor according to the cosmopolitan concept of philosophy, it must fall under a new concept. Indeed, Reinhold himself makes this

claim. According to Reinhold, the *Critique* provided the epistemological revolution necessary to bring philosophy onto the level of pure reason where it could attain scientific certainty. It just needed the proper stable foundation in order to finish the job:

> The business of critical philosophy could only, and likewise had to, be concluded with the absolute bedrock explanation (*Grunderklärung*) of the representation. However, with this bedrock explanation, philosophy stops being critical. With it, the science of the foundation of the philosophy without nicknames (*Philosophie ohne Beynahmen*), the *Elementarphilosophie*, begins. (*Fundament* 104–105)

As Reinhold sees it, after Kant, philosophy no longer needs to be critical. Instead, it is able to begin where the *Critique* leaves off: with the highest concept of philosophy, the concept of representation. This concept is intended to unite Kant's two stems of knowledge, resolving Reinhold's perceived circularity of the *Critique*. Reinhold views this basic concept to be the first brick in the stable foundation that is the *Elementarphilosophie:* the science of the principles common to all particular philosophical sciences (*Fundament* xiv).[43]

5 Conclusion

Kant's scholastic and cosmopolitan concepts of philosophy, as I have described them, are determined by the nature of their respective schemata. If the schema is empirically determined, as seen with the scholastic concept, then, on Kant's terms, the resulting philosophical system lacks scientific certainty. Scientific certainty, rather, originates from a rational schema; it is the germ out of which the philosophical system, reaching ever towards the essential end of human reason, grows. I have argued that, although the *Elementarphilosophie* uses the same axiomatic-deductive method as pre-critical philosophy, it cannot be classified under the scholastic concept of philosophy. Rather, due to what at first appears to be its rational schema, it is best to view this method as being subordinated to the ends of human reason. However, upon closer inspection, it becomes clear

43 Whether the concept of the representation is adequate to the conditions which Reinhold sets out for it, whether he is able to continuously pile levels of complexity onto the concept of the representation within an axiomatic-deductive system in order to build the *Elementarphilosophie*, and whether the *Elementarphilosophie* can act as the set of principles common to all particular philosophical sciences are all difficult questions facing Reinhold's system which go beyond the scope of this paper. Simply put, the *Elementarphilosophie* has its advantages as well as its drawbacks.

that Reinhold's principle of consciousness is merely in the spirit of a rational schema. Furthermore, Reinhold's basis for distinguishing the kinds of cognition cannot be accepted on critical terms. Accordingly, the *Elementarphilosophie* does not quite fit the cosmopolitan concept of philosophy either. Although it has more in common with the latter, I conclude that Reinhold's *Elementarphilosophie* begins something new.[44]

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Abbreviations

[*AA*] Kant, Immanuel (1900 –): Gesammelte Schriften, edited by Königlich Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 29 vols., Berlin.

[*Beiträge*] Reinhold, Karl Leonhard (2003): Beiträge zur Berichtigung bisheriger Mißverständnisse der Philosophen, F. Fabbianelli (ed.), Hamburg.

[*CPR*] Kant, Immanuel (1998): Critique of Pure Reason, P. Guyer, A. W. Wood (ed. and trans.), Cambridge.

[*Fundament*] Reinhold, Karl Leonhard (1978): Über das Fundament des philosophischen Wissens, W. H. Schrader (ed.), Hamburg.

[*GM*] Wolff, Christian (1719): Vernünftige Gedanken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen, auch allen Dingen überhaupt, Halle.

[*Prelim. Disc.*] Wolff, Christian (1963): Preliminary Discourse on Philosophy in General, R. Blackwell (trans.), Indianapolis.

Stephen Houlgate

Hegel, Kant and the Antinomies of Pure Reason

Abstract: Hegel argues that Kant's antinomies of pure reason are important because they implicitly show the categories of thought to be contradictory. In so doing Hegel disregards much of what interests Kant about the antinomies and interprets the latter "against Kant's intention". He also gets Kant wrong when he claims that Kant's "trivial" resolution of the antinomies simply shifts contradiction from things in themselves to appearances. Nonetheless, I contend that Hegel's interpretation is defensible, insofar as the antinomies do, indeed, show (what Hegel regards as) the *categories* of the "infinite" and the "finite" to be both opposed to and inseparable from one another. I also argue that Hegel is right to maintain that Kant's proofs of the theses and antitheses in the antinomies assume what they are meant to prove and that Kant's resolution of the antinomies is unsatisfactory.

1 Hegel on Kant's Antinomies

Hegel is profoundly critical of Kant's account of the antinomies of pure reason and especially of what he regards as Kant's "trivial" resolution of them (*EL* §48 Remark). Yet at the same time Hegel emphasises the considerable significance of Kant's account. "These Kantian antinomies", he writes, "will always remain an important part of the critical philosophy", since "they, more than anything else, brought about the downfall of previous metaphysics and can be regarded as a main transition into more recent philosophy" (in particular that of Hegel himself) (*SL* 190 / *LS* 198).[1] How then, according to Hegel, did the antinomies help take us from pre-Kantian metaphysics to his own speculative philosophy?

Such metaphysics (exemplified most clearly by the thought of Christian Wolff) sought, in Hegel's view, to attribute predicates to objects of reason, such as the soul, the world and God, and it assumed in so doing that such predicates were mutually exclusive. It aimed to determine, therefore, whether the world is finite *or* infinite and whether the soul is simple *or* composite, and it did not consider the possibility that the object concerned could in fact be

1 See also *SL* 46 / *LS* 28–9; *EL* §48 Add.

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both. This metaphysics was, accordingly, a form of dogmatism because it assumed "that of *two opposed assertions* [...] one must be *true*, and the other *false*" (*EL* §32).[2]

Through his examination of the antinomies, however, Kant deals a significant blow to such dogmatism, for he argues that in the case of the *world* no choice between two opposing assertions can be made but "each of the propositions must be affirmed with equal necessity" (*EL* §48): the world must be understood to be finite *and* infinite, to be composed of indivisible units *and* to be infinitely divisible. Kant's argument, in Hegel's view, thus puts an end to the simple "either / or" of pre-Kantian metaphysics, at least in the area of cosmology. Yet Kant also agrees with metaphysics that predicates such as "finite" and "infinite" are opposed to one another and cannot be reconciled. The claim that both have to be predicated of the world "with equal justification and equal necessity" thus in fact produces a "contradiction" (*Widerspruch*): we must judge the world to be both finite and infinite, yet these two determinations exclude one another completely (*EL* §128 Remark and Add.).

In Kant's view (as Hegel sees it), this contradiction between assertions or judgements is not accidental, but inevitably confronts pure reason when it seeks to determine the nature of the world: "Kant's conception of the antinomies is that they are 'not sophisms but contradictions which reason must necessarily *come up against*' (a Kantian expression); and this is an important view" (*SL* 191 / *LS* 199).[3] Kant's argument also suggests, albeit only implicitly, that the predicates, or *categories*, employed by reason are in fact contradictory themselves (see *EL* §48 Remark). This is precisely because they are mutually exclusive, yet prove to be inseparable (since both must be asserted of the world). For Hegel, it is above all this implicit suggestion that categories are themselves contradictory – and necessarily so – that raises reason "into the higher spirit of more recent philosophy" and so takes us forward from metaphysics to truly speculative philosophy (*SL* 46 / *LS* 28, translation altered).

The idea that categories are contradictory does not, however, form the immediate starting point of speculative philosophy itself: for, as I have argued elsewhere, such philosophy at the outset may not presuppose anything concrete about thought and its categories but must begin from sheer indeterminate

2 See also *EL* §28 and Remark.

3 The German text reads: "Widersprüche, auf welche die Vernunft notwendig *stoßen* (nach Kantischem Ausdrucke) müsse". See *CPR* B 449 (though Hegel does not reproduce Kant's wording exactly). On *SL* 46 / *LS* 29 Hegel speaks of the "mistake of thinking", or "misunderstanding", (*Mißverstand*) that reason is "in contradiction with itself", but on *SL* 191 / *LS* 199 he affirms the "antinomial" nature of reason.

being.[4] Kant's antinomies thus do not lead directly to speculative philosophy. By suggesting that the categories are contradictory, the antinomies challenge the idea that they are simply distinct from, or opposed to, one another, that they are one-sided, finite categories; indeed, Hegel claims, the antinomies "produce the conviction of the nullity [*Nichtigkeit*] of the categories of finitude" (*SL* 190 / *LS* 198). This does not, however, itself require us to suspend all assumptions about the categories; yet it does help to prompt the philosopher, who is otherwise committed to free self-critical thought, to determine from scratch, without presuppositions, how the categories are to be understood. The antinomies, as Hegel conceives them, thus do not themselves make presuppositionless philosophy necessary, but they contribute indirectly to the emergence of such philosophy.[5]

Hegel concedes that, *for Kant*, categories or "thought-determinations" are not contradictory in themselves, but contradictions arise only when reason *applies* them in judgements to the "unconditioned" or "things in themselves" (or, more precisely, to the *world* considered as something "in itself").[6] (Like the metaphysicians he criticises, Kant continues to think of categories themselves as one-sided and finite.)[7] Nonetheless, Hegel contends, Kant's account of the antinomies *implicitly* suggests that categories are contradictory, and that they are such necessarily: the "general idea" underlying that account, Hegel writes, is that of the "*necessity of the contradiction* which belongs to the *nature* of thought determinations" (*SL* 56 / *LS* 41).[8] Indeed, he calls this idea "the great negative step towards the true concept of reason" (*SL* 46 / *LS* 29).[9]

This step is merely negative, for Hegel, because it negates the simple distinctions and oppositions between categories and points to their contradictory character, but does no more than this: it does not take us on to what Hegel thinks is the logical conclusion of that very step, namely the insight that opposed categories actually form a *unity*. This insight is, however, reached in the course of speculative philosophy, initially and in particular in speculative logic. Such logic begins from the presuppositionless, indeterminate thought of pure being; but

4 See Houlgate (2006, 29 – 53).

5 For Hegel's use of the term "presuppositionless", or rather "presuppositionlessness" (*Voraussetzungslosigkeit*), see *EL* §78 Remark.

6 See *EL* §§46 Remark, 48 Remark; *SL* 56 / *LS* 41. Gueroult (1978, 282 – 3) appears to miss the fact that Hegel saw this.

7 See *SL* 191 / *LS* 199; *EL* §41. See also Düsing (2004, 55), and Sedgwick (2012, 173).

8 See also Gueroult (1978, 272).

9 Throughout this essay I have replaced Miller's "Notion" with "concept" as the translation of "Begriff".

categories then emerge that are more or less explicitly contradictory or "antinomial", insofar as each is both itself and its negation, and in this way the insight that for Hegel is implicit in Kant's antinomies is confirmed. We also discover, however, that categories are not merely contradictory, but prove to be more or less explicit *unities* of opposed determinations (see *EL* §§81–2). In the sphere of quality, for example, the infinite proves not just to be a contradictory *finite*-infinite, but to be the perfect fusion of finitude and true infinity: the truly infinite process *of* its finite moments (see *SL* 148 / *LS* 148–9).[10] Speculative logic does not stop at contradiction and antinomy, therefore, but shows how categories *resolve* the very contradictions they contain (by mutating either into further versions of themselves or into different categories).

Now, in Hegel's view, Kant also "resolves" his antinomies to his own satisfaction. He does so, however, not by watching them resolve themselves into a unity of opposed determinations but by declaring them to be merely "*subjective*" (*SL* 191 / *LS* 200).[11] For Hegel's Kant, the contradictions revealed by the antinomies are genuine and necessary, but the world that exhibits such contradictions is in truth not something that exists *in itself:* it is merely the world of our subjective experience, that is, "the world of *appearance*" (*die* erscheinende *Welt*) (*EL* §48 Remark, translation altered). Whatever there may be in itself is thus, for Kant, free of contradiction, and the latter belongs only to the world that is there *for us*. To Hegel, however, this "resolution" is inadequate, for it leaves the antinomies themselves "unresolved" (*unaufgelöst*). In the eyes of Kantian reason, Hegel claims, the contradictions remain, even though the world they beset is declared to be subjective rather than objective (*SL* 191 / *LS* 200).

Note that there is actually an inconsistency in the position Hegel attributes to Kant: for Hegel's Kant, contradictions arise only because opposing categories "are applied by reason to *things in themselves*" (*SL* 56 / *LS* 41), that is, to the world considered as thing in itself; yet they remain even when the world is revealed *not* to be a thing in itself but mere appearance. (As we will see below, Hegel also gets Kant wrong at this point, since Kant himself does not consider appearances to be contradictory.) Yet Hegel fails to notice the inconsistency, so it makes no difference to his assessment of Kant's "resolution" of the antinomies. The latter, in Hegel's view, is inadequate because Kant argues that "the worldly content, whose determinations are caught in such a contradiction, cannot be something *in itself*, but only appearance [*Erscheinung*]" (*EL* §48, translation altered), but he thereby leaves our own "subjective" reason and experience

10 See also Houlgate (2006, 423–7).

11 See also *EL* §48 and Remark, and Düsing (2004, 41).

entangled in contradiction and, Hegel would add, contradictory categories. In the *Logic*, by contrast, Hegel provides what he considers to be a more profound resolution of the antinomies. He does so by showing that the categories that (in his view) underlie those antinomies are not *merely* contradictory after all, either for our reason or in being itself, but "have their truth only in their sublatedness [*Aufgehobensein*], only in the unity of their concept" (*SL* 192 / *LS* 200, translation altered).

The idea that Hegel's speculative logic proceeds by "resolving contradictions" is, of course, a simplification of what actually goes on, which is more complex and subtle.[12] Nonetheless, it is true that being and nothing are at odds in becoming but united in *Dasein* and that the contradictions of finitude are resolved in true infinity. So Hegel's simplified description of what occurs in speculative logic is not wrong. The principal difference between Hegel and Hegel's Kant is thus, indeed, that the former resolves contradictions in categories that the latter leaves unresolved.

A further difference between them is that Hegel's Kant fails to see, as Hegel does, that all antinomies, properly understood, are actually generated *by categories*. I noted above that Hegel's Kant, unlike Hegel himself, does not consider categories as such to be contradictory, but locates the source of contradiction in the *application* of those categories to the world (regarded as a thing in itself). This in turn means that he does not understand the categories themselves to be the true source of antinomies, and so does not appreciate the real significance of what he has disclosed. For Hegel's Kant, antinomies are conflicts between metaphysical judgements about the world (in which categories are applied to an object of reason), but they are not conflicts between, and do not highlight the contradictory character of, one-sided categories as such. As Hegel puts it, therefore, "Kant did not take up the antinomy in the concepts themselves, but in the already *concrete form* of cosmological determinations" (*SL* 191 / *LS* 199). In Hegel's own view, by contrast, what is expressed and demonstrated by Kant's antinomies – albeit implicitly – is that "the categories on their own account [*für sich*] are what produce the contradiction" (*EL* §48 Remark, translation altered).[13] Thus, in order to study the antinomies of reason properly, we must focus directly on the categories, without Kant's (for Hegel) extraneous cosmological baggage. In Hegel's words:

> in order to possess the antinomy in its purity and to deal with it in its simple concept, the determinations of thought must not be taken in their application to and entanglement in

12 For a detailed study of the logic of being (from the category of being to that of true infinity), see Houlgate (2006, 263 – 435).

13 See also Gueroult (1978, 274).

> the general idea of the world, of space, time, matter, etc.; this concrete material must be omitted from consideration of these determinations which it is powerless to influence and which must be considered purely on their own account, since they alone constitute the essence and ground of the antinomies. (*SL* 191 / *LS* 199)[14]

This, of course, is what Hegel does in his "science of logic". That logic can thus be regarded as Hegel's revised and purified version of Kant's important but deficient study of the antinomies of reason (just as it can also be regarded as a revised and purified version of Kant's question-begging derivation, or "metaphysical deduction", of the categories).[15]

Since Hegel's Kant fails to identify the categories as the source of the antinomies of reason, he also fails to see that there are far more than just four such antinomies. Indeed, he fails to see that "profounder insight into the antinomial, or more truly into the dialectical nature of reason demonstrates *any* concept whatever" – that is, any *pure* concept or category – "to be a unity of opposed moments to which, therefore, the form of antinomial assertions could be given" (*SL* 191 / *LS* 199).[16] In this respect, Hegel claims, Kant lags behind ancient Greek scepticism, which "did not spare itself the pains of demonstrating this contradiction or antinomy in every concept which confronted it in the sciences" (*SL* 191 / *LS* 199). Yet Kant's contribution is still the more important one for speculative philosophy – indeed, is "one of the most important and profound advances of the philosophy of modern times" (*EL* §48) – because he argues not just that antinomies *can* be found (or generated) by thought contingently, but that they belong to reason *of necessity*. This Kantian insistence that the production of antinomies – or "dialectic" – is "*a necessary activity of reason*" (*SL* 56 / *LS* 41, translation altered) is so important, in Hegel's view, because it in turn makes it necessary for post-Kantian philosophy to reconsider the way the understanding conceives of the categories (though, as I noted above, it does not itself make a strictly presuppositionless study of the categories necessary). This is not to deny that Hegel's philosophy owes a debt to Greek scepticism (and to Greek dialectic in, for example, Zeno and Plato); but, in Hegel's eyes, it is indebted more profoundly to Kant's philosophy.[17] For Hegel, Kant's emphasis on the necessity of the antinomies, and by implication on the necessarily contradictory character of categories, makes it essential that we reconsider how the latter have traditionally been conceived; and his commitment to rational self-critique and freedom re-

14 See Düsing (2004, 55).
15 See Houlgate (2006, 23–8).
16 See also *EL* §48 Remark.
17 See *SL* 55–6, 100–1, 197–8 / *LS* 40–1, 93–4, 207–8.

quires such reconsideration to take nothing for granted about thought (or being) and to be radically presuppositionless.[18]

Having said all this, it is hard to deny that Hegel's understanding of Kant's antinomies is, from a *Kantian* point of view, idiosyncratic. By Hegel's own admission, he sets to one side what principally interests Kant about them and focuses on a claim that Kant himself does not explicitly make, namely that *categories* produce the antinomies and thereby prove to be contradictory themselves; indeed, Hegel even says that such a claim goes "against [*gegen*] Kant's intention" (*VGP* 356).[19] Moreover, what Hegel means by "category" does not coincide exactly with what Kant means. Kant understands a category to be a pure concept through which "the synthetic unity of the manifold in intuition" is thought (*CPR* B 105); this is to be distinguished not only from an empirical concept, but also from other pure concepts, including concepts of reflection and transcendental Ideas (see *CPR* B 316 ff., 378 ff.). By contrast, Hegel uses the term "category" in a broad sense to refer to all pure concepts and does not restrict any of them to mere representations of the unity of intuition: all categories, for him, are logical structures in their own right that at the same time bring fundamental ways of being to mind.[20] By implicitly suggesting that categories are themselves contradictory, Hegel's Kant thus implicitly suggests to Hegel himself that contradiction belongs to *being* as such – a suggestion that, as Hegel well knows, Kant himself would emphatically reject.[21] Kantians can be forgiven, therefore, for thinking that Hegel does not provide an interpretation of *Kant's* antinomies at all, but simply reads into them what he is interested in finding there. There are, I think, good grounds for claiming that Kant should have been interested in what interests Hegel about the antinomies, since, as I have argued elsewhere, Hegel's whole philosophy is the logical outcome of taking Kant's *own* project of rational self-criticism more seriously than Kant did.[22] Nonetheless, it seems clear that Hegel does not do justice to Kant's antinomies in a way that Kant himself

18 Other influences on Hegel include, of course, Aristotle, Spinoza, Leibniz and Schelling, but they do not require philosophy to avoid presuppositions in the way that Greek scepticism and Kant's thought do. Other influences pushing Hegel towards presuppositionlessness include Descartes, Fichte and modern freedom more generally in the moral, political and religious spheres; see Houlgate (2006, 23 – 71).

19 See also Llewelyn (1987, 100).

20 Hegel distinguishes between determinations of being and of reflection, but thinks of both as categories; see *SL* 409 / *LW* 25, and *EL* §114 Remark.

21 For Hegel, contradiction as such can also be expressed as the "law" that states "*all things are in themselves contradictory*" (*SL* 439 / *LW* 59, trans. altered).

22 See Houlgate (2006, 24 – 8), and Houlgate (2015, 37 – 9).

would have recognised, and that the Kant whose antinomies Hegel finds so fruitful is, in the words of Martial Gueroult, an "hegelianised Kant".[23]

Yet things are in fact a little more complicated than this, for, as I will argue later, Hegel's interpretation of Kant's antinomies is by no means wholly unjustified. Furthermore, Hegel sheds important light on Kant's actual arguments or "proofs" in the antinomies (as opposed to what Kant *should* be arguing or suggests merely *implicitly*).

In Hegel's view, Kant implicitly shows categories, such as "finite" and "infinite", to be contradictory by showing them to be bound to one another, even though they are opposed; and he shows them to be bound to one another by arguing that both must be predicated of the same world by reason. As we have seen, Hegel applauds this implication of Kant's arguments. At the same time, however, he dismisses Kant's manner of argument itself as a "useless form" (*unnütze Form*) (*SL* 191 / *LS* 199). Kant's arguments or "proofs" are "useless", in Hegel's view, because they serve no real purpose, and they serve no purpose because they simply presuppose what they are meant to prove. For Hegel, Kant's arguments in the antinomies, which purport to prove that the world is both finite and infinite, are really no more than assertions masquerading as arguments:

> the Kantian antinomies on closer inspection contain nothing more than the quite simple categorical assertion of *each* of the two opposed moments of a determination, each being taken on its own in *isolation* from the other. But at the same time this simple categorical, or strictly speaking assertoric statement is wrapped up in a false, twisted scaffolding of reasoning which is intended to produce a semblance of proof and to conceal and disguise the merely assertoric character of the statement. (*SL* 192 / *LS* 200)

The second antinomy, for example, consists merely in the *assertion* of the two moments of quantity – discreteness and continuity – against one another: "the one-sided assertion of discreteness gives infinite or absolute *dividedness* [*Geteiltsein*]", whereas "the one-sided assertion of continuity, on the other hand, gives infinite *divisibility* [*Teilbarkeit*]" (*SL* 190 / *LS* 198). The world is thus asserted to be absolutely finite in the first case, since division reaches its limit in simple discrete parts, and absolutely infinite in the second case, since division continues without end.[24] (Hegel is well aware, by the way, that Kant ac-

23 Gueroult (1978, 272).

24 See Gueroult (1978, 279). Hegel describes both dividedness and divisibility as "absolute" or "infinite", but he does so to emphasise that each moment is asserted "absolutely" by itself in abstraction from the other. He knows that for Kant the thesis of an antinomy asserts a finite, limited series, whereas the antithesis asserts an infinite series; see *VGP* 356 – 7. See also *CPR* B 532 – 3, and Grier (2001, 212).

tually opposes "composition" (*Zusammensetzung*), rather than "continuity", to simplicity and discreteness in the second antinomy, but he insists that this does not itself generate an antinomy, since it is a tautology that "the composite consists of the simple" (*SL* 192 / *LS* 201). On the other hand, Hegel maintains, by asserting in the proof of the antithesis that "composition is possible only in *space*", which for both Kant and Hegel is continuous, Kant implicitly pits continuity against simplicity in the antinomy (*SL* 195 / *LS* 205).)[25]

Kant himself contends that the arguments in support of the thesis and antithesis in each antinomy are "sophistical" (*vernünftelnd*), insofar as they rest on an illegitimate assumption. This assumption is that appearances are things in themselves and so form a world that is independent of us (but also given to us) and that can be limited or unlimited, composed of indivisible units or endlessly divisible, and so on (*CPR* B 397–8, 535). Yet Kant also insists that, aside from this assumption, the "proofs of the fourfold antinomy are not semblances [*Blendwerke*] but well grounded" (*CPR* B 535): they are properly formed arguments that are "without contradiction" and are supported by "valid and necessary grounds" (*CPR* B 449).[26] Indeed, in the *Prolegomena* Kant states unequivocally that "I will vouch for the correctness of all these proofs" (*Prolegomena* §52a). Thus, on the (illegitimate) assumption that empirical objects form an independent world "in itself", the arguments in each antinomy succeed, in Kant's view, in *proving* that both the thesis and the antithesis are true of that world.

In Hegel's view, by contrast, such arguments are mere "pseudoproofs" (*Scheinbeweise*), quite apart from the assumption that Kant claims they make. This is because they presuppose the very thesis and antithesis that they are to prove (and the categories contained therein): "what is supposed to be proved is always already contained in the presuppositions that form the starting point, and the semblance of a mediation is produced only through Kant's prolix, apagogic procedure" (*EL* §48 Add.). This can be seen, for example, in Kant's proof of the thesis in the second antinomy. The thesis states that "every composite substance in the world consists of simple parts"; but the proof depends on the claim that "with substances composition is only a contingent relation, *apart from which*, as beings persisting by themselves, they must subsist", which is itself just a restatement of the thesis (*CPR* B 462–4, emphasis added; see also *SL* 193–4 / *LS* 202–3). Indeed, as Michelle Grier puts it, Kant's proof actually "exploits a purely conceptual necessity", namely, that the very "concept of a composite" – and not just that of a "composite substance" – "commits us to

25 See also *CPR* B 39, 463.

26 See also Sedgwick (2012, 172–3).

the concept of the simple, which externally relates to comprise it".[27] Grier fails to note, however, that this makes a mockery of Kant's claim to have proven the thesis "apagogically".[28]

Hegel's charge, therefore, is not (as Kant's is) that the proofs of the thesis and antithesis in each antinomy rest on an unwarranted assumption about appearances, but rather that these proofs are altogether circular. This problem cannot just be blamed on the proponents of the two positions, for Kant himself sets out the proofs and, indeed, regards them as correct (given the illegitimate assumption on which they rest). The problem, as Hegel sees it, is thus, in Sally Sedgwick's words, that "*Kant's* treatment of the antinomies is question-begging".[29] This strikes me, as it strikes Sedgwick, as a serious and well founded charge.

2 Kant on the Antinomies in general

If, however, we are properly to assess the merits of Hegel's interpretation of Kant's antinomies, we need to look in more detail at Kant's own account of the latter. We will thus now consider how in general, for Kant, an antinomy or contradiction in reason is generated.

First, Kant argues, reason concludes – or, more precisely, leads the understanding to judge[30] – that the totality of conditions of appearance, that is, the *world*, is given as a reality in itself. This conclusion is reached by the following argument that Kant regards as "dialectical": if the conditioned is given, then the whole series of all conditions for it is also given; now objects of the senses are given as conditioned; consequently, the whole series of conditions of the objects of the senses is, and must be, given as a world that is a thing in itself (*CPR* B 525).[31] This argument is dialectical (in Kant's sense) for two principal reasons. First, it assumes erroneously that objects of the senses can, indeed, be given as a totality, whereas in fact, as "appearances", they can be given only through a regressive synthesis that can never be completed. Second, it assumes, again erro-

27 Grier (2001, 202).

28 An "apagogical" proof of a proposition is one that proceeds "through the refutation of its opposite" (*CPR* B 821), and the proofs of both the thesis and antithesis in an antinomy are supposed to take this form.

29 Sedgwick (2012, 170), emphasis added.

30 See *CPR* B 387: "reason attains to a cognition through actions of the understanding [*Verstandeshandlungen*] that constitute a series of conditions".

31 See also Allison (2004, 391).

neously, that the objects of the senses, as appearances, are also things in themselves (the assumption of transcendental realism).[32] The conclusion that the world is given as a reality in itself is thus reached by a dialectical argument that fails to respect the limits, in particular to the concept of an "appearance", laid down by transcendental idealism.

After having convinced itself (or the understanding) that the totality of the conditions of appearances exists as a world in itself, reason then discerns an ambiguity in the very idea of such a totality. So what exactly is this ambiguity? The answer becomes clear if we consider the difference between the ideas of the soul and God and the idea of the world (see *CPR* B 379). Each of the former is the idea of a single unconditioned condition: the unconditioned condition of thought as such in the case of the soul, and of all possible objects of thought, or of things as such, in the case of God (see *CPR* A 397, B 391). God, or the transcendental ideal, contains the totality of conditions of things, insofar as he, or it, encompasses "the entire storehouse of material from which all possible predicates of things can be taken" (*CPR* B 603). Nonetheless, God is, or rather is assumed to be, the single "being of all beings" that grounds all things (*CPR* B 607). The idea of the world, by contrast, is not that of a single unconditioned condition, but rather that of an explicit totality of conditions conceived as a *series*. More precisely, it is the thought of the complete series of conditions of *appearances* (see *CPR* B 532).

Kant maintains that a "totality of conditions is always itself unconditioned" (*CPR* B 379). He also points out, however, that the complete *series* of conditions of appearances can in fact be conceived as unconditioned, or as entailing the unconditioned, in *two* distinct ways. This is an ambiguity inherent in the idea of the world, but absent from the ideas of the soul and God. On the one hand, Kant contends, that series as a whole can itself be considered to be unconditioned, "because outside it there are no more conditions regarding which it could be conditioned" (*CPR* B 445n). On the other hand, however, the series can be understood to have the unconditioned as its first member (for example, as the first part or the cause of the series) (see *CPR* B 445). In the first case, in which there is no unconditioned first member, the series will be infinite and "without limits"; accordingly, reason will never be able to complete its regress through the conditions, even though the series itself is given as a whole. In the second case, by contrast, the series will have an endpoint or limit and so be finite (see *CPR* B 445 – 6). That limit will be the limit of space and time, or the point at which

32 On transcendental realism, see *CPR* A 371, Grier (2001, 101), and Allison (2004, 386).

division ends, or the unconditioned (free) cause of events, depending on the antinomy concerned.[33]

Kant goes on to argue that the complete series of conditions of appearances not only can but *must* be understood in these two opposing ways. When the thought of this necessity is then combined with the assumption that the complete series actually exists as something in itself, the *antinomies* are generated. This is because thought must now attribute *two* mutually exclusive features to *one* reality, but that reality, as such, must be determinate and so have one *or* the other of them (but not both). Note that, for Kant, a genuine antinomy or contradiction is not produced by the mere thought that the world is, or must be, ambiguous in the way I have described. It arises only when we take that ambiguous world to be a *reality* in itself that by its nature must be unambiguous. Antinomies arise, therefore, only because we combine conflicting judgements about the "world" with the erroneous conclusion of the dialectical argument set out above, which is itself based on the error of transcendental realism. As Kant puts it, "if one regards the two propositions, 'The world is infinite in magnitude', 'The world is finite in magnitude', as contradictory opposites, then one assumes that the world (the whole series of appearances) is a thing in itself" (*CPR* B 532).

Since the erroneous judgement that appearances are things in themselves is, in Kant's view, quite "natural" (*CPR* B 528), the antinomy to which that judgement leads is itself "a wholly natural antithetic" (*CPR* B 433). The very fact that an antinomy or contradiction arises, however, shows that the judgement on which it rests is, indeed, *erroneous:* the antinomy "uncovers a falsehood lying in this presupposition" of transcendental realism (*CPR* B 535). This in turn, Kant maintains, provides an indirect proof of transcendental *idealism* – the thesis that "everything intuited in space or in time, hence all objects of an experience possible for us, are nothing but appearances, i.e., mere representations", not things existing independently in themselves (*CPR* B 518–19; see also *CPR* B 534). Kant's direct proof of such idealism is presented in the first part of the *Critique*, the Transcendental Aesthetic, and it is against the background of this proof that he initially rejects transcendental realism as an error: for the latter falsely turns appearances or mere representations into things in themselves. The fact that transcendental realism generates antinomies, however, confirms that it is an error, and so indirectly confirms the truth of transcendental idealism.[34]

33 See also Allison (2004, 359).

34 See Allison (2004, 388–95), and Winegar (2016, 88).

For Kant, reality as it is thought to be *in itself* cannot be contradictory or antinomial, but must be unambiguously itself; indeed, "no predicate pertains to a thing that contradicts it", whether the thing is a thing in itself or an appearance (*CPR* B 190). Yet, when the world – the complete series of conditions of empirical objects – is judged to be a reality in itself, it proves precisely to be contradictory. Since the arguments proving it to be so are sound, given the assumption that such a world exists, the conclusion we must draw is that that assumption must be wrong and the world *cannot* be anything real in itself after all. It must, rather, be an "idea" that merely *seems* to have a real existence of its own. The fundamental forms of that world, namely space and time, cannot have a real existence of their own, either, but must be merely subjective (albeit for us universal): the a priori forms of our human sensibility. In this way, transcendental idealism is proven indirectly by the antinomy generated by transcendental realism.[35]

Kant, however, does not justify the claim that reality in itself cannot contain a contradiction; he takes it over, uncritically, from traditional formal logic. (It is, of course, immediately derived from the "principle of contradiction", which is regarded by Kant as the "general though to be sure only negative condition of all our judgments whatsoever" (*CPR* B 190).) For Kant, it is simply obvious that no reality can be contradictory; where contradiction is found, therefore, *there can be no reality.* This, I take it, is why Hegel accuses Kant of showing too great a "tenderness" (*Zärtlichkeit*) towards things (*EL* §48 Remark).[36] In Hegel's view, Kant deserves (qualified) credit for maintaining that reason generates antinomies, but he deserves censure for insisting, without clear justification, that reality as it is thought to be, and as it is judged actually to be, in itself must be free of all contradiction.[37]

35 On *CPR* B 534 the indirect proof of transcendental idealism is slightly different. It goes like this: if the world is a whole in itself, it must be either finite or infinite; but both claims are false (as has been shown by the arguments in the antinomies); therefore, the claim that the world is a whole in itself is also false. On *CPR* B 535, however, Kant argues that this latter claim is false, not because the thesis and antithesis are false, but because they constitute a "conflict" (*Widerstreit*). The thesis and antithesis are then shown to be false, because the claim that the world is a whole in itself is false, not vice versa.

36 Sedgwick (2012, 170) finds Hegel's remark "bewildering", but it is in my judgement perfectly intelligible, given Kant's commitment to the principle of contradiction.

37 For Hegel, such a justification would have to entail deriving the principle of contradiction, without presuppositions, from the very nature of thought and being. In Hegel's own presuppositionless logic, however, he demonstrates that contradiction is actually an integral feature of being itself; see *SL* 431 – 43 / *LW* 50 – 64.

As we have seen, there is a necessary tension in the very idea of a complete series of conditions of appearances, since it can, and must, be conceived both as unconditioned itself (and so unlimited and infinite) *and* as containing an unconditioned first member (and so limited and finite). A strict antinomy or contradiction arises, however, only when that complete series is taken actually to be something *real* in itself, that is, when we commit the error of transcendental realism: for only in that case are we required to attribute two mutually exclusive characteristics to a reality that must be one *or* the other. If, therefore, we abandon the idea that this complete series constitutes something real in itself, in favour of transcendental idealism, then the antinomies of pure reason are immediately "removed" (*gehoben*) (*CPR* B 534): if the reality that proves contradictory is eliminated, then the contradiction it produces itself disappears. Accordingly, for the critical or transcendental idealist, there is "no real *contradiction of reason*" (*CPR* B 768), because there is no determinate totality of appearances, or "world in itself", about which two mutually exclusive judgements must be made: such a world is a mere "mirage" (*Blendwerk*) (*CPR* B 451). The thesis and antithesis of each antinomy remain opposed to one another, but they are not actually about anything and so produce no contradiction.[38]

It is important to emphasise here that, in Kant's view, not every pair of conflicting assertions about a thing or things produces a contradiction. If, for example, we assert that every body smells good and also that every body smells bad, there is not necessarily a contradiction, since both propositions could be false: there could, after all, be bodies that do not smell at all (see *CPR* B 531). A contradiction in Kant's sense arises only when two assertions are made about something, and are assumed to be true of it, one of which, however, must be false while the other is true. So if we assert both that every body smells good *and* that not every body smells good (partly because some do not smell at all), we have a direct contradiction, because one assertion must be true and thereby excludes the other.

38 See also Sedgwick (2012, 167). Note that in all four antinomies of pure reason the thesis and antithesis are both shown to be false insofar as their shared assumption, namely transcendental realism, is shown to be false. There is, however, also a difference between the "mathematical" and "dynamical" antinomies. The theses and antitheses of the "mathematical" antinomies cannot be true at all, since the series of appearances and their conditions can never form a totality, but is given only in a regressive "empirical synthesis" (*CPR* B 527). By contrast, the theses and antitheses of the dynamical antinomies could conceivably be true, if transcendental realism were abandoned, since they would then simply concern things in themselves (a free cause and a necessary being) that are possible but, whatever their status, beyond our cognition. The thesis and antithesis in each case would still contradict one another, but either could be true. See *CPR* B 559 – 60, and also Wood (2010, 259).

Similarly, conflicting claims about the world as a whole produce a contradiction, when both prove to be necessary but one must be true and the other false. Take, for example, the thesis and antithesis of the first antinomy (without their specific reference to space and time). The thesis states that the world is finite in magnitude, whereas the antithesis states that it is infinite. They produce a contradiction, however, only under the condition that "the world (the whole series of appearances) is a thing in itself" – an *actually existing* thing in itself – and so must be "determined in itself regarding its magnitude": for this condition requires that it have a magnitude that is either finite or infinite (but that cannot be both) (*CPR* B 532–3). If, therefore, we remove this condition by denying that the world exists as a thing in itself, the contradiction automatically disappears. It does so, because the thesis and antithesis both prove to be false: the world is neither finite nor infinite in itself, since there is no world "in itself" at all.[39] The conflict in each antinomy is thus *in truth* not a contradiction but a "dialectical" conflict – one that merely *seems* to be a contradiction – because the world that is its subject is itself an illusion. As Kant writes, it is simply "a conflict of an illusion" (or "due to" an illusion) (*ein Widerstreit eines Scheins*) (*CPR* B 534).

Yet things are in fact more complicated than Kant recognizes: for the conflict that is generated by the illusory world cannot just be *seemingly* contradictory. A contradiction is initially produced because the "world" is necessarily ambiguous but is also judged to be something real in itself and therefore unambiguous. This contradiction is then "removed" when the world is shown not to be real in itself after all, but to be merely illusory. The world, however, retains the same characteristics when it is reduced to mere illusion, as it had when it was judged to be real in itself: it must still be understood to be both finite *and* infinite, and to have a determinate character of its own that is unambiguously finite *or* infinite. This means that this illusory world must itself give rise to an actual contradiction. There is no contradiction in the world in itself, since there is no such world and the thesis and antithesis of an antinomy are both false insofar as they are taken to apply to such a world. Yet there is still a contradiction in the world there seems to be, since the thesis and antithesis still apply necessarily to that world, but the latter cannot be characterised by both of them. When the world is exposed as an illusion, therefore, the conflict between the thesis and antithesis does not just prove to be *seemingly* contradictory (and so dialectical); it remains a *genuine* contradiction besetting the world there merely *seems* to be. Kant does not make this point explicit himself – indeed, he insists that "the con-

39 See Allison (2004, 387).

flict of reason with itself" can be brought "entirely to an end" (*CPR* B 544) – but the point is implicit in what he says.

The judgements that the world has a beginning in time and does not have such a beginning thus have an ambiguous status. On the one hand, insofar as the world to which they apply is not something real in itself, those judgements merely *seem* to be true: they are illusory judgements. This in turn means that the transcendental illusion that Kant declares to be unavoidable includes not only the ideas and the principle Grier calls "P_2" – namely, "when the conditioned is given, then so is the whole series of conditions subordinated one to the other, which is itself unconditioned, also given" (*CPR* B 364)[40] – but also the theses and antitheses of the four antinomies: it includes "e. g. the illusion in the proposition 'the world must have a beginning in time'" (*CPR* B 353). On the other hand, however, such judgements do not merely *seem* to be true of the world that merely *seems* to be real, but they *are* indeed true of it. The world as a whole is not real in itself but merely seems to be, but it remains no less true that it must be understood to be both finite *and* infinite even though it must also be determinate and so either finite *or* infinite.

Kant's claim that there is "no real *contradiction of reason* with itself" (*CPR* B 768) thus needs to be qualified. There is no actual contradiction, since no complete world to which mutually exclusive predicates necessarily apply is actually given. Yet there *is* still a "real contradiction of reason", since such mutually exclusive predicates continue to apply to the determinate world that seems to be given. This contradiction is no mere illusion, but is a necessary and irreducible feature of the world that seems, and must seem, to exist: it is the "conflict of an illusion" that remains *contradictory* (*CPR* B 534, translation altered). Kantian reason – that is, reason enlightened by transcendental idealism – does not confront a contradictory reality "in itself", but it will always face the contradictions generated by the illusions that it necessarily projects, that is, by its own "subjective" products. In this sense, Hegel is right to claim that Kant's solution to the antinomies "make[s] the so-called conflict [*Widerstreit*] into something *subjective*, in which of course it remains still the same illusion, that is, *as unresolved*, as before" (*SL* 191 / *LS* 200, emphasis added).

It has to be admitted, however, that in these lines Hegel does not himself have in mind the point I have just been making. He is not claiming that, for Kant, contradiction, though absent from the sphere of the "in itself", continues to belong to the world that *seems* to be real in itself, that is, to transcendental illusion (*Schein*). His claim is rather that Kant shifts contradiction from things

40 See also *CPR* B 436, and Grier (2001, 121 – 2).

in themselves to the (in Hegel's view) "subjective" realm of *appearance* (*Erscheinung*). It is for this reason that Hegel thinks Kant does not ultimately resolve his antinomies: for Hegel's Kant, contradiction remains even in the world of our empirical experience, the world as it is *for us*.

That this is Hegel's view is confirmed by his statement in the *Encyclopaedia* that, for Kant, "the worldly content, whose determinations are caught in such a contradiction, cannot be something *in itself*, but only appearance [*Erscheinung*]", and by the subsequent remark that "it is not considered at all objectionable that the world of *appearance* [*die* erscheinende *Welt*] shows contradictions to the spirit that observes it" (*EL* §48 and Remark, translation altered). The interpretation of Kant expressed in these lines is, however, clearly mistaken: for, in Kant's own view, *there is no contradiction in mere appearances*. The illusion projected by reason's idea of the world may well continue to produce contradictions (even if Kant does not say as much himself); but there is no contradiction in things as they actually appear to us, in the things we experience.

For Kant, a contradiction arises when the totality of conditions of appearance is assumed to be something real in itself, because that one totality must be understood (for example) both to have and not to have a limit in space and time. Kant then dissolves this contradiction by rejecting the assumption on which it rests: in his view, appearances do not constitute a reality or world "in itself" and so are neither infinite nor finite "in themselves"; there is thus no contradiction in them (see *CPR* B 533).[41] One might still worry, however, that, even if they have no existence in themselves, appearances form a given whole *for us* and that that whole must be both infinite and finite. If that were the case, then the contradiction attached to reason would not actually be removed but would simply be relocated from the world "in itself" (which has now been exposed as an illusion) to the world of our appearances (which is empirically real), and Hegel would be right.

Kant insists, however, that appearances (and their conditions) not only do not constitute a whole reality or world *in itself* but also do not constitute a whole world or totality *for us*. Appearances (and their conditions) are not given as a totality *at all*, because (as I have noted above) they are given only in the "regressive series of my representations" and that series can never be completed (*CPR* B 533; see also B 527). As I regress back from what is actually given to me to other objects of perception, I regress from one conditioned thing to another, but I never reach a point at which no further regression is possible and the whole can thus be said to be given. Accordingly, the series of appearances "is

41 See also *VGP* 358.

never wholly given, and the world is thus not an unconditioned whole, and thus does not exist as such a whole, either with infinite or finite magnitude" (*CPR* B 533). There can be no contradiction in appearances, therefore, because they do not constitute a totality to which mutually exclusive predicates must, or could even, be applied.

Hegel thus misunderstands Kant when he claims that Kant just shifts contradiction from things in themselves into the realm of appearances and thereby leaves such contradiction "unresolved". For Kant, there is no fundamental contradiction in the realm of appearance because that realm does not, and cannot, constitute a given totality to which conflicting predicates must apply. Nonetheless, as I suggested above, there is truth in Hegel's claim that Kant leaves the contradiction set out in the Antinomies unresolved: for that contradiction remains an ineliminable feature of the worldly totality there merely *seems* to be.

3 Hegel on Kant's Antinomies once again

From Hegel's perspective, Kant also falls short insofar as he does not provide the resolution of the antinomies that *Hegel* thinks is required: Kant fails to focus on the categories that (in Hegel's view) give rise to the antinomies when they are understood in a one-sided manner, and he fails to think such one-sided categories in their true, "speculative", unity with one another. As I have noted above, what interests Hegel about Kant's antinomies is not principally Kant's own story about the ideas, transcendental illusion and transcendental realism, but rather what they suggest about the categories of thought, and about the categories in Hegel's sense rather than Kant's.

In Kant's own view, the antinomies are indeed related to categories, since they are generated by combining the idea of the world with transcendental realism and all ideas of reason in turn are simply "categories extended to the unconditioned" (*CPR* B 436; see also B 383). More precisely, the ideas are reached by starting from a premise in which a category of *relation* is expressed and arguing back, through syllogistic inference, to the point at which the "synthetic unity" thought in that category is regarded as something unconditioned (and / or as encompassing a totality of conditions) (see *CPR* B 383).[42] The category of substance, for example, is the thought of "something that can exist only as subject and never as mere predicate", so this is extended to the idea of the unconditioned subject (*CPR* B 289, 379). This unconditioned subject is then identified with

42 See also Grier (2001, 132 – 3), and Allison (2004, 317).

the thinking subject (or "I") to produce the specific idea of the "soul" (see *CPR* B 391).[43] The category of causality, on the other hand, is based on the thought of the dependence of one thing on another (or the relation of ground and consequent) (*CPR* B 106), so this is extended to the idea of the whole series of such dependencies (see *CPR* B 106, 379, 393). This totality is then identified with the series of conditions of objects in space and time (that is, of "appearances") to produce the idea of the "world" (see *CPR* B 391).[44]

In Hegel's view, however, Kant's antinomies are just as intimately connected to what he (Hegel) considers to be the *categories* of infinity and finitude, and they implicitly suggest that these categories themselves are both opposed to and inseparable from one another and in that sense contradictory (see *VGP* 356). Indeed, for Hegel, Kant's antinomies are in truth generated *by* these and other categories (see *EL* §48 Remark).[45] The proper consideration of the antinomies – which Kant fails to carry out – should thus focus on such categories "purely for themselves" (*rein für sich*) and show how they resolve their own contradictions logically and thereby develop into their unity (*SL* 191–2 / *LS* 199–200, translation altered).

Hegel's interpretation of Kant's antinomies clearly disregards many of Kant's own explicit concerns. In my view, however, it is not simply unjustified. The connection Hegel draws between Kant's antinomies and certain (Hegelian) categories finds its justification in Kant's claim that the antinomies are generated (on the assumption of transcendental realism) by the two ways in which the totality of conditions of appearance can be understood to be unconditioned. As I noted above, that totality can be understood to be unconditioned as a whole and to have no unconditioned first member, in which case it is an *infinite* totality (in what Hegel would consider a "bad" sense); but the totality can also be understood to have an unconditioned first member and so to be limited and *finite*. Kant makes clear that this distinction, indeed opposition, between an infinite and finite series underlies all four antinomies (see *CPR* B 445–6). Furthermore, each antinomy purports to show that the world in itself must be *both* infinite and finite, even though the two are mutually exclusive. Thus, although Hegel interprets Kant's antinomies "against Kant's intention" (*VGP* 356), his claim that they are generated ultimately by *categories* is at least partly justified by Kant's own procedure: for (assuming transcendental realism) Kant's antinomies arise

43 See also Grier (2001, 136).

44 For a fuller account of the formation of the cosmological ideas, see Allison (2004, 362–4). Note that not all such ideas are the ideas of series of *causes*; see *CPR* B 439 ff.

45 Such other categories include, for example, discreteness and continuity (in the second antinomy) and necessity and contingency (in the fourth).

because "infinity" and "finitude" prove to be both opposed and inseparable at the same time.[46] It is true that for Kant (in Hegel's words) "reason *only* falls into contradiction through *the application of the categories*" to the "world" (*EL* §48 Remark). Yet it is the fact that categories such as infinity and finitude – or continuity and discreteness – are themselves conceived by Kant as essentially *opposed* to one another that actually generates the contradiction when both have to be "applied" to the world. In this sense, Hegel's interpretation of Kant's antinomies is defensible.

Hegel is also justified in claiming that Kant does not properly resolve the contradiction that he (Hegel) sees in Kant's antinomies. As we know, Hegel thinks that the contradictions within and between categories, such as infinity and finitude, are resolved – or, rather, resolve themselves – in the course of speculative logic. This occurs as such categories prove to be moments of a unity (see *SL* 191–2 / *LS* 200). No aspect of Kant's resolution of the antinomies, however, yields this conclusion, so none can satisfy Hegel. Kant resolves the antinomies to his own satisfaction by rejecting transcendental realism and so denying that appearances and their conditions form a reality in itself that could be either infinite or finite: there is no "real *contradiction*" between the thesis and antithesis of the antinomies because there is no one reality to which both must apply (see *CPR* B 768). From Hegel's perspective, however, Kant fails thereby to resolve the contradiction between *categories* such as infinity and finitude in a properly speculative manner.

This remains true even though Hegel is wrong to claim that Kant simply moves contradiction from the sphere of things in themselves to that of appearance. Viewed from a modified, "Hegelian" perspective (rather than Hegel's own), Kant still fails to provide the resolution that Hegel seeks. He fails in two distinct ways.

First, as we have seen, Kant rejects the assumption that the totality of conditions of appearance constitutes a reality in itself, but he accepts that it *seems* to do so. Furthermore, as I argued above, that seeming reality must continue to be contradictory in Kant's sense, even though Kant himself does not explicitly recognize this. Since the world there merely seems to be retains the same character as the world that is erroneously judged to exist, it must still be either finite *or* infinite, but must also still be judged to be *both*. This in turn means that for Hegel, the opposed categories of finitude and infinity must still both apply to Kant's illusory "world", and so be inseparable in their opposition, and so be contradictory in Hegel's sense. Kant, however, does not show how these contradic-

46 See Düsing (2004, 41).

tory categories can be reconciled and thought together *as one*, either in relation to that illusory world or (as in Hegel's *Logic*) in themselves. Hegel's assertion that Kant turns the conflict "into something *subjective*", but otherwise leaves it "unresolved", is thus justified, even though – *pace* Hegel – the unresolved conflict or contradiction attaches not to the realm of appearance (*Erscheinung*) but to the illusion (*Schein*) projected by reason (see *SL* 191 / *LS* 200).

Kant's second failure is different. As just noted, no contradictions are to be found in the sphere of appearance, as Kant understands it (since the latter is a not a given totality that must be, and yet cannot be, both infinite and finite). This conception of appearance as a contradiction-free zone does not, however, *resolve* the contradiction between the categories of infinity and finitude that Hegel finds expressed in Kant's antinomies. It just *removes* the contradiction by denying that the categories are opposed-but-inseparable (since, in the sphere of appearances, they do not both apply to the same totality). Infinity and finitude are thereby simply left distinct from one another within appearance: finite things are, indeed, infinitely divisible, but they are thus "finite" and "infinite" in quite different respects. Now, for Kant, of course, finding a way to remove a contradiction is a mark of philosophical success; for Hegel, however, it is to fail to take seriously the insight implicitly contained in the antinomies. To take the latter seriously, in Hegel's view, is not to do away with the contradictions within and between categories, but to think those contradictions through to their logical conclusion and speculative resolution. Kant fails to do this because he does not see the need for a purely logical study of the categories in Hegel's sense (see *CPR* B 108), but also because, for all his strengths, he is ultimately a philosopher of the *understanding:* in Kant's view, the point of philosophy is not to go along with, and think through, contradiction but above all to keep thought and reality *free* of it.

I have suggested that Hegel's general interpretation and critique of Kant's treatment of the antinomies are justified by certain key aspects of Kant's procedure in the first *Critique*. Yet that interpretation and critique still do not look genuinely *immanent*, despite Hegel's stated commitment to entering immanently into "the strength [*Kraft*] of the opponent" (*SL* 581 / *LB* 10, translation altered). First, Hegel focuses, not on what explicitly concerns Kant in the antinomies, but on what he takes to be implicit in Kant's account of them: namely that categories themselves generate the antinomies. Second, Hegel takes Kant to task for failing to do what Kant had no intention of doing, namely consider the categories and their intrinsic antinomies "purely for themselves", as Hegel himself does in his speculative logic.

In another sense, however, Hegel's critique of Kant on the basis of his logic can be considered immanent after all. This is because that very logic is made necessary by Kant's own demand that thought be *self-critical* and not take the

dogmatic assumptions of reason for granted. Dogmatism, Kant tells us, is the "presumption" (*Anmaßung*) that reason can proceed according to principles "without first inquiring in what way and by what right it has obtained them" (*CPR* B xxxv). The purpose of critique is thus to challenge that presumption and to show how – under what conditions – reason's principles can be justified. Hegel, however, also sees in this conception of critique a call to challenge the unquestioned assumptions made by understanding, such as that distinct categories and concepts like "infinity" and "finitude" are, indeed, simply distinct and that thought and the world are governed by the principle of contradiction (or, more accurately, non-contradiction) (see *SL* 41–2 / *LS* 21–2, and *EL* §§32, 80). Hegel takes Kant to task, therefore, for failing to carry his own rejection of dogmatism to its logical conclusion: for Kant retains the categorial and conceptual distinctions of the understanding "without first inquiring in what way and by what right he has obtained them".[47] In Hegel's eyes, to carry Kant's rejection of dogmatism to its logical conclusion is to carry out the radically presuppositionless derivation and examination of the categories that is undertaken in the *Science of Logic*. That in turn includes a close study of those categories – such as infinity and finitude, condition and the unconditioned, and discreteness and continuity – that explicitly or implicitly "constitute the essence and ground of the antinomies" (*SL* 191 / *LS* 199). Hegel's apparently "external" consideration of Kant's antinomies is thus in fact guided by a logic that is the direct result of following Kant's own injunction to reject dogmatism (as well as the indirect result of those antinomies themselves, as I noted above).

Hegel certainly does not do justice to Kant's account of the antinomies in the way that Kantians may expect. Nonetheless, he offers a critique of Kant's account (as well as of his transcendental idealism) that is ultimately driven by one of Kant's own philosophical imperatives: anti-dogmatism. Hegel interprets Kant's antinomies as imperfect anticipations of his own insight into the presuppositionless, immanent dialectic within thought through which contradictions in and between categories arise and are then resolved. From Hegel's point of view, however, (as Gueroult puts it) "pressing the *Kantian* system is enough to let Hegelian dialectic emerge from it as if by itself".[48]

47 See Houlgate (2015, 38).

48 Gueroult (1978, 273): "Es genügt, das Kantische System zu pressen, um wie von selbst die Hegelsche Dialektik aus ihm hervortreten zu lassen" (emphasis added to translation). Gueroult's remark that Hegel's thought draws more on an "hegelianised Kant" than on Kant himself suggests that he is actually sceptical of Hegel's claim to be taking Kantian thought to its logical conclusion. In my view, by contrast, in the respect I have outlined (though admittedly not in every respect) Hegel is right.

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Abbreviations

[*CPR*] Kant, Immanuel (1997): Critique of Pure Reason, P. Guyer and A. W. Wood (eds), Cambridge.

[*CPR*] Kant, Immanuel (1990): Kritik der reinen Vernunft, R. Schmidt (ed.), Hamburg.

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Lara Ostaric

Creating the Absolute: Kant's Conception of Genial Creation in Schlegel, Novalis and Schelling

Abstract: In contrast to the current tendencies in secondary literature to interpret the notion of the Absolute of the Early Romantics and Schelling from either an epistemological or an ontological perspective, I argue that these philosophers found in Kant's notion of genius in the third *Critique* a model for the Absolute that combines both perspectives in the act of the artist's free creation. However, I contend that Schlegel and Novalis followed more closely the modesty of Kant's Critical philosophy, both epistemologically and ontologically: epistemologically as a lack of our capacity to know and ontologically as a lack of our capacity to fully realize the Absolute. With their conceptions of the Absolute as an infinite becoming and an endless oscillation, they defied philosophical systems with an absolutely certain principle as its basis and embraced Kant's doctrine of the ignorance of things as they are in themselves. In contrast, Schelling's philosophy from its early beginnings was marked by ambition to extend Kant's notion of the Unconditioned from both epistemological and ontological perspectives. For him, an act of genial creation was equivalent to a full realization of the Absolute, which presupposed and afforded its theoretical transparency.

Introduction

In current literature, there are two dominant trends of approaching the notion of the Unconditioned, or Absolute, in post-Kantian thinkers. The key proponent of one group is Manfred Frank who emphasizes the epistemological significance of the concept in Early Romanticism, i.e., on the one hand, its role as the condition of the possibility of self-consciousness, on the other, the Early Romantics' ultimate skepticism with respect to our possibility to have knowledge of it. The main proponent of the other group is Frederick Beiser who stresses not the epistemological but the ontological significance of the Absolute and both the German Idealists' and Early Romantics' claims that we can have knowledge of it. What is common to both Frank and Beiser, however, is that they trace back the emergence of the post-Kantian Absolute to criticism, which for them is "not unjustifiable", of Kant's notion of the Unconditioned that is merely an epistemological notion, a regulative ideal with no ontological status, i.e., with no

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reality.[1] If any ontological aspects of the post-Kantian Absolute are at all discussed, then those tend to be ascribed to the influence of Jacobi, Goethe, and Spinoza.[2]

One reason for this wide-spread view is a tacit endorsement of one contemporary reception of Kant's transcendental idealism, the one that goes back to some of Kant's first interpreters, i. e., Reinhold and Hegel. On this view, transcendental idealism is primarily an epistemological position according to which 'transcendentally real' transcends our cognitive capacities as such and hence has no special ontological status, is an empty category, because that which goes beyond all our possible concepts may not be real.[3] This reception of Kant's transcendental idealism ignores Kant's long arguments for the relevance of our specific forms of a priori intuition, space and time, and the fact that by 'transcendentally real' or the 'thing in itself' Kant has in mind objects which – although they do not conform to the conditions of our a priori intuition – have genuine ultimate or unconditioned properties, and, therefore, are objects

1 Frank (2004) argues that Jacobi "believed, not unjustifiably, that he could relate this [his idea of understanding predicate statements as a derivative form of Being (existence)] to an idea of Kant's that had not been worked out in much detail" (Frank 2004, 59). Frank is keen on emphasizing that the Early Romantics received Kant primarily through Jacobi and his reception of Kant's claim that Being (existence) is no real predicate, which further inspired Jacobi to take a skeptical approach to Kant's transcendental idealism and the existence of a thing-in-itself. Against Kant, Jacobi felt compelled to argue for an intuitive certainty of the true Being (existence) of a thing-in-itself in relation to which the predicative notion of Being (existence) is derivative. The Early Romantics, according to Frank, took over this "ontological monism" from Jacobi while being at the same time committed to "epistemological realism" (Frank 2004, 56), i. e., the view that we cannot know this original Being that escapes all consciousness. Beiser (2002) approaches the history of both German Idealism and Early Romanticism not as "the *culmination* but the *nemesis* of the Cartesian tradition" (Beiser 2002, 2), "the progressive *de-subjectivization* of the Kantian legacy, the growing recognition that the ideal realm consists not in personality and subjectivity but in the normative, the archetypal and the intelligible" (Beiser 2002, 6).

2 Nassar (2014) argues that – in lieu of the existing literature on philosophical romanticism which approaches the romantic Absolute as either an epistemological project "concerned with elaborating a theory of knowledge and explicating self-consciousness" (Nassar 2014, 1) or a metaphysical project "concerned with understanding the nature of being and reality" (Nassar 2014, 1) – the romantic conception of the absolute is more complex, not one-sided, "an identification of epistemological and ontological concerns" (Nassar 2014, 2). While I am sympathetic to her view that the post-Kantian Absolute has both epistemic and ontological aspects, she however never questions the division according to which the epistemic aspects of the Absolute are identified with the "Kantian regulative ideal or a Fichtean transcendental self" (Nassar 2014, 2) and the metaphysical aspects with "Spinoza's substance" (Nassar 2014, 2).

3 See Ameriks (2003, 103).

with an even greater ontological status than those that are transcendentally ideal. This is because in comparison to the phenomenal realm of appearances where one item depends on another, to wit, is conditioned by another ontologically (e. g. an effect by its cause, a whole by its parts, something that is contingent by something that is necessary etc.), the objects in the noumenal realm are unconditioned, not ontologically conditioned by other things.[4]

While one must acknowledge the complex constellation within which the post-Kantians received Kant's philosophy, one should also not underestimate the degree to which they, the Early Romantics and Schelling especially, were familiar with Kant's writings and, in particular, his third *Critique*. In this paper, I will challenge the current approach according to which the epistemological aspect of the post-Kantian Absolute is ascribed to the influence of Kant's philosophy (or better yet, its amendments) and the metaphysical/ontological to the influence of Jacobi's, Goethe's, or Spinoza's philosophy. I will argue that Kant's conception of genius through whom nature creates and gives the rule to art – a notion that became central for the Early Romantics and early Schelling – was instrumental for these post-Kantian figures for developing a conception of the Absolute that has both epistemological and ontological components.[5] Fur-

4 See *CPR* A 19/B 33 and also Ameriks (2003, 33 – 34). This interpretation of Kant's transcendental idealism is also in the background of Nassar (2014), namely, her claim that the Critical philosophy could not offer the resources to the Early Romantics that go beyond the epistemological notion of the Unconditioned. Hence, she interprets Novalis' dissatisfaction with the Unconditioned as a "mere being," i. e., being only in relation to the knowing subject, and his turn to "being as such" (Nassar 2014, 27), or, Schlegel's dissatisfaction with the "infinite" as a merely epistemological category of infinite approximation to the Absolute, and his turn to the infinite as an ontological notion, i. e., as an "infinite becoming" (Nassar 2014, 84), as their turn away from the limitations of Kant's Critical philosophy and as their turn towards Goethe and his studies of nature. This she does in spite of the fact that, as she admits in her book, Schlegel was not at all familiar with Goethe's studies of nature and only a speculation remains on Nassar's part that perhaps he became familiar with Goethe's studies of nature through his discussions with his friend Novalis whose familiarity with Goethe's writings on nature can be confirmed with more certainty. See Nassar (2014, 145).

5 Nassar (2014) sporadically mentions this concept (see for example Nassar 2014, 43, 150, 211) but does not draw any conclusions from it. Beiser (2003) emphasizes the importance of the idea of the artist for the development of the Early Romantic metaphysics: "For the romantics, the main reason that the creativity of the artist has a claim to metaphysical truth is that his activity is continuous with, and an integral part of, nature as a whole" (Beiser 2003, 76). But Beiser never traces the importance of the idea of artistic genius in Early Romanticism back to Kant's conception of genius. This is because for Beiser, "[t]he fundamental problem with a strictly Kantian reading of the romantic aesthetic theory is that it cannot explain its *objective* dimension" (Beiser 2003, 76). And even those who do trace the Early Romantic conception of genius to Kant's argue that Kant's reference to surpassing nature in his definition of genius should not

thermore, unlike some commentators who argue that the post-Kantians reached their conception of the Absolute as a result of amending and turning away from the limitations of Kant's philosophy,[6] I will emphasize that they understood their project primarily as an extension and deepening of Kant's Critical thought. In Friedrich Schlegel's words, this Absolute is "a sure principle by means of which to amend, complete, and carry out the Kantian outline."[7] Paying closer attention to the ways in which they understood their projects as, on the one hand, amending and, on the other, completing Kant's Critical philosophy, will reveal that the Early Romantics had an anti-foundationalist agenda which remained true to the modesty of Kant's Critical system. For them, the realization of the Absolute remains an "infinite progress". Schelling's conception of the Absolute, instead, was more consistent with other German Idealist figures, such as Fichte and Hegel, and showed ambitions of a stronger foundationalism.[8]

The paper is structured as follows. Part one summarizes briefly Kant's conception of genius; part two shows the importance of Kant's conception of genius for Friedrich Schlegel's conception of the Absolute as an "infinite becoming"; part three argues for the relevance of Kant's conception of genius for Novalis' notion of "romanticizing" (*romantisiren*); section four shows the importance of Kant's conception of genius for Schelling's 1800 *System*. In the final Section, I offer some concluding remarks.

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be understood in "any metaphysical sense" (Kneller 2007, 158). And it is precisely this reading of the legacy of Kant's aesthetics – that is, as either pertaining merely to the subject (her feelings and content of her mind) or, if going beyond the mere subject, then certainly not in any metaphysical sense – that I wish to challenge.

6 For Beiser, "Kant's third Kritik had *mainly* a negative significance for the romantic belief in the metaphysical status of art" (Beiser 2003, 80). Beiser (2003) reserves some positive significance of the third *Critique* only for Kant's Critique of Teleological Judgment. See Beiser (2003, 82 – 87). Nassar (2014) follows Beiser and focuses one-sidedly on the connection of the Early Romantics and Schelling to Kant's philosophy and their attempts to amend it and never mentions their attempts to complete it.

7 Schlegel (2001, 90).

8 This is the reason why I remain puzzled why Nassar (2014) treats Schelling together with the Early Romantics, i.e., Novalis and Schlegel. Schelling's ambitions from the start were those of a system builder, while the Early Romantics, consistent with their Kantian modesty, were critics of systems that have an absolutely certain principle as their basis.

1 Kant's Conception of Genius[9]

While Goethe for the Early Romantics and Schelling was an example of genius, it was Kant's philosophical account of a genius's production – a production that presupposes both an act of spontaneity, or rule-giving, as well as passivity or receptivity to the "gift of nature"[10] – that served to them as one of the core catalysts for, what they considered was, carrying out the Critical project to its completion.

According to Kant, a genius's cognitive faculties, imagination and understanding, must relate to each other in a free harmony, so that her work would be capable of eliciting the same free harmony of the faculties in the observer and, thus, be judged as beautiful universally.[11] But if the explanation of a genius's "productive faculty", her productive imagination, were reduced to the necessary condition for evoking a proper aesthetic response in the observer, then it would not be possible to distinguish a genius's "productive faculty" from an artist who proceeds by mere taste, which Kant defines as a "faculty for judging" (*KU* AA 5:313). The work of the latter just as the work of the former can elicit a free harmony of the faculties in the observer and stand the test of aesthetic judgment. However, on Kant's view, the artist who proceeds by taste alone proceeds by imitation. She learns how to give her work a purposive form through a slow and painstaking process of holding her work up and judging it against the works of superior masters, or geniuses. A genius, on the other hand, does not learn through imitation how to give her work a purposive form. Rather, a genius creates, which, for Kant, is to say that a genius's "productive faculty", her imagination, requires "spirit" (*Geist*) (*KU* AA 5:313). The connection between spirit, the originating source of a genius's inspiration, and nature is revealed in the following passage: "Spirit is the secret source of life. It is not subordinated to the whim but its movements come from nature."[12] And it is this originating source of a genius's inspiration that Kant has in mind in his definition of genius as "the inborn predisposition of the mind (*ingenium*) through which nature gives the rule [*Regel*] to art" (*KU* AA 5:307).

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9 Much of my discussion in this section relies on my 2010 and 2012a where I offer a more detailed analysis of Kant's conception of genius.

10 Schlegel (2001, 25).

11 See *KU* AA 5:316.

12 Reflexion 831, *Refl.* AA 15:371; dated according to Adickes approximately 1776 – 1778; my translation.

The meaning of the term "nature" in Kant's definition is ambiguous but from the *Pillau* lectures on anthropology[13] we learn that the term "nature" in Kant's definition of genius denotes the Idea of nature as a "whole", or nature understood in its systematic unity:

> Spirit is also the enlivening of the faculties by the Idea [...] The Idea does not have a meaning of a concept. One can have concepts independent of an Idea. The development of a whole science belongs to an Idea. The Idea is business of the understanding but not through abstraction because these are then concepts. [Idea] is the principle of the rules. There is a double unity: a distributive and a *collective* unity. The Idea concerns always the unity of the manifold as a whole. The Idea contains the principle of the manifold as a whole. (AA 25:782)

Because the Idea of nature as a whole, or what Kant in the Appendix of the *Critique of Pure Reason* calls the Idea of the "world-whole" (*eines Weltganzen*) (*CPR* A 677/B 705), is not an Idea of an empirical reality that is engendered discursively, the possibility of the "world-whole" can be explained only if reason posits an unlimited understanding that is analogous to ours in its empirical use. Therefore, the Idea of nature as a "world-whole" necessarily implies nature's supersensible substrate and it is the supersensible substrate that enlivens a genius's productive imagination.[14] Thus, on Kant's view, the rule exhibited in the works of genius does not have a merely "subjective significance, referring to nothing but the mind of the artist."[15] Instead, it entails much stronger ontological commitments than this is commonly acknowledged in Kant literature. That is to say that it presupposes something that goes beyond a genius's creative subjectivity through the notion of an order that is purposive for human faculties in general, and goes beyond the minimum required for knowledge and action to occur at all.

Because, for Kant in his Critical period, we cannot have theoretical knowledge of the supersensible, genius can never summarize the steps that are necessary to complete her creative process, that is, "it cannot itself describe or indicate scientifically how it brings its product into being" (*KU* AA 5:308). Although a genius-artist cannot formulate the rules of her production and, thus, we can say, she produces unconsciously, this unconscious production is not a blind production. Put differently, a genius knows when, with respect to her work, she gets

13 See also my 2010, 32.

14 The Idea of the "world-whole" relates to the Idea of the "highest intelligence" as conditioned to something that is unconditioned. This is because if it were to exist as an object and not just as an Idea of our reason, it would require intelligence other than ours for its existence, which, in turn, would not depend on anything else as a condition of its possibility.

15 See Beiser (2003, 75).

things right or wrong. This is because a genius's intuition of an indeterminate principle generates the harmonious play of her cognitive faculties, imagination and understanding. Thus, a genius's intuition of an indeterminate principle results in a judgment although it is not reached through a judgment. In order to understand better how a genius's intuitive understanding amounts to a judgment, it is helpful to consider Kant's account of judgment in the first *Critique:* "If the understanding in general is explained as the faculty of rules, then the power of judgment is the faculty of subsuming under rules, i.e., of determining whether something stands under a given rule (*casus datae legis*) or not" (*CPR* A 132/B 171). Thus, a genius's creative process amounts to a series of evaluative acts in which a genius judges which particulars (e.g., colors, symbols, metaphors or notes in the case of a musical composition) she should choose in order to express the intuited content so that this expression meets the epistemic standard of the purposive arrangement of her cognitive capacities.

In the following section, I will show how both the passive/intuitive and the active/rule-giving aspects of Kant's conception of genius can be discerned in the epistemic aspects of Schlegel's notion of the Absolute. I will also show how Kant's conception of genius influenced Schlegel's ontological conception of the Absolute.

2 Friedrich Schlegel's Absolute as an "infinite becoming"

In *On the Study of Greek Poetry* – a piece that stems from his "classical phase" (1793–1796) when Schlegel was focused on his philological studies of the Ancient Greeks – Schlegel describes the state of modern poetry as a form of art that is guided by "[e]very principle [...] except that of beauty. This is to such an extent not the governing principle of modern poetry that many of its most splendid works are openly representations of the ugly" (*KFSA* I.1:219 / Schlegel 2001, 18). Modern poetry for Schlegel is "simply a slave of either sensibility or reason" (*KFSA* I.1:275 / Schlegel 2001, 48). It originates either in a poet's sensibility, emotions, or in her intellect, concepts and, "[o]nly by means of a remarkable, rich, new, and unusual content, only by means of voluptuous material can presentation become important and interesting to them" (*KFSA* I.1:275 / Schlegel 2001, 48).[16] Unlike modern poetry, the poetry of Ancient Greece was governed

16 "Nur durch merkwürdigen, reichen, neuen und sonderbaren Inhalt; nur durch wollüstigen Stoff kann eine Darstellung ihnen wichtig und interessant werden." Translation slightly altered.

by the true principle of beauty, "free from the constraints of needs and the rule of the understanding" (*KFSA* I.1:275 / Schlegel 2001, 48).[17] Greek poetry was free from the determination of sensibility on the one hand and understanding on the other because it was governed by the "unconditioned purposiveness of its purposeless play" (*KFSA* I.1:275 / Schlegel 2001, 48).[18] Thus, Schlegel makes explicit what only remains implicit in Kant's conception of genius, namely, that the free harmony of a genius's faculties (imagination and understanding), the indeterminate precept of her creation (principle of purposiveness without a purpose), is indeterminate because it presupposes a determination, "purposiveness", of that which transcends the subjectivity of the artist, the Idea of the Unconditioned, or supersensible. The art, more specifically poetry, of Antiquity, externalizes the Unconditioned or supersensible. In other words, it embodies the infinite in the finite:

> [E]ven in the lyric genre, whose actual object is *beautiful peculiarity*, Greek poetry preserves nonetheless its constant tendency toward the objective by means of the type and spirit of presentation [*Darstellung*], which – in as much as the particular limits of its peculiar style and its subject matter allow – approximates the purely human, elevates the individual to the general, and represents in the peculiar actually only the universal. (*KFSA* I.1:283 / Schlegel 2001, 53)[19]

For Schlegel, even the lyric poetry of Antiquity, which reflects the emotional state of the poet, and, thus, on the surface something subjective, manifests ultimately something universal and objective. This is because its rule, i.e. the principle according to which it is composed and put together, transcends the subjectivity of the artist.

But for Schlegel, just like for Kant, the creative act of a genius consists of an objective and a subjective component. It consists of a passive, intuitive, and an active, critical, aspect:

> Only the mind [*Gemüt*] that has been sufficiently worked upon by fate has the uncommon fortune of being able to be independent. The foundation of his proudest works is often only a gift of nature, and his best deeds are often only half his. Without freedom it would not be a deed: without any external assistance it would not be a human deed. (*KFSA* I.1:230 / Schlegel 2001, 25)

17 "Bei den *Griechen* allein war die Kunst von dem Zwange des Bedürfnisses und der Herrschaft des Verstandes immer gleich frei." Translation slightly altered.

18 "[...] die unbedingte Zweckmäßigkeit ihres zwecklosen Spiels [...]." Translation slightly altered.

19 Translation altered by rendering German *Darstellung* as "presentation".

The rule of a genius's art implies the Idea of nature's supersensible substrate and, hence, her creative process presupposes that which surpasses her individual human subjectivity and is "a gift of nature". This is also why her rule is not indeterminate in the way some other concepts are. Instead it is something that, given the special limits of our human cognitive capacities, is in principle beyond any finite determination (i.e., specification). This is why Schlegel in the passage above calls a genius's mind "independent", that is, original insofar as she is independent from the existing rules and norms imitated by other artists.[20] But her rule also presupposes an active element, "freedom", by which Schlegel understands an act of her spontaneity and judgment. If a genius-artist were to produce blindly, her product would not be "a deed", i.e., a work she could claim her own. But on the other hand, if this act of bringing the infinite, i.e., the supersensible, into the finite were entirely an act of her own freedom, her spontaneity, then this would not be an act of a human but a divine subject, and, hence, it would not be a "human deed". If her creative act were entirely an act of her own freedom, this would imply that she is capable of theoretical knowledge of the supersensible and could consciously bring it about.

Schlegel's respect for Kant's Critical limits is not only epistemological in nature, i.e., pertaining to our capacity to have knowledge of the Absolute, but also practical and ontological, i.e., pertaining to our capacity to realize the Absolute in the world. For Schlegel, "*Beauty in the broadest sense* [...] is the pleasurable manifestation of the good" (*KFSA* I.1:288 / Schlegel 2001, 56). Put differently, for Schlegel, creating beautiful art is equivalent to bringing about the good in the world.[21] Schlegel also does not remain a pessimist with respect to the development of modern poetry. On the contrary, he argues that beauty exhibited once by the poetry of Ancient Greece is the goal of modern poetry. Modern poetry's progression towards this goal is not a "*constant progression*" but, rather, "appears to be achievable through a *sudden leap*" (*KFSA* I.1:255 / Schlegel 2001, 36). These sudden leaps are made possible by the occurrences of special individuals in history, i.e., artistic geniuses: "Every great, albeit eccentric, product of the modern artistic genius is, from this perspective, an authentic – and, in its place, very purposeful – advance" (*KFSA* I.1:354 / Schlegel 2001, 88). Hence, Schlegel argues that our progression towards the Absolute, i.e., true beauty that was inherent in Greek culture and poetry, and, thus, towards the true

20 For a more detailed account of a genius's originality in Kant see my 2012a, 88–94.

21 Schlegel alludes in this passage to Kant's conception of beauty as a "symbol of morality." That Schlegel is correct in interpreting Kant's section "Beauty as a Symbol of Morality" in the third *Critique* as pertaining not only to the beauty of nature but also to the beauty of special works of art, that is, those of a genius-artist, see my 2010.

good, can only be an object of "*endless approximation*" (*endlose Annäherung*) (*KFSA* I.1:255 / Schlegel 2001, 36): "I can presuppose as self-evident that the *good* [...] for man, who is himself pieced together, can in this heterogeneous life approximate his pure nature only in the infinite, without ever entirely reaching it" (*KFSA* I.1:289 – 290 / Schlegel 2001, 56). Schlegel's notion of the infinite approximation to the ideal of beauty in Greek culture is analogous to Kant's notion of our infinite approximation to the ideal of the highest good.[22] For Kant, the highest good, even if it is the object of the moral law that is to be realized in this world, remains transcendent in part. In *Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History* (1786) Kant presents us with a picture of teleological progression of human history as a constant struggle between man's culture and nature. By the former, Kant means the realm of humanity's free and rational production. By the latter, he means internal nature understood as human instincts and external nature where a human being realizes his or her culture. This struggle ends when "art, when it reaches perfection, once more becomes nature – and this is the ultimate goal of man's moral destiny" (AA 8:117 – 118). Put differently, the struggle ends with the achievement of the highest good, where there is no obstacle by either our internal or external nature, to the realization of our human moral vocation. But this end for Kant remains an object of an infinite striving. Schlegel similarly conceives of our infinite progress towards the Greek ideal of beauty as an "evolution of freedom", a constant progress towards the culture of the moral good: "The *development* [*Bildung*] or evolution of freedom is the necessary result of all human activity and suffering, the ultimate result of every interaction [*Wechselwirkung*] between freedom and nature" (*KFSA* I.1:230 / Schlegel 2001, 25). It is this conception of *limited* freedom, which rests on our human finite will and must always take into account nature as an obstacle, that for Schlegel is characteristic of our human freedom and why for him this "evolution of freedom" remains infinite.

The importance of Kant's conception of genius is not only limited to Schlegel's "classical phase" but it extends also to his "romantic phase" (1796 – 1808). In *Athenäum* Fragment 116, which is considered a manifesto of the Early Romantic notion of poetry, Schlegel writes the following:

> Romantic poetry is a progressive, universal poetry [...] It tries to and should mix and fuse poetry and prose, inspiration and criticism, the poetry of art and the poetry of nature; and

22 See *KpV* AA 5:122. Although Nassar (2014) rightly argues that the Early Romantics resisted symbolic presentation (see Nassar 2014, 118), the works of genius for them are still not a complete realization/determination of Kant's supersensible but rather its partial determination, i. e., steps towards its *infinite* realization.

> make poetry lively and sociable [...] It alone can [...] also – more than any other form – hover at the midpoint between the portrayed and the portrayer, free of all real and ideal self-interest, on the wings of poetic reflection [....] Other kinds of poetry are finished and are now capable of being fully analyzed. The romantic kind of poetry is still in the state of becoming; that, in fact, is its real essence: that it should forever be becoming and never be perfected. It can be exhausted by no theory and only a divinatory criticism would dare try to characterize its ideal. It alone is infinite, just as it alone is free. (*KFSA* I.2:182f. / Schlegel 2003a, 249–250)

In Schlegel's "romantic phase", the ideal of Greek poetry of his "classical phase" is replaced by romantic poetry. The progress towards the ideal of romantic poetry presupposes the same passive and active elements of creative production that Schlegel identified as early as in his *On the Study of Greek Poetry* and, as I demonstrated this earlier, he took over from Kant's conception of genius. It presupposes, namely, the intuitive element of "inspiration", or the act of nature, as well as the active, spontaneous element of "criticism", or the act of judgment on the part of the romantic poet. Just as the ideal of Greek poetry, the ideal of romantic poetry remains an object of "infinite striving" or "infinite becoming". Finally, consistent with the ideal of the free harmony of the faculties, romantic poetry "hovers between the portrayed and the portrayer", the "real and ideal self-interest". In other words, romantic poetry is neither determined by the empirical, real or the "portrayed", nor by the conceptual, ideal or the "portrayer". It is in the realm of "reflection" and not determination.

Kant's conception of genius is not only at the core of Schlegel's conception of "romantic poetry" but also at the core of how he understood his own relation to Kant as a predecessor. In *Athenäum* Fragment 114, Schlegel writes the following:

> The world considers anyone a Kantian who is interested in the latest German philosophical writings. According to the school definition, a Kantian is only someone who believes that Kant is the truth, and who, if the mail coach from Königsberg were ever to have an accident, might very well have to go without the truth for some weeks. According to the outmoded Socratic concept of disciples being those who have independently made the spirit of the great master their own spirit, have adapted themselves to it, and as his spiritual sons, have been named after him, there are probably only a very few Kantians. (*KFSA* I.2:182 / Schlegel 2003a, 248)

In the above passage, Schlegel is referring to Kant's distinction between "imitation" (*Nachahmung*) (*KU* AA 5:282, 283, 301, 308, 309, 318, 322, 355, 474n) and "following" (*Nachfolge*) (*KU* AA 5:283, 309, 318). The former represents a lack of independence of the artist insofar as she continues to produce in the style of the original genius-master. However, the latter, presupposes the artist's appro-

priation of the master's spirit so that she can learn how she ought to proceed in order that her own work becomes an original achievement in relation to her own predecessor.[23] As someone who knew Kant's philosophy very well, Schlegel took some core ideas of Kant's philosophy and developed his own original thought. He "amended" and took himself to be "completing and carrying out" Kant's project in his own original way. For example, by holding that the intuitive element of genial creative production dominates the arts, and more specifically poetry as the queen of fine arts, and that the active or critical element defines philosophy, Schlegel, unlike Kant, attempted to fuse philosophy and poetry. Romantic poetry, which aims to combine both inspiration and criticism, poetry and philosophy, is the result of one creative act. Furthermore, in his "romantic phase", the active element of creative production, i.e., the act of judgment or criticism, becomes central for Schlegel's conception of irony and his further emphasis on the human finitude in relation to both our capacity to know and realize the Absolute.[24]

But Schlegel was not the only figure of the Early Romantic movement influenced by Kant's conception of genius. In what follows below, I will show the influence of Kant's conception of genius on Novalis' notion of the Absolute.

3 Novalis' "*oscillating*" Absolute

Kant's conception of genius is at the core of Novalis' notion of "romanticizing" (*romantisiren*):

> The world must be romanticized. In this way one rediscovers the original meaning. Romanticising [*romantisiren*] is nothing but the qualitative raising to a higher power [*Potenzirung*]. The lower self becomes identified with the better self [...] Insofar as I give the commonplace a higher meaning, the ordinary a mysterious countenance, the known the dignity of the unknown, the finite an appearance of infinity, I romanticize it. The operation is precisely the opposite for the higher, unknown, mystical and infinite – these are logarithmized [*logarythmisirt*] by this connection – they become common expressions. [R]omantic philosophy. *Lingua romana*. Alternating elevation and lowering. (*NS* 2:545, No. 105)

23 See my 2012a for a more elaborate discussion of this distinction in Kant.

24 Also, the Schlegel of the "romantic phase" argues that Kant's Critical philosophy can be completed only by introducing a historical critique of philosophy. Hence, in this respect, Kant was for him only a "half-critic" (*Philosophical Fragments*, *KFSA* 8:15, No. 10). See on this Millán-Zaibert (2007, 117–131).

Romanticizing for Novalis is a process that goes in two directions. In one direction, it elevates ordinary phenomena into the mysterious, i. e., it represents (*vorstellen*) "finite" as "infinite". In the other direction, it lowers the mystical into the ordinary, it presents (*darstellen*) the "infinite" as "finite".[25] The key faculty for the activity of romanticizing is imagination: "It is on account of indolence that man demands *mere* mechanism or *mere* magic. He doesn't want to be active, to employ his *productive imagination*" (*NS* 3:408, No. 724 / Novalis 2007, 134). And also the following: "The imagination is the marvelous sense which can *replace* all senses for us – and which is so much ours to command. If the outward senses seem to be ruled entirely by mechanical laws – the imagination is obviously not bound to the present and to contact with external stimuli"[26] (*NS* 2:650, No. 481 / Novalis 2003b, 237). For Novalis, just like for Kant in his Critical period, intellectual laziness or "indolence" consists not only in letting oneself be completely determined by our sensibility ("*mere* mechanism", as he puts it) but also in allowing ourselves to make knowledge claims about objects that are beyond our cognition (in Novalis' words, "*mere* magic"). The proper intellectual activity is provided by "productive imagination", which is not determined by mere mechanism, i. e., it is not reproductive but productive imagination, and hence it contains an element of spontaneity, ("it is so much ours to command", as he puts it). But productive imagination is also not an unruly imagination, which cre-

25 This famous fragment is also cited by Kneller (2007, 22) and Nassar (2014, 67 – 68). They both emphasize that Novalis' romanticizing is a two-direction process. Kneller reads Novalis' notion of *romantisiren* from the perspective of Kant's first *Critique* and his notion of the sublime in the third *Critique*. She, however, does not trace back Novalis' notion of *romantisiren* to Kant's conception of genius. Nassar (2014, 69), without acknowledging Kant's influence, relates Novalis' conception of *romantisiren* to the productive imagination.

26 Unlike Kant (and later Schelling) for whom genius was a privilege of a select few, the Early Romantics (the Schlegel of the "romantic phase" and Novalis) held that everyone could be and ought to be a genius. Schlegel writes as follows: "Though genius isn't something that can be produced arbitrarily, it is freely willed [...]. You should demand genius from everyone, but not expect it. A Kantian would call this the categorical imperative of genius" (Schlegel 2003b, No. 16). We see in the fragment cited above that, for Novalis, following Kant, the productive imagination, unlike the reproductive, is not empirically determined. But its spontaneity is not grounded in the concepts of the understanding. Instead, analogous to Kant's notion of the will that is determined by the moral law, for Novalis, imagination is "so much ours to command" insofar as it is ultimately in the service of the highest ends of reason i. e., of bringing good in the world. This, of course, is Schlegel's and Novalis' distorted reading of Kant's notion of "beauty as a symbol of morality," or, rather, their intentional alteration of Kant's view. For Kant, beauty was a sign that what we know we ought to do (i. e., bring good to the world), may in fact be possible for us to do. Kant's notion of "beauty as a symbol of morality" did not entail an identity between beauty and the moral good.

ates exalted (*schwärmerisch*) visions in its effort to represent the objects that cannot be known by our finite, discursive intellects.

In other words, Novalis' notion of romanticizing, and of productive imagination romanticizing employs, presupposes the elements of passivity and activity that constitute Kant's notion of creative genial process discussed above. On the one hand, romanticizing presupposes the movement beyond the finite, the element of inspiration that transcends one's own individuality: "Every work of art has an Ideal a priori – has a *necessity* within itself to be there" (*NS* 2:648, No. 476 / Novalis 2003b, 235). On the other, it presupposes an active element, the element of judgment and criticism.

> So genius consists in the capacity to treat imaginary objects as if they were real, and real objects as if they were imagined. So the talent for representation, for exact observation, for the purposeful description of what has been observed is different from genius. Without this talent, one's vision is incomplete, one is but half a genius, one can have a disposition towards genius, lacking that talent one will never develop into a genius. (*NS* 2:420, No. 22 / Novalis 2003a, 205–206)

Thus, romanticizing requires a talent "for exact observation [...and] description" of the particulars that will be subsumed under the free play of productive imagination. In other words, it requires a talent for judgment that for Kant can only be acquired with continuous exercise and practice of subsuming the particular under the universal. Similar to Kant, for whom inspiration is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for genius,[27] for Novalis, without "the talent" for a critical aspect in romanticizing "one's vision is incomplete, one is but half a genius".

But Novalis' notion of romanticizing can be approached from an ontological and not only epistemological perspective. By creating a work of art and employing his productive imagination the genius transforms a finite object into an infinite, it elevates it, raises it to a higher power (*Potenzirung*). And also in the opposite direction: the creative process is the lowering of the infinite, its logarithmization, the infinite becomes sensible or finite. For Novalis, the Absolute is realized in this constant movement of lowering the infinite and elevating the finite. This process of the Absolute's realization must be infinite because as soon as the emphasis is put on only one aspect of the process, the Absolute is either seen as sensible and hence any reference to the intelligible is lost, or it is seen as merely intelligible and any reference to the real is lost. On Novalis'

27 For Kant, a genius who does not have taste, or a developed capacity for judgment, would only produce "original nonsense" (*KU* AA 5:308).

view, romanticizing consists in the infinite reciprocal back and forth between intelligible and the sensible.[28] In his *Fichte Studies* (1795/96), Novalis calls this reciprocal back and forth between the infinite and the finite "oscillation" (*Schweben*) of "[an] *identical eternally acting* genius" (*NS* 2:267, No. 556 / Novalis 2003c, 165).

> To be free is the tendency of the I – the capacity to be free is the productive imagination. – *Harmony* is the condition of its activity – *of* [*its*] *oscillating*, between opposites [...] All being [*Seyn*], being in general, is nothing but being free – *oscillating* between extremes that necessarily are to be united and necessarily are to be separated. All reality radiates from this light-point of oscillation – everything is contained in it – object and subject have their being through it, not it through them. (*NS* 2:266, No. 555 / Novalis 2003c, 164)

Although Novalis takes the term "oscillation" (*Schweben*) of the productive imagination from Fichte's *Grundlage der Gesamten Wissenschaftslehre* (1794/95), Novalis' employment of this term reveals his criticism of Fichte's philosophy. For Fichte, the productive imagination is reason's tool for overcoming its internal cleft. Within the theoretical domain this separation is between the self-positing 'I' (the intuition of the 'I am') and the reflective and mediated 'not-I'. Within the practical domain this separation is between the domains of theoretical and practical reason.[29] For Novalis, this oscillation, or the productive imagination's play, transcends the transcendental subjectivity, i.e., it is not a mere tool of a transcendental subject, a third thing that connects its given extremes. Instead, it is a faculty that connects the transcendental subject to its supersensible ground, "in which object and subject have their being through it, not it through them". Novalis replaces Fichte's *Thathandlung*, the intellectual intuition of the 'I am', with an act of creation, an act of employment of one's productive imagination that he takes over, as we saw above, from Kant's conception of genius: "By 'fact' [*Thatsache*] one usually thinks of action [*Handlung*], something that is proceeding or has happened in time. But the fact [*Thatsache*] that is

28 Nassar (2014, 70) rightly emphasizes both the sensible and the intelligible aspects of the Absolute in Novalis: "[I]t is only through the work of raising and lowering – of transforming the ideal into the real or the real into the ideal or seeing the part in the whole and the whole in the part – that insight into the absolute as both sensible and intelligible can be achieved [...] The absolute, then, never 'is' but must always be realized" (Nassar 2014, 70). Nassar rightly argues that for Novalis the realization of the Absolute is in the activity (of the imagination) and that the Absolute can never be seen as a product. But one must also emphasize that this activity is infinite and that the fact that for Novalis the Absolute never 'is', i.e., it can never be seen as a product, implies that it can never be *fully* realized.

29 See more on this Hühn (1997, 144–151).

under discussion here must be thought of as completely spiritual, not singular, not temporal [...] an unending fact that transpires completely in every moment – [an] *identical eternally acting* genius – *being I*" (*NS* 2:267, No. 556 / Novalis 2003c, 165–166). For Fichte, the "fact of consciousness" (*Thatsache*) presupposes an action (*Handlung*) that is at the same time an object (*That*). In other words, it presupposes an intellectual intuition of the 'I am', or *Thathandlung*. But for Novalis, Fichte's notion of this activity (*Handlung*) that is supposed to be the ground of empirical consciousness is itself also empirical, or "in time". For Novalis, Fichte's notion of intellectual intuition of the 'I am' must be replaced by the activity of the productive imagination, an act of genial creation, that in its intuition of the supersensible ground is no longer merely empirical but "spiritual", the ground of unity (identity) of the Ideal and the Real in the creative subject.[30]

But this infinite "oscillation" of the Absolute in the power of imagination is not, as Hegel argued, self-destructive.[31] The fact that the creative employment of imagination leads only to the Absolute's partial determination does not preclude a sense of progress:

> Morality must be at the core of our existence [...] Its end, its origin, must be the *ideal of being*. An unending realization of being would be the vocation of the I. Its striving would be toward ever more being [*immer mehr zu Seyn*]. From 'I am' the path of evil descends, the path of good ascends. (*NS* 2:266–267, No. 556 / Novalis 2003, 164)

The passage above is Novalis' take on Fichte's 'I' in its material and not its formal aspect. In other words, on the 'I' as it ought to be and not as it is, and which for Fichte consist in the 'I's' self-determining activity as the giver of the moral law. Novalis, just like Schlegel and unlike Fichte, is focused on the ontological aspects of our practical agency. Put differently, following Kant's notion of an infinite progress towards the highest good, Novalis' "oscillating" Absolute entails a transformation of the world by ever more bringing about of the good, a progress "toward ever more being" or towards greater freedom.[32]

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30 This is what I take Novalis understood by "Fichteciz[ing] far better than Fichte himself," or "Fichteciz[ing] artisitically" (*NS* 2:524). The passage is also cited in Wood (2013, 258–259).

31 On Hegel's view, for the Romantics "nothing is treated *in and for itself* and as valuable, but only as produced by the subjectivity of the *ego* [...] When the ego that sets up and dissolves everything out of its own caprice is the artist, to whom no content of consciousness appears as absolute and independently real but only as a self-made and destructible show, such earnestness can find no place, since validity is ascribed only to the formalism of the *ego*" (Hegel 1975, 64–65).

32 In this paper, given its limited scope, I do not have space to address in detail Novalis' study of nature. But Kant's conception of genius is also behind Novalis' analogy between a work of art

I have argued above that Schlegel's and Novalis' philosophy followed the modesty of Kant's Critical system, both epistemologically and ontologically: epistemologically as a lack of our capacity to fully know and ontologically as a lack of our capacity to fully realize the Absolute. With their conceptions of the Absolute as an infinite becoming and an endless oscillation, they defied philosophical systems with an absolutely certain principle as its basis and embraced Kant's doctrine of the ignorance of things as they are in themselves. Schelling's philosophy, in contrast, was marked by ambition from its very beginning: freedom as the first principle at the beginning and at the end of his philosophical system.[33] And it is to this topic that I shall turn now.

(as a human product) and an organism (a product of nature). For Kant, the whole of an organism, its regularity, cannot be explained in terms of the motion of its independently existing material parts as this can be done in a mechanism. The parts of an organism depend for their existence on one another, so that an organism both produces and is produced by its own parts and is, therefore, 'cause and effect of itself' (*KU* AA 5:371). In the example of organisms, the Idea of the well ordered whole is not temporally prior, as some external intentional cause, to the combination of its parts but is rather metaphysically prior, as a ground, to the combination of its parts. (*KU* AA 5:373) On Kant's view, a genius's product displays the same unique whole-to-parts relationship as the one displayed by organisms. In other words, single elements of a work of art have no aesthetic relevance when considered independently of the holistic unity of the work just like a pair of wings is not a unit that can function independently of the whole, i.e., the organism of the bird. Therefore, for a genius, the Idea of a well ordered whole is not temporally prior to the combination of its parts (as some external intentional cause is to an artifact) but, rather, its totality is metaphysically prior, as a ground, to the composing parts. Instead of tracing the origin of this analogy in Novalis back to Kant's third *Critique*, Nassar (2014) ascribes it to Goethe's influence and resorts to an allusion that Novalis could learn from Goethe how to "perceive nature with an artist eye".

33 I am referring to the following famous citation from Schelling's letter to Hegel of February 4, 1795: "Philosophy must begin with the *Unconditioned*. But the question presents itself what the center is of the *Unconditioned*, the 'I', or the 'not-I'. If this question is answered, then *everything* is answered. On my view, the highest principle of philosophy is the pure absolute 'I', i.e., the 'I' insofar as it is merely an 'I', not determined by objects, but posited [*gesezt*] through *Freedom*. The A and Ω of all philosophy is freedom."

4 Schelling's Absolute as the Instrument (*Organon*) and Document (*Document*) of Philosophy[34]

Just as for Schlegel and Novalis, Kant's conception of genius was also influential for early Schelling. It informed, just as it did for the Early Romantics, both the epistemological and ontological aspects of his Absolute.

Schelling's 1800 *System* is a systematic history of self-consciousness. This history starts with the lowest degree of self-consciousness, which Schelling identifies with "nothing else but an act of *self intuition* as such" (*SAA* I.9.1:330 / Schelling 1993, 233) and it ends with the highest degree of self-consciousness that is achieved by the creative intuition of genius and her art. On Schelling's view, the products of our own mind are on the one hand products of our freedom and can be consciously brought about, and on the other, they are sometimes similar to the products of nature and are brought about by unconscious mechanical causation, our sensibility. The end of self-consciousness is to achieve the identity of the purposive, intentional causation on the one hand and the mechanical causation on the other and, furthermore, to understand itself as this identity. This identity is to be achieved through the production of a genius-artist. The creative activity of genius demonstrates the involuntary and unconscious nature of her production, that is, the fact that the creative production of an artistic genius is motivated by an inspiration, or an "irresistible urge" (*unwiderstehlicher Trieb*) (*SAA* I.9.1:316 / Schelling 1993, 222). The unconscious aspect of a genius's creativity is revealed in the fact that the meaning of her product surpasses her own comprehension. An artistic genius is compelled to "say or depict things which he does not fully understand himself, and whose meaning is infinite" (*SAA* I.9.1:318 / Schelling 1993, 223). The work of an artistic genius also demonstrates a conscious aspect of her production because it involves the artist's reflection on how her work relates to tradition, and it also presupposes considerable skill. (*SAA* I.9.1:318 / Schelling 1993, 223) But, unlike ordinary consciousness, a genius

34 Much of my discussion in this section is based on my 2012b where I trace back the influence of Kant's conception of genius throughout Schelling's early writings, going back to his early Plato studies. There, I also argue that Kant's conception of genius provides a clue to why Schelling considered himself an "inverted Spinozist" (see Schelling's letter to Hegel of February 4, 1795) dedicated to the completion of Kant's Critical project rather than to the reversal into dogmatic rationalism. The paper directly challenges the view that Schelling's early development is "more broadly Spinozist" (Nassar 2014, 229).

has the capacity to unify the conscious and the unconscious elements of her production in a work of art.

What Schelling in his *System* identifies as the unconscious aspect of the creative production of an artistic genius is, as I demonstrated above in section 1, what Kant in his definition of genius identifies with the passive and intuitive element in a genius's production, that is, with the activity of "nature" in the creative process. The fact that on Kant's view a genius cannot summarize the steps involved in the production of her work (i.e., that the originality of the work of genius surpasses any skill, and that for Kant the meaning of a genius's work can never be fully exhausted even by the genius herself) is echoed in Schelling's discussion of the unconscious aspect of a genius's production.[35] The conscious element of a genius's production in Schelling refers to what Kant in his account of genius identifies as the critical and active aspect of a genius's creative process. Not only does Schelling take over from Kant the epistemic aspects of genial production – to wit, those aspects of genial production that pertain to a genius' knowledge of the Absolute – but also the ontological aspects of genial creation, that is, the aspects that pertain to a genius' realization of the Absolute in the world.[36] For Schelling, the objective, that is, the work of art as a part of the world, or nature, becomes an expression of spirit, or the subjective. And, just as a work of art becomes an "image of the invisible world", or "visible spirit", the genius-artist becomes "invisible nature".[37] In developing this unified model of creative subjectivity as "invisible nature" and nature, through the works of a genius-artist, as a "visible spirit", Schelling approaches the desired unity of the Ideal and the Real, of freedom and nature, or practical and theoretical reason respectively.

But unlike the Early Romantics, Schelling's early writings, including his 1800 *System*, do not follow the modesty of Kant's Critical philosophy. For Schel-

35 Already in his early Plato studies (1792), Schelling shows a special interest in this intuitive aspect of creative production. There, he relates Plato's *theomania* to poetic enthusiasm (*Begeisterung*). Enthusiasm (*Begeisterung*) is an example of the extension of human reason that Schelling also discusses in his *Commentary on the Timaeus* (1794) as the necessary condition for the creative production of the Demiurge. Later, in *Of the I as the Principle of Philosophy* (1795) and the *Philosophical Letters On Dogmatism and Criticism* (1798), this intuitive and passive element of creative production will turn into an intellectual intuition of the 'absolute I.' See my 2012b.

36 Already in his *Commentary on the Timaeus* (1794), in the passage that is known in secondary literature as the "*Übertragung* citation," Schelling contends that the Demiurge "transfers [*überträgt*] the subjective to the objective." In my 2012b, I argue that this passage should be interpreted as the issue of realization/objectification of the Absolute in a creative process.

37 In his *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* (1797), Schelling writes: "Nature should be Mind made visible, Mind the invisible Nature" (*SAA* I.5, 107 / Schelling 1988, 42).

ling, the end of self-consciousness is not the infinite approximation but, rather, the identity of the Ideal and the Real and further to understand oneself as this identity. Philosophical consciousness, on Schelling's view, cannot achieve this identity because the vehicle of philosophical production is intellectual intuition. Through intellectual intuition a philosopher constructs theories and concepts about the nature of self-consciousness and, hence, is able to present this knowledge about self-consciousness "in a merely subjective fashion" (*SAA* I.9.1:329 / Schelling 1993, 232). In other words, the philosopher's theories and concepts about the dual nature of self-consciousness – on the one hand, its intentional and conscious, and on the other its natural and unconscious aspect – lack objective reality and a proper justification of their meaning. Unlike a philosopher with her intellectual intuition, a genius-artist with her aesthetic intuition has a capacity to unite the free, rational, and purposive aspect of our agency with the unconscious, mechanical, or sensible aspect. For Schelling, unlike for Kant and the Early Romantics, achieving this unity presupposes that the genius-artist can have the knowledge of the Unconditioned, the identity of the Ideal and the Real, and can *fully* realize the Unconditioned in her work of art. Therefore, Schelling's conception of genius represents both an epistemological and an ontological extension of Kant's conception of genius.

In this context we should also be able to understand better how for Schelling in the 1800 *System* art "is at once the only true and eternal instrument [*Organon*] and document [*Document*] of philosophy" (*SAA* I.9.1:328 / Schelling 1993, 231). Schelling's claim that the work of a genius-artist is the "instrument" of philosophy reveals an epistemological aspect of his notion of the Absolute. In other words, the work of a genius-artist is a "keystone" of philosophy because "art is paramount [*das Höchste*] to the philosopher, precisely because it opens to him, as it were, the holy of holies, where burns in eternal and original unity, as if in a single flame, that which in nature and history is rent asunder, and in life and action, no less than in thought must forever fly apart" (*SAA* I.9.1:328 / Schelling 1993, 231). The work of a genius-artist is the instrument of philosophy insofar as it is the object of the philosophy of art, which interprets self-consciousness, the condition of philosophical practice, in its objective form. Thus, for Schelling, formulations of philosophical truth are dependent on art.[38] Schelling's claim that the work of a genius-artist is a "document" of philosophy reveals an ontological aspect of his notion of the Absolute insofar as the work of a genius-artist is considered as a "capstone" of philosophy: a realization

38 Cf. Gardner (2002, 279).

of the philosopher's intellectual intuition, at once a piece of evidence for and a proper realization of the philosopher's strivings.

5 Conclusion

By focusing on the often-neglected part of the third *Critique*, namely, Kant's discussion of genius, I have shown that the connections of the Early Romantics to Kant are much stronger than this is generally considered. The Early Romantics are indebted to Kant not only for their epistemological aspect of the Absolute (i.e., the fact that the Absolute for them remains beyond our cognition) but also for their ontological aspect of the Absolute (i.e., the fact that the Absolute for them can find its partial determination in a work of art).[39] One of the many ways in which the Early Romantics amended Kant's position was to hold that the act of genial creation was equivalent to the realization of the moral good. In this sense they took themselves to be completing Kant's Critical project insofar as the act of genial creation for them was an advancement of freedom in the world, an ontological component of their Absolute that can hardly be understood by emphasizing their indebtedness to Spinoza. They, however, remained faithful to Kant's Critical philosophy insofar as this advancement for them was an object of infinite striving. The influence of Kant's conception of genius is also evident in Schelling's early development. But, unlike the Early Romantics, Schelling did not follow the path of Kantian modesty. Instead, the act of genial creation for him was a full realization of the Absolute, which presupposed and afforded its theoretical transparency. But in the 1800 *System* Schelling remains ambiguous regarding the implications this may have for the practice of philosophy: By arguing that the work of an artistic genius is a "keystone" of philosophy, Schelling suggests that philosophy should *imitate* an artistic genius, which brings him closer to the Early Romantics. By arguing that the work of an artistic genius is a "capstone" of philosophy and that philosophy should *interpret* the works of an artistic genius, Schelling anticipates his later Philosophy of Identity, according to which the unity of the Ideal and Real, or the Absolute, is the object of philosophical knowledge.[40]

39 For Sebastian Gardner, the Early Romantic metaphysical theory of art depends for its development more broadly on Kant's Copernican revolution. But one cannot establish its closer indebtedness to Kant's theory of art. (See Gardner 2002, 281). As I have shown in this essay, Kant's conception of genius brings this view into question.

40 Thus, the 1800 *System* does not point so straightforwardly in the direction of Schelling's System of Identity as argued by Nassar. (See Nassar 2014, 224).

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Abbreviations

[*AA*] Kant, Immanuel (1900–): Gesammelte Schriften, edited by Königlich Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 29 vols., Berlin.
[*CPR*] Kant, Immanuel: Critique of Pure Reason.
[*KU*] Kant, Immanuel: Critique of Judgment.
[*Refl.*] Kant, Immanuel: Reflexions.
[*KFSA*] Schlegel, Friedrich von (1958–): Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe, ed. by E. Behler.
[*NS*] Novalis (1960–2006): Novalis Schriften, R. Samuel, H.-J. Mähl and G. Schulz (eds), Stuttgart.
[*SAA*] Schelling, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph (1976–): Sämmtliche Werke – Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe, H. Buchner and J. Jantzen (eds), Schelling-Kommision of the Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Stuttgart.

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Dennis Schulting

In Defence of Reinhold's Kantian Representationalism: Aspects of Idealism in *Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögens*

Abstract: In this paper, I want to zero in on the Kantian idea that, whilst things in themselves must logically be presupposed as the ground underlying appearances and things are not reducible to their representations, (1) objects as appearances are not properties *of* things in themselves, and (2) things in themselves or the thing in itself cannot properly be represented or even thought. To do this, I turn to one of the earliest defenders and champions of the Kantian philosophy, Karl Leonhard Reinhold, and specifically to his first major work *Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögens*, published in 1789. I am here interested neither in the extent to which Reinhold's interpretation of Kant is correct or even adequately represents Kant's thought in all of its aspects, nor whether Reinhold's attempt to present a systematic philosophy based on a rigorous deduction from a single principle (his strong foundationalism) stands up to scrutiny. I am here solely interested in some of Reinhold's positive insights, in the *Versuch*, concerning elements of his representationalism that may shed light on Kant's idealism, specifically, the relation between appearances (as objects of knowledge) and things in themselves, i. e., points (1) and (2) described above. I read the early Reinhold of the *Versuch* as confirming the Kantian view that objects as appearances are not properties of things in themselves and that we are radically ignorant of things in themselves, in the sense that we can neither know things in themselves (through the senses) nor even intellectually grasp things in themselves through the understanding alone.

1 Kant's Idealism

It has been a long-standing problem in Kant scholarship how to conceive of Kant's notorious concept of the thing in itself, its inextricable relation to his idealism about appearances – which are what things are to us as representers – and the fact that, according to Kant, we cannot have knowledge of things in themselves, but only of objects as appearances (the so-called ignorance or unknowability thesis). It is important to note that the ignorance thesis does not imply

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that we only know our own private sense data, nor does it mean that things in themselves do not exist, or that there exist only thinking beings, that is, as Kant writes, that "all other things which we believe are perceived in intuition are nothing but representations in the thinking beings, to which no object external to them in fact corresponds". Kant is adamant that things that exist outside us "are given". What makes his view idealist is, not that he denies the existence of things that are independent of our minds (which he doesn't),[1] but that he denies that we have knowledge "of what they may be in themselves". We only know "their appearances", which are "the representations which they [i.e., the things] cause in us by affecting our senses" (all quotations from *Prolegomena* AA 4:288–9).

There are certain elements of Kant's idealism that are foregrounded in this passage, and which are usually considered the most interesting (and also controversial) ones. These concern, first, the seeming fact that the objects that we know, i.e., appearances, are *mere* representations, a claim that Kant makes more often (see e.g., *CPR* A 30/B 45, A 120, A 369, A 371, A 374–5n, A 490–1/B 518–19) and which has puzzled many commentators, for it seems to reduce empirically real objects to sense data after all.[2] That is, if appearances were really just representations, rather than the *objects of* representations, Kant's idealism about appearances would amount to a kind of phenomenalism. And it seems commentators believe phenomenalism is a Berkeleian spectre that just cannot

1 "The existence of the thing that appears is thereby not destroyed, as in genuine idealism, but it is only shown that we cannot possibly know it by the senses as it is in itself" (*Prolegomena* AA 4:289). Kant's idealism is epistemological, not metaphysical. However, this does not mean that Kant's idealism only concerns the *knowledge* of objects, and not the *objects* of knowledge. In some sense, the objects of knowledge themselves are also ideal, that is, ontologically dependent on our forms of knowledge, hence they are mere appearances, that is, representations, and not things in themselves. For a detailed argument, see Schulting (forthcoming, ch. 4).

2 In fact, in the notorious passage at *CPR* A 491/B 519 Kant appears to be claiming that "extended beings [...] have outside our thoughts no existence grounded in itself". See also *Prolegomena* AA 4:337, where Kant makes the prima facie confusing claim that it can be denied that "bodies (as appearances of outer sense) exist *outside my thoughts* **as bodies in nature**" (Cambridge trans., Kant 2002, 128; bold face mine). This last aspect (i.e., what is put in bold) provides the clue to why Kant is not an empirical idealist. Bodies of course exist outside of us in space (as Kant affirms in the same passage), but space is merely a form of sensibility, hence bodies do not exist outside my sensibility, hence they do not exist outside my representations or thoughts (cf. *CPR* A 370). This is why Kant identifies appearances and representations. However, Kant also points out that "body [...] refers also to the thing *in itself* that underlies this appearance", as much as it refers to "outer intuition (in space)" (*Prolegomena* AA 4:337; trans. amended), thus underlining a major difference from empirical idealism, for, in Kant's view, the thing in itself does exist independently of the mind.

be the right interpretive frame for reading Kant's emphatic empirical realism about objects of experience (cf. Langton 1998, 141ff.). Most commentators try to explain away this aspect of Kant's talk about appearances, i.e., that they are 'mere' representations,[3] but like Van Cleve (1999), who is one of the few exceptions in the literature to take phenomenalism seriously as an interpretation of Kant's idealism, I believe not only that it is the only non-deflationary way to interpret Kant's explicit identification of appearances as representations, but also, unlike Van Cleve, that only a phenomenalist interpretation of Kant's idealism can explain his claim – the central argument of the Transcendental Deduction of the categories – that the necessary conditions of self-consciousness are sufficient for the objectivity of the objects of our experience, given sensory input. I

3 Since she wants to avoid a phenomenalist reading at all costs ("We have many good reasons for not taking at face value Kant's phenomenalist-sounding talk"), Langton (1998, 158ff.) for example misreads a controversial passage from the *Prolegomena* (AA 4:289), where whilst protesting against idealism (of the Berkeleian sort) Kant plainly identifies appearances with representations, which we call bodies. She suggests that we read the passage as saying that appearances are not to be identified with representations, but that we "know appearances *through* representations", relying on a phrase in the same passage; however, in this later phrase, Kant does not say that we know *appearances* "through representations", but it is rather *things* which, "though quite unknown to us as to what they are in themselves", we know "through representations" (*Prolegomena* AA 4:289; trans. amended). See Kanterian (2013) for a fine critique of Langton on this point. Contrary to what Rosefeldt (2012, 240–1) argues, I believe that in the *Prolegomena* passage at issue Kant does not take back the view expressed in the A-edition Fourth Paralogism that appearances as bodies are mere representations (*CPR* A 370). It is the *things* we know *through* representations, which latter we call bodies; in other words, bodies *are* representations, and are not, strictly speaking, the things which we know *through* the representations, namely, *represent as* bodies. The passage does not say that bodies are not representations, as Rosefeldt believes. We do indeed perceive objects (Kant's "things [*Dinge*]") as outside us *by means of* representations, and we perceive those objects *as* bodies (we do not just perceive our perceptions). But in the clause not quoted by Rosefeldt, which directly follows "und denen wir die Benennung eines Körpers geben", Kant clearly identifies a body as "bloß die Erscheinung", whilst a few lines before he identified appearances as "the representations, which they [i.e. the things outside us] cause in us by affecting our senses"; hence, a body is a representation. So, strictly speaking, it is not a body which we know *through* representation, but the thing (in itself), which we *represent as* outside us, and *whose representation* we call body. The *represented* thing, i.e., its appearance, is a body. The representations that are bodies are obviously not mere mental states, but represent*eds* (for the distinction between representation and represent*ed*, see the discussion below in Section 3), that is, intentional objects (which are nonetheless nothing outside our thoughts). But, contrary to what Rosefeldt says, I would argue that even in the A-edition Fourth Paralogism, Kant should be taken to argue that bodies are represent*eds*, not mere mental states (significantly, he talks about "Vorstellungs*arten*" at *CPR* A 372; emphasis added).

cannot expand on this here (see Schulting, forthcoming, ch. 4, for an account of this last aspect).

Secondly, there seems to be a problem with regard to the putative causal relation between things in themselves and appearances, which is often a ground for commentators to dismiss the causal reading of idealism as an appropriate interpretive approach (see e. g., Wood 2005). For the idea of a causal relation between things in themselves and appearances would appear (a) to conflict with the ignorance thesis, namely, that we do not have knowledge of things in themselves, so that we cannot know about any relations, causal or other, that obtain between things in themselves and appearances either, and (b) to suggest that things in themselves and appearances are not identical, for if things in themselves causally effect appearances, they cannot be identical to them (as Wood (2005) argues), raising the legitimate question that if they are not identical, in which other way appearances can be seen as the appearances *of* things in themselves.

Thus, as regards (a), if we do not have knowledge of things in themselves, then neither can we have knowledge of their putative causal or affective relation to our representations. At most, it must be granted that it is analytic that if there is an appearance, there must be something appearing, which presumably is the thing in itself in terms of the thing that exists independently of what it appears as to us (cf. *CPR* A 251–2). From Jacobi onwards, Kant has been criticised for crossing the transcendental bounds of experience by applying a category of experience (causality) to something which ex hypothesi cannot be experienced, namely, things in themselves. There is, however, a generic dependence relation of appearances as metaphysically grounded upon a thing in itself or things in themselves as ground, while causal relations are conceptually based on such ground-consequence relations. Nevertheless, the causal relation that Kant talks about is not just a logical ground-consequence relation, but genuinely a metaphysical relation of causal affection, as Kant says in the above-quoted passage from the *Prolegomena*. It is not prima facie clear, if Kant does not contradict his own restrictions here, as Jacobi and others alleged. But we can grant the appropriateness of assigning a role of sorts for causality even in the domain of things in themselves, if this role is not seen as constituting causally determined objects or events governed by physical laws, that is, objects existing within the bounds of sense experience. It is thus doubtful – if not impossible on Kant's account – that any causal relation between things in themselves and appearances, if it is causal, would be one of *efficient* causation. The application of causality beyond the bounds of experience would thus at any rate be an unschematised use of the category.

With regard to (b), it would appear odd to claim that we know things in terms of "*their* appearances" (*Prolegomena* AA 4:289; emphasis added), if the appearances are not identical to that *of* which they are the appearances, namely, the things in themselves. At best, we would know the things' *appearances*, but nothing *of* the things in themselves that appear, or even *of how* they relate to us in the way that they appear to us. That is, we are not licensed to conclude from our acquaintance with or knowledge of the appearances, that we have knowledge of the appearances as *of* things in themselves that are putatively numerically identical to them. We are only licensed to infer, by logical implication, from our knowledge, or the existence, of appearances that there must be something that appears.[4] This is quite general, and does not give us any substantial clue as to the specific relation between appearances and things in themselves. The possessive pronoun "their" that Kant employs thus should not be read as if it did any metaphysical lifting here: it does not signify numerical identity or one-to-one correspondence between appearance and the underlying thing in itself. There are other passages, which might seem to support readings that regard the distinction in terms of double aspects of the very same thing and so to confirm identity readings of the relation between things in themselves and appearances, e. g., at *CPR* B 69, where Kant writes:

> For in the appearance the objects, indeed even the properties (*Beschaffenheiten*) that we attribute to them, are always regarded as something really given; but insofar as this property only depends on the mode of intuition of the subject in the relation of the given object to it is this object as *appearance* to be distinguished **from itself** as object *in itself* (*von **ihm selber** als Objekt an sich*). (trans. amended and bold face mine)[5]

4 Kant writes: "The understanding [...], by assuming appearances, grants also the existence of things in themselves, and to that extent we may say that the representation of such beings as underlie the appearances, consequently of mere beings of the understanding, is not only admissible but unavoidable" (*Prolegomena* AA 4:315; trans. amended). See also *CPR* B xxvii and *V-Met/Mron* AA 29:857. Notice that the fact that the existence of appearances entails the existence of things in themselves does not imply that the existence of things in themselves entails the existence of appearances – e. g., God is a thing in itself, whose existence, if he were to exist, does not entail the existence of appearances. However, given a relatively orthodox Christian understanding of God as triune, one could of course explain God's immanent economy in such a way that God the Son, as incarnated as a human being (i. e., an appearance in the phenomenal world), is an appearance of God, who is also the Father, where the appearance is identical to the thing in itself underlying it, and the triune God is the thing in itself, whose existence necessarily entails the appearance of the Son.

5 Cf. *CPR* B xxvii. The problems with assuming numerical identity across the phenomenal/noumenal boundary have been noted before by Schulting (2011) and Marshall (2013).

More specifically, the double-aspects reading of things in themselves is taken in terms of considering two disjunctive types of *property of* one and the same thing, where the properties are irreducible to each other, but still properties of one and the same thing, and where the thing is considered the thing in itself. Such a reading is logically possible (think of Spinoza's view of different attributes as expressing the one substance). However, this reading, standard in the current so-called metaphysical two-aspect interpretation of transcendental idealism, is prima facie odd, if not flat-out contradictory, in the Kantian context. For Kant says that appearances do not exist *outside* our thoughts, whilst he asserts that things that exist outside us, and have an 'in itself' nature, are given independently of our thoughts; hence, because appearances are nothing but properties of our mind, i. e., *thoughts* or modes of *representation*, they cannot be properties *of things in themselve*s (as indeed Kant makes clear at *Prolegomena* AA 4:293) – which gainsays the view that appearances are somehow to be seen as the phenomenal or appearing properties *of* the very things in themselves underlying the appearances, even if these properties were to be seen as mind-dependent properties, that is, properties relativised to epistemic subjects, whose representations represent those things (Rosefeldt, MS).[6] Kant himself speaks of a contradiction, if per impossibile one were to regard objects in space and time, that is, appearances, as objects that are "independent of this thought of mine (*ohne diesen meinen Gedanken*)":

> [F]or then I would contradict myself, since space and time, together with the appearances in them, are nothing existing in themselves and outside my representations, but are themselves *only modes of representation*, and *it is patently contradictory to say of a mere mode of representation that it also exists outside our representation*. The objects of the senses there-

6 At *CPR* B 164, Kant writes that appearances do not "exist in themselves, but only relative to the same being [the subject], insofar as it has senses". This might, at first blush, be taken to mean either that, since appearances are mere representations, they exist only *in* the *particular* subject that has these representations, suggesting straightforward phenomenalism (empirical idealism), or that appearances are the properties of things in themselves that are relativised to an epistemic subject, as Rosefeldt suggests. I think that the "relative to the subject" must be read neither reductively so as to suggest empirical idealism, nor as implying that, though not existing in themselves qua appearances, appearances are nonetheless the mind-dependent properties *of* things in themselves. The property of the object that we perceive outside us is the property of the given object "only insofar as this property depends on the mode of intuition of the subject in the relation of the given object to it" (*CPR* B 69; trans. amended); in other words, the relation of the object to the subject, which enables its perception, is one that is first established by the subject's mode of intuition. This means that the appearances as properties attributed to the object are not just *partly* dependent on, or relativised to, the cognising subject, but in fact wholly dependent on it, and so effectively wholly subject-internal.

> fore exist only in experience; by contrast, to grant them a self-subsistent existence of their own, without experience or prior to it, is as much as to imagine that experience is also real without experience or prior to it. (*Prolegomena* AA 4:341–2; Cambridge trans. (Kant 2002, 132), emphasis added)

Further, similar problems face the metaphysical two-aspect reading as they did the well-known methodological two-aspect reading (see e. g., Allison 1983; cf. Robinson 1994 for a critique) – which sees a consideration of things in themselves as a consideration of things in abstraction from the conditions under which they can be considered objects of knowledge, namely, as appearances – by regarding the distinction between appearances and things in themselves in terms of disjunctive kinds of property of the same underlying thing. I believe appearances cannot really *be numerically the same as* things in themselves, because (1) appearances are merely the effects of deeper grounds, or, accidents of underlying substances,[7] and (2) fundamental appearance properties such as space and time are on Kant's account, by definition, not properties *of* things in themselves, even if they were to be seen as merely the relational or extrinsic or subject-relativised properties of things in themselves (and since all appearances are contained in space and time, *no* appearance properties can be properties of things in themselves). Moreover, if space and time and appearance properties were to be seen as properties of things in themselves, even if only as their extrinsic or relational or subject-relativised properties, the pressing question remains – despite it being logically possible that various attributes can be attributes of the same substance – how two *exclusionary* types of property, namely *non-spatial* intrinsic properties and *spatial* extrinsic properties, could be said to be properties of *one and the same* (numerically identical) underlying thing. Such a view is simply difficult to square with Kant's emphatic claim that space and time are not properties of things in themselves.

7 I follow Langton (1998, 50, 55, 57, 60, 63) here in distinguishing between, on the one hand, phenomenal substances, which are substances only comparatively speaking, and, on the other hand, a pure concept of substance as an independent being that exists in itself, i. e., unaccompanied, where in one sense, appearances are accidents of the latter, and, in another sense, identified with the former, namely, when appearances are determined as objects of experience in accordance with the category of substance. My use of 'substance' here refers to the pure concept of substance.

2 Reinhold's Representationalism

I want to zero in on the Kantian idea that, whilst things in themselves must logically be presupposed as the ground underlying appearances and things are not reducible to their representations, (1) objects as appearances are not properties *of* things in themselves, and (2) things in themselves or the thing in itself cannot *properly* be represented or even thought. To do this, I turn to one of the earliest defenders and champions of the Kantian philosophy, Karl Leonhard Reinhold, who published his so-called *Letters on the Kantian Philosophy* in instalments in *Der Teutsche Merkur* in 1786 and 1787, with which he came to public prominence and which helped him get the post of professor of Kantian philosophy in Jena, and his first relatively orthodoxly Kantian monograph *Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögens* (henceforth *Versuch* for short) in 1789. My interest here concerns the latter work. Reinhold's *Versuch* can be read as a commentary of sorts on Kant's Critical philosophy, although Reinhold specifically fashioned the book as an attempt to give the Critical philosophy a more secure, systematic foundation than the *Critique of Pure Reason* itself provided. I am here interested neither in the extent to which Reinhold's interpretation of Kant is correct or even adequately represents Kant's thought in all of its aspects, nor whether Reinhold's attempt to present a systematic philosophy based on a rigorous deduction from a single principle (his strong foundationalism) stands up to scrutiny.[8] I am here solely interested in some of Rein-

8 As Imhof (2014) rightly indicates, unlike the later works, the *Versuch* is not yet concerned with advancing a strong foundational programme. The best critical introduction that gives a good insight into Reinhold's ambitious overall philosophical agenda, and the problems facing it, is Ameriks (2000, Part II). See also Beiser (1987) and Frank (1997, Part II), for a more historical analysis, and, for a contextualisation of the *Versuch*, especially Onnasch's extensive and invaluable introduction including bibliography – a short book in itself! – to his edition of the *Versuch* (Onnasch 2010). Like Ameriks (2000, 104), I very much doubt that, on the whole, Reinhold's presumably "easier" version of the Critical programme, in particular, a deduction of what in Kant are quite clearly *distinct* and *irreducible* cognitive capacities (sensibility, understanding, reason) from the notion of 'representation', would have met with Kant's approval (notwithstanding Kant's positive comments in general on Reinhold's work in correspondence to him; see *Br* AA 11:288 and cf. Onnasch (2010, cxii – cxv)) or is indeed a systematic improvement upon Kant, as Reinhold himself thought. In Schulting (MS) I critically address Reinhold's account of the deduction of the categories, comparing it to Kant's own. However, in the current paper, rather than emphasising the differences between Reinhold and Kant, significant though they may be, I wish to focus on the extent to which Reinhold's view on the relation between representation and the thing in itself can be seen as Kantian at least in spirit. I thus also ignore the famous criticisms of Reinhold's views on this score by Schulze in his *Aenesidemus*. For an ex-

hold's positive insights, in his first major work,[9] concerning elements of his representationalism that may shed light on Kant's idealism, specifically, the relation between appearances (as objects of knowledge) and things in themselves, i. e., points (1) and (2) described above. I read the early Reinhold of the *Versuch* as confirming the Kantian view that objects as appearances are not properties *of* things in themselves (ad 1) and that we are radically ignorant of things in themselves, in the sense that we can neither know things in themselves (through the senses) nor intellectually grasp things in themselves through the understanding alone (ad 2).

Reinhold's main line of reasoning is that the Critical programme can be presented in an analytically more thorough manner, if we start from a clearer premise, namely the very possibility of *representation*. The idea is not that representation is the most basic notion, from which all further analysis should proceed, simply *because* anything that we can have knowledge of must be able at least to be represented. That would be so trivial as to be practically meaningless. Reinhold's representationalism might be interpreted as if it advanced simply a psychological principle of representation stating that since our human psychological make-up is such that we process impressions by way of representations, the notion of representation should be seen as the fundamental assumption upon which philosophical analysis of anything more complex is based.[10] But reading the *Versuch* makes it abundantly clear that Reinhold is not at all interested in psychological or indeed typically metaphysical questions concerning the origin of representations, whether it be empirical or not, but rather *in what* representation consists, what it *means* to represent.

> Here it is not a question of *how* representation *arises*, but *in what it consists*; it is not a matter of the *origin* but merely of the *nature* (*Beschaffenheit*) of the capacity for representation, not *where* the capacity for representation gets its components *from*, but what components it possesses; not how the capacity for representation can be explained *genetically*, but what is

cellent account of Schulze's (and Jacobi's) criticisms of Kant's notion of the thing in itself, see Rosefeldt (2012).

9 I do not consider the different versions of the so-called *Elementarphilosophie*, including alternative accounts of his view of the thing in itself and his representationalist approach, that Reinhold presented in his *Beyträge zur Berichtigung bisheriger Mißverständnisse der Philosophen* (published in two volumes; Jena, 1790 and 1794) or in *Ueber das Fundament des philosophischen Wissens* (Jena, 1791). For a detailed commentary on the origin and development of the *Elementarphilosophie*, see Bondeli (1995). In particular in connection with the place of the *Versuch* in Reinhold's philosophy, see also especially Onnasch (2010).

10 Fabbianelli (2011, 30 – 1, 49, 70 ff., *et passim*) appears to read Reinhold's *Versuch* as a psychological treatise of sorts.

> *meant* by capacity for representation (*was man denn unter Vorstellungsvermögen zu verstehen habe*). (*Versuch* 2:237)

Unlike previous philosophers (before Kant), whether they be materialists or what he calls spiritualists (or more broadly, idealists or dualists), Reinhold is not interested in the question of whether representations are ultimately to be located in a simple soul-substance or are merely the effects of causal impingements and reducible to sense impressions in "organic bodies" (*Versuch* 2:214). He does not deny though that representations may be attributes of a simple soul-substance, or may ultimately be derived from sense impressions, the outcome of some "organisational capacity" (*Versuch* 2:213). (Reinhold systematically associates the term *Organisation* with bodily arrangement; see *Versuch* 2:216.) Reinhold points to the necessary external and internal conditions of representations: e. g., parents are the necessary *external* conditions of a human being, mind and body are his necessary *internal* conditions (*Versuch* 2:217). A necessary internal condition for a representation would be to have a functioning brain, a mind (*Gemüt*) that does the representing.

But these are not the conditions which make a representation a *representation* of some specific content, having a meaning. The central question – and this makes Reinhold a quintessentially Critical thinker in the wake of Kant's revolution in metaphysics – is a transcendental one, namely, what does it *mean* to have a representation of some *x*?[11] To explicate the meaning of representation, Reinhold sets out to analyse what he calls the *bloßes Vorstellungsvermögen* in contrast to *Vorstellungskraft*, which latter term connotes more the capacity for representation as a power of the soul-substance, as the rationalists attempted to determine it. In keeping with Kant's subjective turn in metaphysics, Reinhold wants to focus purely on the representing *subject*, specifically the element of the formal productive capacity (*hervorbringendes Vermögen*) or activity (*Tätigkeit*) in representation (*Versuch* 2:272, 273 – 7 (§20)), which operates in conjunction with a receptivity for objective matter (*Versuch* 2:271, 299), regardless of the question whether this subject is a simple substance or just the outcome of some material organisational power. Reinhold's analysis is fundamentally based on what he later, in his *Beyträge*, comes to call the *Satz des Bewußtseins*, which – as formulated in the *Versuch* – states that

> One can agree, necessitated by *consciousness*, that to representation there belongs a representing subject and a represented object which must *both* be *distinguished* from the *representation* to which they belong. (*Versuch* 2:217, §7; cf. 2:315, §38)

11 My reading of Reinhold diverges from that of Ameriks here (see Ameriks 2000, 106).

The principle that is expressed here says that in consciousness, one is necessarily conscious of the fact that an occurrent representation implies that, anticipating Wilfrid Sellars's distinction,[12] there is something represent*ed* and something or someone doing the represent*ing*, in other words, there is a distinction between the *subject* and *object* of representing, which is made *in* and *through* consciousness, that is, *by* the agent of representing.[13] The differentiation between subject and object, between representing and represented, is a differentiation of which one is necessarily aware in consciousness, *when* one represents. Now Reinhold is interested in the purely internal or transcendental conditions of representation; in other words, the analysis concerns the *bloßes Vorstellungsvermögen* only, what Reinhold calls the *Vorstellungsvermögen in engster Bedeutung* (*Versuch* 2:232–3, §12).[14] Hence, he is interested in the meaning of the distinction itself between representing and represented made in and through consciousness, that is, in and through the pure capacity for representation, rather than the subject or object of representation in and of themselves. Again, questions about the nature of the representing subject and the represented object or thing are not at issue, which concern merely the strictly speaking external (non-transcendental) conditions of both the agent of representing and represented object. The ground for this emphasis lies in the fact that whatever questions about the nature of the subject and object as things of some kind may arise, such questions *already assume* the *Vorstellungsvermögen* as the fundamental ground of any such inquiry, and hence can be questions of secondary philosophical interest only in the transcendental analysis of our representational capacity.[15] Before we can meaningfully ask what the concept of a 'thing' means, we must first clarify the meaning

12 See Sellars (1968, 32, 36).

13 This view harks back to a Wolffian distinction. See Schulting (2015, 99–101).

14 Reinhold subdivides the genus 'representation' into its various species, i.e., sensations, thoughts, intuitions, concepts, and ideas, much in the same way as Kant does in the so-called *Stufenleiter* in the *Critique*, but more extensively and more analytically fine-grained (*Versuch* §10ff.). What is at issue here, in Reinhold's emphasis on *Vorstellung in engster Bedeutung*, is the *genus* 'representation' and the *pure* capacity for representation (*Versuch* 2:232). See Beiser (1987, 250–1).

15 It should be noted that Reinhold avoids the term 'transcendental', but it is clear from the proceedings in the *Versuch* that he carries out a transcendental analysis of our capacity for representation (cf. Fabbianelli 2011, 52–3). It should also be noted that Reinhold at first sight seems to employ the term 'internal' or 'inner', as referring to the mind, ambiguously, either referring to the *Gemüt*, as a functioning subject's capacity for representation, or even to the body (*Versuch* 2:217), or referring to the capacity for representation purely *qua* such capacity for representation. It is the latter sense that is centrally at issue, when Reinholds talks about "inner", or "essential", "conditions" of a "mere representation" (*Versuch* 2:243). Cf. Beiser (1987, 250–1).

and fundamental status of the term 'representation', that is, the *Vorstellung im strengsten Sinne*, as genus, since 'concept' is a species of representation (*Versuch* 2:238 – 9, 242). Representation is foundational, since it is that through which any possible object is *understood* as being related to the subject that represents the object. The focus on representation thus reveals the fundamental and necessary *reflexivity* underlying our knowledge; it explains what it really means for one to make knowledge claims about objects, and how the form of our claims and the objects themselves are intimately related at the level of representation itself.

3 Reinhold's Representationalism and the Thing in Itself

An important consequence of this fundamentally representationalist approach to metaphysical issues, such as the possible knowledge of things or objects, is some form of idealism: our knowledge of objects outside us is restricted to what we represent them as, namely, as *represented* as distinct from us. Reinhold argues:

> We know the objects outside of us and even the representing in us *only through the representations* that we have of them and that we ourselves must distinguish from them. The represented things outside of us and our souls are not the representations themselves, which we have of them, and our consciousness must make every effort to make it quite impossible to *substitute* the *represented* for the *mere representation* (*bloße Vorstellung*) and the latter for the *representing.* (*Versuch* 2:223)

And a few lines down, he asserts that

> one can know something about all these things [i. e., the representing being or the soul and the objects outside the soul] *only through the representations* that one has of them, but which one [also] oneself must differentiate from them. (*Versuch* 2:224)

Reinhold might be taken to present here what is basically a short argument to idealism, namely, the representability thesis implies the restriction or unknowability thesis: whatever is not representable is therefore unknowable.[16] But, de-

16 Reinhold himself appears to call this approach the "short route" to idealism: "If I should hope to be understood by my readers – a hope that I can base on nothing but the circumstance that *my* problem is easier to solve than *Kant's* – one will start to understand the impossibility of knowledge of the thing in itself, as *Kant* proved, **by a shorter route**. The thing in itself cannot be *represented*, so how could it then be *known*?" (*Versuch* 2:264; bold face mine). However, this remark should not be read simply on its own, outside of the context of the previous 50-odd

spite appearances to the contrary, I believe this is not what Reinhold means to say. It is important to note that, in the first passage, first, from the context (see e. g., *Versuch* 2:208 – 9) it is clear that Reinhold means the object outside of us to signify the thing as it is 'in itself', namely, as it exists apart from our representation, and, secondly, he says that we should not conflate the things that we represent (whether they be outer things or our souls) with their representations – we must keep the things that we represent separate from their representations, though, to be sure, we do not *know* anything about them other than *through* their representations; so by implication anything that is not representable is also not knowable.

My view is that one should not read this as saying that as *simply* a matter of definition,[17] anything that is 'in itself' is 'not representable', and since anything that is 'not representable' is 'unknowable', a thing in itself is *eo ipso* unknowable (Reinhold does think that unrepresentability analytically entails unknowability, but this seems unproblematic, since knowing is a species of representing[18]). Reinhold has arguments for the position that he has on the restriction or unknowability thesis: as we shall see below, a thing in itself *as* properly a thing *in itself*, namely, as a thing *qua* thing (Reinhold employs the term *Sache* to refer to mind-external objects), and thus not *as* a representation (i. e., a representing), is necessarily separate from or outside the representation (representing), and so not something represented. It is not that *in-itselfness* simply implies unrepresentability, but rather, given what we understand by a thing, *thingness* means *not-being-due-to-a-representing*, which implies *not-being-a-represented*, which in turn implies unrepresentability; so unrepresentability follows from *not-being-due-to-a-representing*. Of course, a thing existing outside or external to representation *can* be represented (is representable), but only *on condition of* it being modified *in* representation, by being made into a represent*ed*, for,

pages of analysis of the *grounds* on which Reinhold believes that the thing in itself cannot be represented. Nevertheless, Reinhold's claim about the unrepresentability of the thing in itself does look like a short route to the unknowability thesis, in the sense that, as Ameriks (2000, 127 – 8) writes, Reinhold largely dispenses with Kant's lengthy arguments for transcendental idealism in the *Critique*, specifically the details of the account of space and time in the Transcendental Aesthetic and the Antinomies. But in and of itself this does not invalidate Reinhold's more general claims about the unrepresentability of the thing in itself (cf. Breazeale 2003, 251 – 2).

17 Cf. by contrast Ameriks (2000, 130).

18 *Versuch* 2:227 – 8; cf. *Versuch* 1:149.

as per the above argument, it is not representable *qua* thing-in-itself.[19] Only represent*eds* correspond strictly speaking to being-representable. Thus, to put it succinctly, a thing in itself *is* representable, but only *as* represented, not *as* thing in itself.

This can be expressed in terms of the Sellarsian distinction between, on the one hand, "existing in itself" as "existing *simpliciter*" and, on the other, "existing *as represented*", or existing "as idea (content) or representable". For Reinhold, a thing in itself would be, in Sellars's terms, a "non-representing *qua* existing *simpliciter*", and a thing in itself *as modified in* representation would be, in Sellars's terminology, a "represented non-representing *qua* represented" (Sellars 1968, 36, 38). It is exactly Reinhold's point, not just to formally contrast 'existing in itself' and 'existing as representable', but in fact to assert that *a thing* that exists *in itself* cannot, *as so existing*, exist *as representable*, and that only a represent*ed*, a determinate object, exists in a representing (cf. *CPR* A 374 – 5n).

We should see the above analysis against the backdrop of the fact that Reinhold's idealism is an idealism of the explicitly non-reductive kind, not a type of phenomenalism that denies the mind- or representation-independent existence of the *things* that are represented, just as Kant does not deny the mind-independent existence of things in themselves, as we saw in Section 1. Reinhold specifically mentions the objection (from "our empiricist") that he (i.e., Reinhold) admits the actuality (*Wirklichkeit*) of representations, whilst denying it of the things themselves (*Sachen*), an objection which he rebuts by saying that his

> non-committal [...] is not a dogmatic doubt and [that he] in no way makes claims about the distinction between soul and body or indeed the actuality of things outside us. (*Versuch* 2:225)

And further, more emphatically:

> I am refraining from all assertion until my readers and I have reached agreement about principles, after which it will then be shown that I ascribe merely *ideal* actuality to the so-called *things* (*Sachen*) just as little as I ascribe *real actuality*[20] to *representations*, as

19 Ameriks (2000, 130 – 3) notes that the triviality reading can be escaped by focusing on the element of modification that Reinhold talks about, but then indicates some further potential problems for Reinhold.

20 Reinhold contrasts *ideale Wirklichkeit* with *reale Wirklichkeit*, which might come across as odd-sounding expressions. *Wirklichkeit* is a modal term, not to be confused with *Realität*. What I thus take him to mean by these terms is 'ideal existence in the mind' versus 'real existence outside the mind', respectively.

> the misunderstood writer of the Critique of Reason has so often been accused of doing. (*Versuch* 2:225; cf. 2:229)

Reinhold's position thus does not imply a reductive idealism – for the existence and representation of things in themselves (*Sachen*) should not be conflated. Neither is it the case, though, that there is a strict identity or correspondence between, on the one hand, the thing in itself outside representation and the represented, on the other, in the same way as there is a conceptual, analytical connection between representation and represented. In other words, while thing in itself and representation should indeed not be conflated, this does not mean that we are able to represent the thing in itself as it is, *as such*, apart from its being represented. This is often assumed in contemporary direct realist interpretations of Kant, such as that of Rae Langton (see above), who believes that representations are merely the means *through* which things (in themselves) are represented, even if only their appearance, extrinsic, or relational properties, the properties that are mind-dependent or relativised to the epistemic subject, as it is said. This suggests that the thing in itself, even if only its appearance, extrinsic, or relational properties, is the *direct* object of my representation. And, as we shall see, this is not the case, according to Reinhold (and I would argue, for Kant[21]).

Reinhold proceeds to distinguish (in *Versuch*, §15) as one of the inner or *essential* conditions of a representation, the 'matter' (*Stoff*) of a representation, by which he means the matter *in* a representation, the "proper matter" of a representation (*Versuch* 2:244; cf. *CPR* A 20/B 34). This 'matter' directly refers to that which is represented as distinct from consciousness, namely, the object (*Gegenstand*). Reinhold distinguishes between subjective and objective matter, and it is this latter objective matter which makes that a representation relates to an actually existing object (*Versuch* 2:245, 249, 265, 295 – 7). The matter of a representation is the determinate effect of the object's affecting our sense organs. The object as such always remains the same, unchanging mind-independent object (*Versuch* 2:245). It is the matter of a representation of the object which gets modified in accordance with any further specification of the *representation* of the object. The 'matter' of a representation is what makes a representation a *repraesen-*

21 Notice that Kant can however be said to be a direct realist in the sense that we directly perceive the *empirically real objects in space*, which are after all nothing but our representations (see Heidemann 2011, 203). But contemporary direct realists, such as Rae Langton (1998) and Lucy Allais (2015), take this perception to refer to the thing that exists in itself, even though it is emphasised that we do not thereby perceive its intrinsic or mind-independent properties. There is some ground for this view in e. g. *Prolegomena* AA 4:337, but Kant's general view (most clearly in the Refutation of Idealism) is that we only directly perceive objects in space.

tatio, in the truest sense of the term,[22] of something other than consciousness *in* consciousness, namely, a conscious content that refers to a mind-external represent*ed* (a thing) which is re-presented[23] in consciousness. Even so-called 'empty' representations, representations that represent something that in reality does not exist or obtain (in Reinhold's words, has no "real actuality"), has a material content – *any* representation has representational content, or a representational *object*, otherwise they would be representations that do not represent, which is contradictory (*Versuch* 2:246–7). So a representation always has a representational object, an object that is differentiated from the representation, or a represent*ed*, even if this represented is not an object really existing outside the representation. However, only "objective" matter refers to an actually existing mind-external object or thing (*Versuch* 2:295), which is *re-presented* in representation in terms of the *matter* of representation. (In the case of a represented that does not exist outside the representation, Reinhold speaks of "subjective" matter.)

The second essential inner condition of a representation is its 'form'. Whereas matter is that which makes that the represented object "belongs" to the representation (*Versuch* 2:249), form is what relates the representation to the *subject* of representation (the representing), what makes that the representation "belongs" to the mind (the representing capacity). Form is what in fact first makes out of the manifold of the matter a genuine representation (*Versuch* 2:290); only the conjunction of form, which makes a unity out of the manifold, and the receptivity for matter constitutes a representation *stricto sensu*.[24] Matter as such, without form, is not yet a representation in the strict sense (something that is *representational* content, i.e., referring to an object, whether real or imagined). The matter of a representation can acquire form "*only* in the mind [*Gemüt*] and *only* through the capacity for representation" (*Versuch* 2:249). As Reinhold later in Book III of the *Versuch* delineates, the quintessential forms of a representation are, more specifically, both the Kantian forms of sensibility, space and time, and the categories as the forms under which an object can be thought. Importantly, the form of a representation is not determined by the represented, the object, but by the *subject* of representing. For this reason,

22 Cf. the editorial note in *Versuch* 2:529 n.176.

23 Reinhold uses the Latinate *repräsentieren* (*Versuch* 2:245), which literally translates into German as *vergegenwärtigen*.

24 Reinhold's assumption that matter is necessarily a manifold, and that only form is able to unite the multiplicity of matter is not properly argued, to say the least. In the later *Beyträge*, he admits that indeed this deduction had failed in the *Versuch*.

> no represented, no object (*Gegenstand*) can be represented in its form that is independent of the form of representation, [i.e.,] as it is in itself, but can occur only, modified through the form of representation, in consciousness. (*Versuch* 2:252)

Similarly, Reinhold writes:

> The object (*Gegenstand*) that is differentiated from the representation can therefore only occur in consciousness, i.e., be *represented*, under the *form of representation*, which the matter corresponding to it [i.e., to the object] had to take on in the mind. And hence, it could by no means be represented as *thing in itself*, i.e., under that form which it would have outside of all representation, would be denoted through the mere matter of representation, and would have to be differentiated from the form of representation. (*Versuch* 2:257)

> The representation of an object in its own proper form independently of the form of representation, or the so-called *thing in itself*, contradicts the concept of a representation in general (*Vorstellung überhaupt*); that is, no thing in itself can be represented. (*Versuch* 2:256, §17 heading)

Hence, what we represent of the represented object, which exists mind-independently, is not the object *an sich* (the thing in itself), but how (*wie*) it is represented in consciousness, necessarily by means of the form of representation. This is crucially important and explains Reinhold's fundamentally representationalist position: there is nothing reductively idealist about this position, but it shows that a representation of an object ex hypothesi implies that an object cannot be represented *an sich*, for this would mean, contradictorily, to represent it in abstraction from representing it (cf. *Versuch* 2:254). The object *an sich* is only re-presented – Reinhold employs the term *vertreten* (*Versuch* 2:246)[25] – in the representation by means of the matter (*Stoff*) that it effects in the mind, i.e., the sensations that are prompted as a result of the object's affecting the mind externally. The object is not re-presented *an sich*, but only as "modified through the form of representation" (*Versuch* 2:252), which is analytic, because the object *as represented* is fully dependent on, or must conform to, the necessary conditions under which alone it is represented, namely the form(s) of representation.[26]

25 See note 23 above.

26 It seems to me that the objection that Beiser (1987, 258) raises to Reinhold's reasoning here is not compelling. Beiser writes: "[I]t does not follow that in conforming to the form the content can no longer represent the object in itself; for 'to conform to the form' here means only that the content enters into consciousness; and merely to enter into consciousness does not prevent the content from representing the object in itself. As pure consciousness in general, the form of a representation does not necessarily change any of the determinate features of its content." It is important to note Reinhold's point that by entering into pure consciousness, the content of a representation, which is the determinate result of the affection by the thing in itself, is changed

The form that the *Ding an sich* has in itself is essentially different from the form it acquires when it is represented in consciousness: as *Ding an sich*, it lacks the "form of representation", so how can it be *represented* as *an sich*, whilst *intrinsically* lacking the form of representation under which alone it can be represented? Reinhold therefore believes that *representing* the thing in itself *as in itself* amounts to a contradiction, as we saw in the last of the above quotations.

It is important to know that this restriction of the way that the thing in itself is re-presented in consciousness or representation, namely solely as modified, is not so much because of the fact that *merely* the forms of our sensibility, and not the forms of our conception per se, constrain our knowledge of things – that is, because space and time are not properties of things in themselves – as that it has to do with the transcendental conditions under which we are able to re-present the mind-external object, the thing in itself, at all. These transcendental conditions concern the forms of our conceptual capacity as much as the forms of sensibility, for they concern more fundamentally the way we re-present mind-external objects in consciousness. In other words, for Reinhold our very conception of things as objects is already affected by idealism, namely, an idealism of the Copernican sort that argues that things must conform to *both* our forms of concep-

at least insofar as it takes on the form of representation, a form which ex hypothesi it could not yet have had before it took on the form, that is, before it was represented. (Indeed, Beiser notes this too, but he then says that in so arguing Reinhold illegitimately presupposes the active role of the subject, thus undermining his attempt to base the deduction on the pure notion of a representation; I do not think that Beiser has a point here, for, as Reinhold argues, representation itself already implies subjective activity merely in terms of a representation being a *representing*, which refers to the subject of representation, as much as a represent*ed*, which refers to the object of representation.) Therefore, whatever 'determinate' features the content, and by implication the thing in itself to which the material content directly refers, may still have as represented, under the form of representation the content has changed into *re-presented* content. The element of being-represented is an added feature that it did not have before. Reinhold is of course not saying that re-presenting content means to alter the content *completely*, for all of its features. Reinhold means to say that if a content, and hence a thing in itself, is re-presented under the form of representation, it is ipso facto not represented as *an sich* – that is, with all of its (empirical) features, including possible forms, *but without the form of representation* – but only *as* represented, under the form of representation, with all of its empirical features. To use Reinhold's own example, i. e., "a statue whose material is white Salzburg marble", the fact that being made (changed) into a statue (its form), does not alter the material being white and marble, but it does change the piece of marble (the matter) at least insofar as the piece of white marble is moulded into the form of a statue. The statue is white and made of marble purely in respect of its *matter*, whereas it being a statue is an essential feature the white and marble object has only in respect of its form as statue. As Reinhold says, "certain predicates apply to representation only in respect of its form, others only in respect of its matter" (*Versuch* 2:248 – 9).

tion and our forms of intuition in order for knowledge, indeed *representation*, of objects to be possible (cf. *CPR* B xvii–xviii).

Reinhold makes an important observation in reaction to a possible objection that surely we do have a *conception* of a thing in itself, an objection that also Kantian commentators who take Kant to be a direct realist, are apt to make. He points out that this objection plays on the ambiguity between having the *concept* of a *Ding an sich überhaupt* and having a representation of the thing in itself as a determinate object, a *Sache* (*Versuch* 2:258). Reinhold writes:

> That concept [of the thing in itself in general] is admittedly also a representation, but a representation whose object is not the thing in itself as *thing* (*Sache*), but rather as the mere intellectual concept of an *object* in general (*Gegenstandes überhaupt*).[27] This representation of a merely *logical* entity is confused in that objection with the representation of a *thing* (*Sache*). For those who advocate the representability of things in themselves believe it is possible to grant to and save for our understanding a *knowledge of things* (*Sachkenntnis*) only by construing representation of the thing in it itself as representation of some *thing* (*Sache*), [i.e.,] representation of that object that is outside the mind to which the matter and form of representation belong. What I call the concept of the thing in itself, the possibility and origin of which are to be elaborated in the theory of the cognitive capacity, is the representation of an object *in general*, which is not a representation; [i.e., it is] not a *determinate*, *individual*, *existent* thing. (*Versuch* 2:258–9)

What Reinhold rejects is the possibility of having a representation of a thing in itself as a representation of a "determinate, individual, existing thing", a real thing (*Sache*), which by implication is not a representation – because it is a thing *an sich* – whilst still claiming that it has the form of a representation, which gives the represented its determinacy (and confers objectivity *strictius dicta* on it, as we shall see further below), but has this form *independently of* the subject of consciousness, which first gives it this form. The mistaken assumption here, according to Reinhold, is that one takes the thing in itself to have the form of objective determinacy *an sich*, outside of its representation, that it can have only by virtue of the form of representation, but not *an sich*. The assumption thus rests on a misconception of what it means to have a *representation* of a thing in itself, and on the presumed identity between the form of representation, which determines objectivity, and any form that the *Ding an sich* itself might have, independently of the form of representation. In other words, one cannot have one's cake and eat it – both have a *representation* of the thing in itself

27 Reinhold probably means that the concept of the thing in itself in general *is* the "mere intellectual concept of an *object* in general", not that the latter is the object of the former, as the grammatical structure of the German suggests. Thanks to Christian Onof for flagging this.

and represent it *an sich*, as it is independently of its being represented. (One could put this differently, by saying that on Reinhold's view representation is by definition extrinsic, implying at least two relata in an external relation, namely an agent of representing and a represented, whereas with regard to the *an sich* nature of a thing, its intrinsicality defines its inwardness [*Ansichsein*], apart from any possible external relations, whereby intrinsicality and extrinsicality are considered absolutely distinct and irreducible; on this account, inwardness excludes the possibility of representability, unless one formulates a Hegelian type account of how the extrinsicality of representations supervenes, or more precisely, inwardly latches onto the inwardness of a thing in itself.)

Notice again that Reinhold does not deny the existence of things in themselves, for they *are* the represented objects insofar as they cannot be represented (*Versuch* 2:259). More precisely, a thing in itself is

> that something which must ground, outside the representation, the mere matter (*bloßen Stoffe*) of a representation, but of which – since its representative (*Repräsentant*), the matter, must take on the form of representation – nothing of what were to belong to it independently of this form, would be able to be represented, except the negation of the form of representation, that is, that which cannot be attributed any other predicate, except that it is not a representation. (*Versuch* 2:259)

What is capable of being represented of a thing in itself, is its "representative (*Repräsentant*)" in representation only, namely, the matter (*Stoff*) in representation which refers to the underlying thing in itself, based on an affective relation to the mind in which the representation occurs.[28] Were we to positively determine the thing in itself, we would have to *re-present* the thing in itself, and as such the thing would necessarily take on the form of representation that is wholly due to the subject or mind (and so change into something represented). But apart from its re-presentation, a thing in itself is not capable of being represented as a thing (*Sache*), but "*merely* as a *concept* of something which is not capable of being represented" (*Versuch* 2:260; emphasis added). With this latter specification, it appears that Reinhold regards the representation of a thing in itself as a representation of something that lacks all predicates, that is, a representation of a "bare subject without all its predicates" (*Versuch* 2:260; cf. 390, 254), similar to Kant's conception of the transcendental object (*CPR* A 109). However, Reinhold may be taken to hold the view that the thing in itself *qua* thing in itself – that is, as not represented – has all the qualities (*Beschaffenheiten*) that it has, distinctly from

28 On Reinhold's views on affection, see *Versuch* 2:282 – 5, 300 – 1, 343 – 4, 350 – 4, *et passim*.

the form of representation. This seems to be confirmed by what Reinhold says two pages further down (a) and a few pages earlier (b):

> [a] The *representable* predicates are then not predicates of things in themselves, but predicates of things which have taken on the form of representation, which does not belong to the things in themselves. (*Versuch* 2:262; emphasis in original)

> [b] All its [the thing's] **positive predicates**, insofar as they are representable, must have taken on the form of representation through the matter corresponding to them in the representation, and this form cannot pertain to them in themselves. The thing in itself and its properties (*Beschaffenheiten*) distinct from the form of representation are not only not impossible, but even something *indispensable* for mere representation, because no mere representation is conceivable without a matter, and no matter [is conceivable] without something outside the representation which does not have the form of representation, that is, without the thing in itself. (*Versuch* 2:259 – 60; bold face mine)

It is important to stress the fact – and this reinforces the unbridgeable gap between the representation of an object and the thing in itself, which cannot be represented as such – that, for Reinhold, the matter in a representation only becomes a proper representative (*Repräsentant*) of the object, when the matter re-presents the object *to* the subject, in consciousness, which occurs in that the representation refers to both subject and object (*Versuch* 2:320). A representation only truly represents in consciousness. Or, more specifically, I have a representation of something, if and only if *I* represent something to myself, signifying self-consciousness. "A representation which *I do not* have and which represents *nothing to me* is not a representation" (*Versuch* 2:320 – 1). What I take Reinhold to mean here is that a representation is genuinely a representation of an object only when I am conscious of it (and not that he is making an existential claim about representations).[29] Only consciousness generates a *determinate* representation of an object. The matter of a representation in an intuition

29 In the just quoted passage, Reinhold might appear to go beyond Kant. Reinhold's assertion seems to claim that *my* having the representation is definitional for the representation *being* a representation. By contrast, Kant would not say that a representation which I do not represent to myself is eo ipso not a representation, since this cannot be concluded on the basis of the analytic principle of apperception; for the principle of apperception is not constitutive of the existence or occurrence of representations in the mind, but rather a principle concerning the conditions of the self-ascribability of representations (cf. *CPR* B 132). There could still be representations going on, of which I am not conscious (cf. Ameriks 2000, 109, 131). But Reinhold of course means representation in the strict sense, namely, a representation of some object, not just alterations in the mind as a result of affection; or, not all that goes on in the mind are strictly speaking *representations* (cf. *Versuch* 2:321), although he does seem to side with Locke in rejecting the possibility of representations of which I am not conscious.

already constitutes an immediate relation to an object, but this relation is still implicit, not made explicit to and in consciousness (cf. *Versuch* 2:332–5). With consciousness of the object, the object is not only distinguished from the representation, but also *represented as* distinct from it (cf. *Versuch* 2:367). And this constitutes knowledge of the object:

> I call the object that is distinguished from mere representation and represented (conceived of) in its quality as object the object *determined in consciousness*, and I call the being-related of the representation to the object determined in consciousness *knowledge* in general. (*Versuch* 2:330–1)

As Reinhold further notes, the notion of a 'determinate object' is ambiguous – and here we come back to the ambiguity mentioned earlier regarding the predicates represented of a thing in itself, and the qualities that a thing in itself has, apart from its being represented. The notion 'determinate object' either denotes the thing in itself, which outside the subject of consciousness "subsists quite independently of the capacity for representation in itself on account of its properties and qualities" (*Versuch* 2:331). Or, it signifies the object that is determined in consciousness. (There is also a third meaning, namely, the matter in a representation is the result of a *determinate affection* from the side of the object (*Versuch* 2:331–2), but we can leave this aside here.) However, it seems that Reinhold denies the possibility of a determinate object as thing in itself, independently of the subject of representation (but again, there remains an ambiguity about having a *representation* of a thing in itself and its determinate properties and, on the other hand, the thing in itself with all its properties as it would be independently of representing it). Reinhold points out that the traditional conception of *Gegenstand* is the totality (*Inbegriff*) of properties and qualities, that is, a "whole of connected determinations, an individual (*Individuum*)" (*Versuch* 2:401). The connectedness of characteristics, which make up the concept of object, thus defined, is established by the combination of the manifold in intuition. Like Kant, Reinhold considers the unity of the manifold that ensues as a result of this combination an *objective* unity, and it is this unity that defines the concept of object. The objective unity in the manifold is the unity under which the object is first *thought* or *conceived*. The combination of the manifold in an intuition is the origin (*Entstehungsgrund*) of the representation of an object *as object*, and the object is as such "nothing but the unity of the represented manifold" (*Versuch* 2:401–2). This is all very much in line with Kant's own conception of objective unity as defining an object (cf. *CPR* B 137).

Importantly, for Reinhold the very conception of an object (a *Gegenstand überhaupt*), defined as a connectedness of determinations, strictly rests on the

combination of the manifold in intuition, in consciousness. An object is first an object, when the "predicate of objective unity, of the unity of the manifold represented in a representation, is attributed to something (*einem Etwas*)" (*Versuch* 2:402–3). This unity is due to the spontaneous combining activity of the understanding (the form of representation), and not yet given with the objective matter that rests on the affective determination by the external object (*Ding außer uns*). This means that objective unity does not belong to the thing in itself, *insofar as the thing is a thing in itself*. This has implications for the way we putatively think about any thing in itself:

> It [i.e., the unity of the understanding] is therefore also only the form of the object insofar as it is *conceivable* (*denkbar*), not the form of the *thing in itself*, which till now was usually confused with the merely *conceivable* (*denkbar*) thing (the intelligible [*dem Intellektuellen*]) to the detriment of philosophy. **Even the understanding is not capable of conceiving (*denken*) the object as *thing in itself*, but is able to conceive it only under that form which is determined *a priori* according to its nature as the representation (the concept) proper to it, i.e., as the objective unity produced through the combination of intuitional characteristics**. [...] The *thing in itself* is that outside us to which corresponds the mere matter of our representation alone without its form; something to which, therefore, no form of our representation – neither an intuition nor a concept – may be related and that consequently **cannot be intuited nor thought**. (*Versuch* 2:403; bold face mine)

Unlike what the rationalists believed, including the pre-Critical Kant (e.g., in the Inaugural Dissertation), according to Reinhold (and the Critical Kant)[30] we do not have an intellectual grasp of the thing in itself and its intrinsic properties, when we abstract away from appearances, which are constrained by the conditions of sensibility. We are capable of *thinking* an object only under the form which first constitutes an objective unity, through combination of the manifold of representations in an intuition. Apart from this objective unity, we cannot even think the thing in itself as a thing proper (*Sache*), for that would mean, contradictorily, to represent a thing in itself as an object for the understanding alone without representing it in accordance with the form under which I can first conceive of an object at all, namely the form of objective unity that combines a manifold in intuition. Having a putative purely intellectual grasp of the thing in itself is already constrained by the conceptual forms of representation, that is, the form of objective unity that first constitutes what it is to conceive, by means of the understanding, of an object at all; so in fact *representing* a thing in itself as a thing proper in abstraction from these constraints purely by means of the understanding is an impossibility. Reinhold thus makes an important distinction between

30 See Schulting (forthcoming, ch. 9).

thinking an object, which together with intuition is one of the constitutive components of having *knowledge* of an object, and *putatively* thinking a thing in itself *qua* thing in itself (as a *Sache*), that is, *an sich*, in abstraction from the forms of representation. This, as we saw already earlier, is a conceptual impossibility. The only thing in itself that we are capable of representing is the mere *notion* of a thing in itself (with its possible intrinsic properties), or else the thing in itself should be modified *in* representation in accordance with the constraints of sensibility and conceptuality, so as to provide us with a genuine representation of an object for knowledge. Reinhold writes:

> If anyone takes the thing in itself to be nothing but the objective unity itself [...], for him the thing in itself will indeed be conceivable but not as a thing (*Sache*) distinct from its representation and independent of his faculty of representation, but, on the contrary, as a mere concept, which can be more than a mere concept only if it relates to an intuition in which a matter (*ein Stoff*) is determined through its being affected (*durchs Affiziertseins*). That outside the representation to which this matter corresponds is rightly called the object (*Gegenstand*), but it can only thereby be represented as something different from the intuition insofar as the form in the sole terms of which an object is conceivable, [i. e.,] the objective unity, is related to it – not therefore as *thing in itself*, but as thing conceived under the most general form of a concept. (*Versuch* 2:403–4)

4 Kant, Reinhold, and the Radical Reading of the Ignorance Thesis

For Reinhold, the predicate 'objective unity' cannot be attributed to the thing in itself *qua* thing in itself, just as little as the property of spatiotemporality is a property that belongs to things in themselves (*Versuch* 2:392). Given that Reinhold understands by the concept of object the connectedness of determinations predicated of something, this means that the totality or whole of properties that belong to an object can be attributed to the object only insofar as this concerns the object of representation, defined by the unity that the understanding brings to the manifold of sensible matter in an intuition. For Reinhold, then, it appears that apart from the constraints of representation (both conceptual and sensible), there is no representation of a thing in itself in any positive sense, namely, as an individual that has all of its properties, though he does not deny the existence of the thing in itself (with all *its* properties) outside representation. We can only have a *notion* (*Begriff*) of the thing in itself in abstraction from representation, as it subsists in itself independently of representation.

This seems thoroughly in line with Kant's own conception of the thing in itself. For Kant, too, the object of knowledge is first constituted by the joint coop-

eration of our conceptual capacity and the forms of sensibility (space and time) that establishes the possible knowledge of a mind-external sensible object. The conceivability of an object that goes beyond the bounds of sense is logically possible (cf. *CPR* A 96; B xxvi n), but this does not translate to the thinkability of things in themselves as noumenal *things:*[31] we have a conception of God and his properties as e.g., the highest being, who is omniscient, omnipotent etc., but by no means do we conceptually determine God as a really existing thing in itself, as an object (*Sache*) exclusively for the understanding; from the purely theoretical point of view, 'God' is just a logically consistent concept that we intelligibly entertain, not a noumenal being of whom we have an intellectually determinate grasp. It is an oddly common view among commentators (as I indicated in Section 1) to hold that in abstraction from appearances we can, purely by means of the understanding, have a thorough grasp, even if only intellectually, of the thing in itself and its intrinsic properties.[32] But, for both Reinhold and Kant, we are radically ignorant of the thing in itself's nature *as* a thing in itself, meaning that we neither know *nor think* it as a *Sache*.[33]

However, there is prima facie an important difference between Reinhold's conception of the thing in itself and Kant's. For Reinhold, as we saw, it appears that the whole of an individual's determinations is just a function of the objective unity that the understanding puts into the manifold of sensible matter in a representation of an object. This means that we cannot conceive positively of *a thing in itself* with all its possible determinations, as an individual, even if only as *ens rationis*[34] (although, as I pointed out, there are passages in the *Versuch* that seem to tell otherwise). This is unlike Kant's view, who, in the chapter in the *Critique* on the Transcendental Ideal (*CPR* A 571 ff./B 599 ff.), argues quite clearly that the thoroughly determined individual defines the thing in itself, but whose ontological determinacy (the totality of all its possible predicates, what elsewhere I call o-determination)[35] we cannot positively determine by means of the necessary conceptual and intuitional forms of knowledge, that

31 This is the same as Reinhold's view that "the domain of the knowable, which does not extend beyond sensibility, is not yet the domain of the thinkable, much less the domain of things in themselves, which we are incapable of representing, which must be clearly distinguished from both [of the former]" (*Versuch* 2:394).

32 I discuss some of these commentators in Schulting (forthcoming, ch. 9).

33 Notice that, for Reinhold as well as Kant, this does not imply that we cannot have a merely *practically* objectively valid cognition of God, although for Reinhold this is arguably more difficult to sustain, given his rather strict deduction from representability.

34 Cf. *CPR* A 681/B 709.

35 See Schulting (forthcoming, ch. 9).

is, by means of what jointly amounts to epistemic determination (what I call ε-determination).[36] The positive ε-determinations concern only the totality of possible objects in possible experience (*CPR* A 581–3/B 609–11).

For Reinhold, prima facie at least, the concept of thing in itself seems an abstraction from all the predicates an object can have by means of ε-determination, and to concern only the bare subject of predication (*Versuch* 2:254, 260–1), not a thoroughly complete individual in Kant's sense.[37] Although this would appear to reveal a consistent adherence on Reinhold's part to the radical ignorance thesis, which heeds the absolute distinction between what can count as an object of representation (both conceptual and sensible) and what would be a putative thing in itself as a *Sache* in abstraction from representation, it also poses a problem for Reinhold, in that the ε-determination of the object, which is first received in terms of the still indeterminate matter in representation, does not seem to be related in any significant way to the ontological determinacy of the affecting thing in itself other than being affected by it insofar as its material aspect is concerned. In fact, Reinhold appears to deny any kind of correspondence or equivalence between the determination by the affecting thing in itself and the determinate object, which is purely a function of the understanding (cf. *Versuch* 2:240, 252, 254). Moreover, labelling the concept of a thing in itself as *merely* a bare subject of predication stands in tension with granting the independent *existence* of a thing in itself in abstraction from representation.

By contrast, for Kant, although ε-determination does not map one-to-one onto o-determination (hence, a standard correspondence theory of truth is rejected by Kant as well as Reinhold), o-determination *defines* the thing in itself as a

36 See also Schulting (forthcoming, ch. 9). Notice that ε-determination is not to be understood along the lines of modern epistemological conceptions of 'justified true belief'; it rather concerns the necessary (and formally sufficient) transcendental conditions of both experience and the *objects* of experience (*CPR* A 158/B 197), in line with the Reinholdian/Kantian definition of what first constitutes an object, namely, the connectedness of determinations in a manifold of representations due to the understanding. Objects in this sense are a function of the objective unity in the manifold and nothing outside it.

37 The chapter, in the *Versuch*, comparable to Kant's account of the transcendental ideal (and the regulative use of the ideas of reason) is §81, where Reinhold defines what is an "idea in the narrowest sense" (*Versuch* 2:464–72). Here, Reinhold speaks of the necessary idea of "unconditioned unity", whose characteristics are "unconditioned universality or *totality*", "unconditioned limitation or exclusion of the limiting condition, i.e., *boundlessness*", "unconditioned concurrence or the *all-encompassing*", and "unconditioned *necessity*". This "unconditioned unity" is "a necessary object (*Gegenstand*)", something that must be thought, but it is not a "characteristic of knowable objects" (*Versuch* 2:466). The aforementioned characteristics cannot be attributed to "any knowable thing (*Dinge*), insofar as it is knowable" (*Versuch* 2:466).

thoroughly determined thing, *qua* thing (what Kant, and Reinhold, call *Sache*). The apparent problem for Kant, though, is how the absolute discrepancy between ε-determination and o-determination can be explained, if ε-determinations must be seen as part of a thing's o-determination: it would appear logical to think that any partial series of actual determinations belongs to the set of all possible determinations, and a fortiori that the set of *all possible* ε-determinations would map onto o-determination, given that the latter defines complete ontological determinacy, i. e., the totality of a thing's possible predicates. But Kant appears to deny, in the chapter on the Ideal, that the determinations of objects of possible experience are simply *aggregates of* the *ens realissimum*, the all of reality, which instead *grounds* empirical reality in its totality (*CPR* A 579/B 607) – and this only makes sense, given his firm denial that e. g. spatiotemporal properties of a phenomenal object could ever be considered properties *of* an underlying thing in itself.[38] In other words, not even *all* of a thing's *possible* ε-determinations map onto its putative o-determination, for the realm of possible experience does not correspond, one-to-one, to the underlying noumenal reality of things in themselves that is the metaphysical ground of the phenomenal world.[39] So, it seems that, like Reinhold, Kant just denies any strict equivalence or isomorphic correspondence between the world of objects as appearances, and its objective determinacy, and the unconditioned noumenal reality of things in themselves, and its o-determination. The main difference between Kant and Reinhold concerns the latter's lack of clarity with regard to the definition of a thing in itself as an ontologically determinate individual.

38 At first sight, the metaphysical dual-aspect reading of Kantian idealism, discussed in Section 1, is able to provide a more coherent interpretation of the relation between the ε-determinations attributed to a thing (including its spatiotemporal properties) and all of the thing's possible properties (its o-determination), which on this reading includes its ε-determinations, without thereby conflating a thing's intrinsic and extrinsic properties, that is, the properties that the thing has as it is in itself and the properties that it has as an appearance. Spatiotemporal properties are not properties of a thing *qua* having intrinsic properties (an in itself nature) but merely *qua* having extrinsic (or relational, or subject-dependent) properties, but both sets of properties are properties of one and the same thing (notwithstanding, of course, the conceptual problems, flagged earlier towards the end of Section 1, with seeing spatiotemporal properties as the extrinsic or relational or subject-relativised properties *of* things in themselves). But this dual-aspect reading stands in tension with Kant's argument that the determinations of possible experience (including all of the extrinsic properties attributed to objects of possible experience) are not aggregates of reality *an sich*, but are only grounded by it. Moreover, this reading assumes numerical identity between an appearance as an object of experience and an underlying thing in itself, thus problematically presupposing a plurality of things in themselves corresponding to their multiple phenomenal counterparts.

39 See further Schulting (forthcoming, ch. 9).

In conclusion, appearances, including the form under which appearances are representations of outer objects, that is, of things as existing mind-independently, cannot be considered properties *of* things in themselves, as that would mean that what can only be represented, and first be constituted, under the representational forms of sensibility and conceptuality (space, time, categories), namely, an object, is or subsists at the same time independently of or apart from those forms, namely, as thing in itself, which is contradictory. As Reinhold says (*Versuch* 2:403 – 4), objective unity is not a predicate that can be attributed to things in themselves as such, that is, without being re-presented, and so modified, in consciousness. Metaphysical dualists respond to this objection by saying that appearances are to be considered the mind-*dependent* or extrinsic or relational properties *of* things in themselves, but this reading faces the unsurmountable problem of how to explain Kant's (and Reinhold's) representationalist view that appearances *are just* representations, and more importantly also how mind-dependency is supposed to be linked to the unconditioned spontaneous *subjective activity* that is irreducible to metaphysical dispositions, a central plank of the Critical philosophy. There is thus an unbridgeable gulf between the object as determined by and in consciousness and the thing in itself, which as such, as Reinhold rightfully argued, cannot be *properly* represented, even thought, but whose *independent* existence must nonetheless be admitted, contrary to what the later German Idealists believed.[40]

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Abbreviations and Notes on Citation

Translations from Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* are from the Guyer/Wood edition (Cambridge, 1998). Unless otherwise indicated, the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics that Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science* is used in the Carus/Ellington translation (Indianapolis, IN, 1977). The *Critique* is cited in the standard way by means of the abbreviation *CPR*, followed by the pag-

ination of the original first (A) and second (B) editions. All other works are cited from the Akademie Ausgabe of Kant's work, by volume and page number(s). The following additional abbreviations for Kant's texts are used:

[*AA*] *Kants Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. königlich preußische (später: deutsche) Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin, 1900–) (Akademie-Ausgabe).
[*Br*] *Correspondence* (AA 10–11).
[*Prolegomena*] *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik* (AA 4).
[*V-Met/Mron*] *Metaphysik Mrongovius* (AA 29).

Reinhold's *Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögens* is cited from the text-critical edition by Ernst-Otto Onnasch (Hamburg, 2010, 2012). All citations are to the pagination of the second volume of this edition (Hamburg, 2012, which contains Book II and Book III), indicated by the abbreviation *Versuch*, followed by the Arabic number 2, and page number(s). All translations are my own and based on this edition, although I have consulted, and sometimes adopted without comment, the recent translation by Tim Mehigan and Barry Empson, published as *Essay on a New Theory of the Human Capacity for Representation* (Berlin and New York, 2011).

Eric Watkins

The Unconditioned and the Absolute in Kant and Early German Romanticism

Abstract: This paper argues not only that Schelling, Novalis, and Friedrich Schlegel are reacting directly to Kant (rather than simply to each other and to other post-Kantian figures), but also that they are responding in complex ways to one particularly prominent and distinctive line of thought in Kant, namely his account of reason, conditions, and the unconditioned. Though Kant argues that we cannot have cognition of unconditioned objects, he none the less thinks that reason demands that we accept the existence of such objects. The paper argues that the German Romantics take over this general line of thought, though they do so in different contexts and to different ends. Specifically, focusing on this dimension of Kant's thought allows us to see both how the logic of conditioning relations can be seen to be *driving* their arguments for the Absolute, and how Kant's particular conception of conditioning relations gives rise to important *differences* from the views of the German Romantics. For whereas he distinguishes different kinds of real conditioning relations, they operate with a generic conception of conditioning that leads to their distinctive Romantic views.

1 Introduction

Over the past several decades, a number of excellent scholars, both German and American, have provided sophisticated new overarching narratives of the development of philosophy in Germany in the wake of Kant's revolutionary contributions.[1] For example, Dieter Henrich (1991, 2003, and 2004) has argued that self-consciousness, freedom, and the search for first principles provide the guiding threads that lead from Kant to Jacobi, Reinhold, Fichte, Hölderlin, Schelling, and Hegel, among others. Manfred Frank (1997) has focused on how several early German Romantics launched an anti-foundationalist attack on the first principles proposed by Reinhold and Fichte and turned to aesthetics and literary devices (such as irony and allegory rather than logical derivation from first principles) to satisfy their "longing for the infinite" ("*Sehnsucht nach dem Unendlichen*"). Karl Ameriks (2000 and 2006) has argued that Kant's com-

1 For a helpful summary of these developments in the secondary literature, see Thielke (2010a, 2010b, and 2013).

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plex "long argument" for Transcendental Idealism in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which turns on specific features of space, time, and experience, was subtly reinterpreted by Reinhold, Fichte, and Hegel into abbreviated (and philosophically questionable) "short arguments" that purport to establish, in one fell swoop, a more encompassing idealism on the basis of a generic notion of representation. Fred Beiser (2002 and 2003) has argued that the German Idealists (including German Romantics) did not represent the culmination of the "subjectivist" Cartesian tradition that emphasized the certainty of one's knowledge of one's ideas (and thus of one's self as a thinking thing), but rather developed an increasingly realist and naturalistic philosophy that would instead derive the subject from the object. Eckart Förster (2012) has focused on the internal dynamic and immanent development of the "single thought" (of reconciling freedom and naturalism) that determined philosophy when it began in 1781 with the *Critique of Pure Reason* and ended twenty-five years later with Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Many other first-rate scholars deserve mention here as well.[2]

Against the background of these views, Dalia Nassar (2014) has recently offered her own broader narrative of the period from Kant to Hegel, arguing that the positions of several German Romantics emerged from an attempt at identifying a stable and philosophically satisfying concept of the Absolute. In the course of her book, *The Romantic Absolute*, she presents philosophically sophisticated and textually nuanced interpretations of the positions and arguments of Schelling, Novalis, and Friedrich Schlegel with respect to the Absolute. Her book is an extremely valuable contribution that helps us to see more clearly the views and arguments of some of the most prominent (but also obscure) early German Romantics, who, prior to the work of Manfred Frank, have typically been thought of primarily as literary figures rather than as philosophers in their own right.

In this paper I propose to argue not only that Schelling, Novalis, and Friedrich Schlegel are reacting directly to Kant (rather than simply to each other and to other post-Kantian figures), but also that they are responding in complex ways to one particularly prominent and distinctive line of thought in Kant, namely his account of reason, conditions, and the unconditioned.[3] Though my proposal is in fundamental agreement with the main thrust of Nassar's project in particular, who acknowledges Kant's importance, I believe that it nonetheless sheds important new light, both textual and philosophical, on central details of the novel po-

2 See, for example, the work of Horstmann (2004), Sandkaulen (1990), Stolzenberg (1986), Pinkard (2002), Bowie (2003), Franks (2005), Forster (2011), Millán-Zaibert (2008) and Larmore (1996).

3 This is not to deny that Novalis, Friedrich Schlegel, and, later in his career, Schelling are also reacting to other figures, even on the specific issues for which Kant is particularly relevant.

sitions and arguments that these German Romantics develop. For it turns out that focusing on the unconditioned (as Kant understands it) helps us to see both how the logic of conditioning relations can be seen to be *driving* their arguments for the Absolute, and how Kant's particular conception of conditioning relations gives rise to important *differences* from the views of the German Romantics.[4]

2 Kant, Reason, and the Unconditioned

Now Kant's philosophy can be seen as revolutionary along many different dimensions. His so-called Copernican Revolution, Transcendental Idealism, or the identification of synthetic a priori judgments are just a few prominent examples of his fundamental philosophical innovations. But one less frequently noted feature that distinguishes it at its foundation from the views of his early modern predecessors and that many of his most prominent immediate successors draw on as they develop their own philosophical systems, is his characterization of reason in terms of conditions and, ultimately, the unconditioned. For Kant characterizes reason as a spontaneous faculty that seeks not only the *conditions* for whatever is given to it as conditioned, but also the *totality* of such conditions, which must, he claims, be *unconditioned*. One could capture essential aspects of this account in contemporary terms by saying that reason seeks not only an explanation of everything that admits of one, but also a complete explanation in terms of something that itself requires and, in fact, admits of no explanation; in short, reason seeks explanations that are both comprehensive and complete.

Kant's distinctive characterization of reason is central to his conception of metaphysics, since it allows him to conceive of the objects of primary interest in traditional metaphysics, such as God, freedom, and the soul, as unconditioned and as thus falling naturally under the purview of reason. It also lies at the heart of his critical project of determining the viability of metaphysics, since his critique of the faculty of reason leads him to undertake an investigation into whether our cognitive abilities can allow us to have cognition of the objects of traditional metaphysics. His complex analysis reveals that theoretical reason is unable to deliver cognition ("*Erkenntnis*") of anything unconditioned, but that practical reason is able to save the day by justifying belief ("*Glaube*") in precisely those unconditioned objects that are at issue in traditional metaphysics. As a re-

4 This is not to prejudge the issue, however, as to whether the Romantic's acceptance of the Absolute, so conceived, is to be preferred to Kant's commitment to the unconditioned.

sult, Kant's conception of reason ends up being fundamental to his basic project and the ultimate source of some of his most distinctive doctrines, such as epistemic humility and the primacy of practical reason.

Now in the course of his analysis of reason, Kant draws several distinctions that are crucial to the way in which he carries out his analysis and thus arrives at his ultimate position. One important distinction is between the logical and the "pure" or real use of reason.[5] Kant's analysis of reason starts with the perfectly natural thought that reason is responsible for syllogisms in logic. On Kant's account, every syllogism contains premises, which express conditions that, when satisfied, entail a conclusion, which is thereby conditioned. In this way, Kant takes syllogisms to express certain kinds of logical relations between cognitions, where reason seeks the logical (conditioning) relations that are required for a valid syllogism. But given his characterization of reason as a faculty that searches for the *totality* of conditions, which can only terminate in something *unconditioned*, in the context of logic reason must seek not only cognitions that could serve as the immediate premises for a conclusion in a syllogism, but also further premises in higher, more general syllogisms that would allow one to deduce the initial premises as conclusions. Reason's ultimate goal is thus to find premises that are unconditioned in the sense of neither requiring nor admitting further justification or explanation in terms of yet further premises. In this way, Kant thinks that reason aims to discover a series of interconnected syllogisms that would amount to a systematic body of cognitions that could qualify as science.

But reason also has a real use that pertains not to cognitions, but rather to objects. When we are given a conditioned object in experience, reason seeks its conditions, and if those conditions are themselves conditioned, reason seeks their conditions as well, since, as noted above, reason is interested in finding every condition for whatever is conditioned, and thus the totality of conditions. And the only thing that could stop reason's search for further conditions is if it could find something unconditioned, since if something is unconditioned, there is nothing that conditions it and thus nothing that could explain why it is the way that it is. Thus, if reason were able to follow a regress of conditions back

5 Note that these two uses of the term 'condition' are distinct from several other prominent uses that Kant makes of that term. For example, Kant claims that (1) space and time are the conditions under which objects are given to us, (2) the categories are the conditions under which objects are thought by us, (3) both space and time and the categories are conditions of the possibility of experience, (4) intuitions and concepts are conditions of cognition, and (5) the conditions of the possibility of synthetic a priori cognition are central to determining the fate of metaphysics. At least some of these uses may be broadly epistemic or semantic in character, depending on one's understanding of the nature of cognition.

to something that admitted of no explanation, its job would be complete and its needs satisfied. Accordingly, reason, for Kant, is a generic faculty that applies to cognitions and objects in its logical and real uses (respectively).

However, Kant also distinguishes different kinds of conditioning relations within each of these two uses of reason. The logical use of reason involves different kinds of logical conditioning relations in different kinds of syllogisms, since hypothetical syllogisms (such as modus ponens and modus tollens) clearly differ in their logical structure from categorical and disjunctive syllogisms. Similarly, the real use of reason involves different kinds of real conditioning relations. For example, Kant maintains that causality is one kind of real conditioning relation, since a cause serves as the condition of its effect, and that what we would call composition is a distinct kind of real conditioning relation, since the parts are conditions of the whole that they compose, yet without it being the case that the parts are the cause of the whole. Though Kant views several other kinds of relations as distinct kinds of conditioning relations, the examples of causality and composition clearly reveal that there are different kinds of real conditioning relations.[6]

Moreover, these distinct kinds of real conditioning relations are crucial to Kant's account of traditional metaphysics, which is concerned with, among other things, free agents, simple beings, and God. For these different kinds of real conditioning relations make possible several different ideas of reason (the world as a totality, including simples and freedom, God, and the soul) and several different kinds of unconditioned objects. For example, Kant thinks of freedom as the uncaused cause of a series of events and thus as being unconditioned with respect to causality, while he understands simples as not being composed of further parts and as thus being unconditioned with respect to their composition. And, unlike a free cause that could be conditioned with respect to its composition, or a simple that could be caused by a prior state, God alone is unconditioned in every respect, or absolutely unconditioned.[7] Because Kant distinguishes between different kinds of conditioning relations in this way, he can allow for a metaphysics that can include things that are conditioned in one respect, but unconditioned in another, along with the possibility that something is absolutely unconditioned.

6 For a more detailed account of the features and kinds of real conditioning relations, see Watkins (forthcoming a).

7 See *Critique of Pure Reason* B 381 – 3 for Kant's explicit remarks about what is unconditioned in every respect or absolutely unconditioned (as contrasted with what is not unconditioned in every respect).

Before turning to the German Romantics, we must note three further distinctive features of Kant's position. First, Kant's conception of God as unconditioned, i. e., as having no reason or ground that explains God's existence, stands in stark contrast with the view of Descartes and Spinoza, who both thought that God must be a self-caused cause (*causa sui*), or the ground of himself. Kant's argument against such a view is based on the fact that a ground (or condition) must be prior to its consequence (or what it conditions), but that nothing could be prior to itself.[8] Another way of expressing this point is to note that whereas Descartes and Spinoza maintain that the Principle of Sufficient Reason holds for all entities, including God, Kant restricts the scope of this principle, since it cannot apply to unconditioned entities such as God or free agents precisely because they are unconditioned.[9]

Second, though Kant thinks that reason moves from what is conditioned to the totality of its conditions and thus to the unconditioned, he explicitly allows (in the Antinomies) that the series of conditioning relations that reason is tracking can be either finite or infinite. That is, the unconditioned can take the form either of a terminal member of a series, which is itself therefore unconditioned (unlike all of the other members of the series, which are conditioned) or of a whole series in such a way that the series as a whole would be unconditioned (even though all of its individual members are conditioned). Thus, the generic claim that something unconditioned exists entails only that either some particular object is unconditioned or the totality of a potentially infinite series of conditioned objects is unconditioned. For example, in the case of the composition of a thing, the unconditioned could be either whatever simples constitute that thing or the *totality* of infinitely divisible parts that contribute to its constitution.

Third, it is important to note conceptual distinctions between the unconditioned, the infinite, and the absolute. One can see this clearly by noting that each one has a different contrast. The unconditioned contrasts with the conditioned, the infinite contrasts with the finite, and what contrasts with the absolute is less obvious, since it can be taken to contrast with the relative, the partial, or the incomplete, but in any case, all three of its most plausible contrasts differ from the contrast classes for the unconditioned and the infinite. This is not to deny that these concepts stand in close relations.[10] In fact, it is a central part

8 See, e. g., explicit passages in both the *Nova Dilucidatio* (AA 1:394) and *Über eine Entdeckung* (AA 8:198).

9 For further discussion of this issue, see Watkins (forthcoming b).

10 Note also that these issues get more complicated if one distinguishes further between the infinite and the unlimited, again on the grounds that they have different contrasts (the finite vs. the limited).

of my position that the German Romantics used Kant's conception of reason and (different aspects of) the logic of conditioning relations that it involves to support their (different) claims about the unconditioned and the absolute. But for that very reason, one can understand their positions and arguments only *after* one has noted the differences between the unconditioned, the infinite, and the absolute.

3 Schelling and the Unconditioned

To appreciate Schelling's views on the unconditioned, which arise quite early in his career, it is useful to have in mind the general contours of the immediate reaction to Kant's philosophy in the 1780s and early 1790s.[11] Though Kant's views were discussed at length at the time both by rationalists, like Eberhard, and by empiricists, such as Tiedemann, Feder, and Pistorius,[12] it was Karl Leonhard Reinhold more than any other who gave an accessible and sympathetic presentation of Kant's views with his influential *Letters on the Kantian Philosophy*, which started to appear, letter by letter, in 1786 and were then added to and revised before being published in book form in 1790. Though Reinhold was responsible for much of the popularity of Kant's views at the time, he both simplified and modified Kant's views with an eye toward his own philosophical system, which he developed in the early 1790s and called the *Elementarphilosophie*, which focused on the fact of consciousness and on the principle of consciousness, which was supposed to be the single first principle from which the rest of philosophy was to be derived.[13] In his *Aenesidemus*, published anonymously in 1792, Schulze then developed a sharp critique of both Kant's and Reinhold's positions, arguing that the different kinds of inferences that Kant and Reinhold wanted to draw from the representations we have were fallacious.

In 1794, Fichte published his review of the *Aenesidemus*, where he agreed with Schulze that Reinhold's principle of consciousness could not in fact be the first principle that would serve as a foundation for all of philosophy.[14] However, instead of adopting Schulze's skeptical position, he proposed that one must appeal not to a (mere) fact (*Tatsache*), as Reinhold had, but rather to an act (*Tathandlung*), since consciousness involves identity and opposition, which presuppose acts of referring and distinguishing. In the *Wissenschaftslehre*, first publish-

11 For a helpful overview, see Beiser (1987).

12 See Sassen (2000).

13 For discussion of Reinhold's views and importance at the time, see Ameriks (2006).

14 See Messina (2011).

ed late in 1794, Fichte argues that the 'I = I' must be the first principle of philosophy, since it is unconditioned with respect to both form (X = X) and content (I).[15] Thus, despite their disagreements and in virtue of their shared focus on finding an unconditioned first principle of philosophy (whether it be the principle of consciousness or the 'I = I'), Reinhold and Fichte agree that one must employ Kant's logical use of reason to identify a cognition that can be used as a premise to deduce the rest of the system of philosophy.[16]

With this background in mind, we can turn to Schelling, in particular, to his *Über die Möglichkeit einer Form der Philosophie überhaupt* in 1794 and his *Vom Ich als Prinzip der Philosophie* in 1795, which reflect an early stage in his thought, though they also contain some elements that he would remain committed to throughout his career. In these works, Schelling accepts the conclusion of Kant's argument that the existence of something conditioned entails the existence of something unconditioned. But then he identifies the unconditioned with something absolute, namely the absolute I, and makes various claims about it, for example, that it is neither an object nor a subject, claims that go well beyond anything Kant asserts.[17]

Kant's position on the unconditioned presented above suggests two questions one might raise about Schelling's view, one about his main argument, the other about the coherence of the position he ends up with. First, what argument does Schelling have for claiming that the unconditioned is also absolute? In *Über die Möglichkeit einer Form der Philosophie überhaupt*, he seems to argue first that the unconditioned principle must be unconditioned with respect to both its form and its matter and thus must be absolutely unconditioned. Here

15 One might think that Fichte's *Tathandlung* answers to Kant's notion of a real condition, while his first unconditioned principle reflects his attempt at finding the highest logical condition. In this way, one could see Fichte as respecting at least Kant's most basic distinction between logical and real conditions.

16 Note that Reinhold and Fichte are departing from Kant insofar as Kant never identifies such a principle in the first *Critique*. As Karl Ameriks has argued, Kant's argument in the first *Critique* does not take the form of a deductive system of philosophy with a single first, unconditioned principle at the top. Note also that Reinhold does not seem to be explicitly interested in identifying an unconditioned metaphysical ground of all of reality (though he does at one point pursue internal and external conditions of representations). Whether Fichte is interested in real conditioning relations is a hotly debated issue that turns on how one understands his argument in the *Wissenschaftslehre* and the notion of positing it invokes. He is definitely interested in the ground (or condition) of consciousness, but his texts do not clearly indicate what kind of ground (or condition) it is.

17 Schelling's interactions with Hegel and Hölderlin early in his career were undoubtedly extremely influential, and may help to explain his early sympathies for a Spinozistic position.

he is still clearly operating with cognitions and thus the logical use of reason, rather than with the real use of reason. While one might naturally wonder whether it makes sense to talk about the form and matter of a principle being conditioned or unconditioned, what is crucial for our first question is what comes next.[18] For Schelling then seems to argue, in a very different mode, first that only something absolute could posit[19] an absolutely unconditioned principle,[20] and second, that only "an absolutely independent original self" that is both self-positing and self-posited could be such an absolute.[21] That is, though Schelling appreciates the distinction between logical and metaphysical considerations, he seems to be arguing here that a logical absolute presupposes an ontological absolute, and this move distinguishes Schelling's position both from Kant's and from Reinhold's and Fichte's.

But how can such a move be defended? Nassar helpfully suggests that Schelling's distinction between the inner and outer form of the first principle should be understood as a distinction between "an absolutely unconditioned act" and "the formal structure of positing, which results in the principle of identity" (Nassar 2014, 169), noting that the former requires "a self-causing cause, a self-determining reality" (Nassar 2014, 169) and thus "an ontological conception of the I" (Nassar 2014, 170). That is, on her interpretation, Schelling claims that the first

18 Nassar suggests that "the conditions of knowability and certainty play no role in his [Schelling's] conception of the *Grundsatz*" (2014, 170). I agree with the claim about certainty (see note 20 below), but am skeptical about the claim regarding knowledge, since he is concerned with establishing the principle of philosophy, and philosophy involves knowledge. Fortunately, Nassar's argument does not turn on this extra claim. In fact, shortly thereafter, she returns to talking about "the unconditioned principle of all knowledge" (Nassar 2014, 173).

19 One suggestive passage for this argument is: "Now nothing can be posited absolutely other than that through which everything else is first posited, nothing can posit itself other than what contains an absolutely independent, original self, and that is posited not because it *is posited*, but rather because it is itself the *positing*. This is nothing other than the *I* originally posited by itself [*das ursprünglich durch sich selbst gesetzte* Ich], which is described [*bezeichnet*] by all of the noted criteria. For the I is posited absolutely, its being posited is determined by nothing extrinsic to it, it posits itself (through absolute causality), it is posited, not because it is posited, but because it is itself the positing" (Schelling 1976, I.1:279 – 80).

20 Nassar rightly notes (2014, 168) that Schelling departs from Fichte in not maintaining that the first principle must be known with certainty. Instead, it is enough if we have the conditional: If we are to have a system of philosophy, then..., where the skeptic can opt out by rejecting the antecedent. Schelling is thus closer to Kant on this point.

21 One can find Schelling making this second argument in the *Formschrift* as follows: "This is possible only insofar as that content is something that is originally absolutely posited, whose being posited is determined by nothing extrinsic to it, that therefore posits itself (through absolute causality)" (Schelling 1976, I.1:279 – 80).

unconditioned principle requires an internal form, which involves a significant ontological commitment. But this is precisely the step that seems to stand in need of justification. Why should we think that such a principle must have a form at all, much less an inner and outer form? By contrast, Kant does not think that the logic of *generic* real conditioning relations alone requires accepting something *absolutely* unconditioned. Instead, one would have to consider each of the particular kinds of real conditioning relations and the different objects that are unconditioned in one respect to see if any of them were also unconditioned in every respect and thus absolutely unconditioned. Viewed from Kant's perspective, there still seems to be a missing link in the argument Schelling advances.

Second, is the position that Schelling finds himself driven to ultimately coherent? After having claimed that the absolutely unconditioned must be an Absolute I, Schelling argues that this Absolute I cannot be either an object or a subject. His argument is that every object is conditioned in virtue of being related to a subject and every subject is conditioned in virtue of being related to an object, but since the Absolute cannot be conditioned in any way, it cannot be either a subject or an object.[22] Nassar notes this feature of the absolute, mentioning that for this reason the absolute "must be distinguished from both object and subject [... and] must therefore 'lie in that which cannot become a thing at all,' in an absolute self, or I" (Nassar 2014, 174). There is thus no doubt that Schelling holds this view.

But three main points are remarkable about Schelling's position here. First, it is difficult to see how to render the position intelligible. What kind of metaphysical entity could the Absolute be, if neither an object nor a subject?[23] And if something is conditioned simply in virtue of being related to something else, then it is difficult to see how the Absolute is not also conditioned and therefore not really an Absolute. For if the Absolute *posits* both the subject and the object, then it would seem to stand in a relation to both and therefore be conditioned by both. Second, even if one could carve out ontological space for something absolute that is neither object nor subject nor related to either in a way that compromises its being absolutely unconditioned, it is unclear how such a thing could be represented in consciousness, which, as Reinhold noted, necessarily

22 Schelling states quite explicitly: "because the subject is conceivable only with respect to an object, [but] the object is conceivable only with respect to the subject, neither one of the two can contain the unconditioned: for both are reciprocally conditioned by each other" (Schelling 1976, I.2:88).

23 In particular, if the Absolute is identified with a self, then it is unclear how it could not be some kind of subject.

has a subject-object structure.[24] Third, unlike Kant, Schelling seems to be operating with a single generic conception of real conditioning relations that contains very little by way of content. (Any kind of relation seems to qualify as a conditioning relation.) Thus, instead of noting different kinds of conditioning relations and investigating which kind of conditioning relation might be involved in what kind of case, as Kant does, Schelling simply looks to whether things are at all related (seemingly disregarding how specifically they are related).[25] Given this generic conception of real conditioning relations, it is no surprise that Schelling winds up with a Spinozistic system, since everything that is at all related to anything else must collapse into being a mere part of a single all-encompassing substance.[26] But if that is true, then Schelling seems to be overlooking rather than refuting significant metaphysical possibilities.

Given these points, it is tempting to think that Schelling begins by accepting Kant's generic notion of a condition and its connection to the unconditioned and then uses it to argue for the existence of something unconditioned. But by glossing over those features that distinguish different kinds of conditioning relations, he thinks that this argument immediately entails the existence of something Absolute. What he is unable to see is that this stronger version of the argument wrongly lays claim to the advantages of theft over honest toil, and, what's more, its conclusion entails a position that would seem to render the Absolute at least unrepresentable, if not also metaphysically incoherent.[27]

4 Novalis on the Unconditioned and the Absolute

Novalis's early views on the unconditioned and the absolute are a matter of considerable debate. For example, Manfred Frank and Fred Beiser, two prominent scholars who have focused on Novalis, disagree about whether he is an Absolute

24 Schelling will return to this issue later, in his *System der Transzendentalphilosophie*, where, drawing on the views of other Romantics, he will appeal to aesthetic experience.

25 For further discussion of Schelling's views regarding the unconditioned, see Watkins (2014).

26 Indeed, one wonders whether Schelling started with a commitment to Spinozism, which lead him to adopt this generic conception of condition, or rather whether he started with this kind of conception, which then naturally led to Spinozism.

27 I do not mean to suggest that the matter is hereby settled or that Schelling has nothing to say in defense of the coherence of his position. Instead, I simply note points on which his position might be vulnerable.

Idealist at all![28] Part of the reason for the disagreement stems from the fact that much of our information about Novalis's formative years derives from extensive personal notes composed in 1795 – 6, which were never intended for publication. In fact, these notes form a unity only in the rather minimal sense that a later editor placed them together into groups according to his estimation of the dates of composition and decided on *Fichte-Studien* and *Kant-Studien* as titles, since the notes gave expression to Novalis's engagement with Fichte and Kant, whose works he was studying at the time. Another part of the reason for the differences of opinion may derive from Novalis not having come to a settled position on every issue he considered, since he, more than, say, Kant, liked to explore a wide range of possible options.[29] As a result, determining Novalis's views is unusually difficult and requires more in the way of interpretive instincts than is standardly the case.

Despite these points, there is significant agreement about at least some aspects of Novalis's position. For example, there is little doubt that Novalis is critical of the possibility of systematic philosophy as such and of the kind of knowledge of first principles that would be required for it. Specifically, so-called *Konstellationsforschung*, led by Dieter Henrich in the 1980s and 90s, has shown that Novalis was heavily influenced by Reinhold's early critics in Jena in rejecting epistemological foundationalism.[30] Further, Novalis is highly critical of Fichte's account of self-consciousness, both as the foundation of a philosophical system and as an account of the phenomenon of self-consciousness itself. Finally, at some point in his career, Novalis is clearly interested in the question of how, given the significant limitations to our cognition (stemming from our capacity for reflection), we can represent the Absolute at all.[31] Though Novalis eventually comes to emphasize aesthetic experience and, as Nassar nicely brings out, ancient and modern fragments and symbols, in his early years he attributes an important role to feeling (as contrasted with reflection within self-consciousness).[32]

I suggest that we can make progress in understanding Novalis's position by considering two questions. First, is there textual evidence to support the claim (made by Beiser and Frank and denied by Nassar) that Novalis is in fact commit-

28 See Frank (1997, Vorlesung 32, 816), and Beiser (2002, Part III, ch. 3, 409).

29 Part of the reason for the dispute between Frank and Beiser may also be terminological differences in how each one understands the term 'absolute idealism'.

30 See Frank (1997, Vorlesung 32).

31 Manfred Frank emphasizes both the importance of this question and the radical novelty of Novalis's answer (1997, Vorlesung 32, 816).

32 Nassar, (2014, 56, 59, 75).

ted to a first principle that asserts the existence of something unconditioned? Nassar suggests that Novalis accepts the Absolute, but conceives of it as something essentially relational and dynamical, and thus as incompatible with it serving as an unconditioned first principle. Specifically, she remarks that: "Novalis identifies philosophy as striving after a ground and elaborates that this ground should not be thought of as a first principle, or an uncaused cause. [...] Thus, in contrast to both Kant and Fichte, Novalis's concept of a ground cannot be interpreted as an unconditioned first principle, an absolute beginning. Rather, throughout the *Fichte-Studien*, as well as in the later writings, Novalis criticizes the notion of an absolute, unconditioned beginning" (2014, 30).[33] If Nassar is right, Novalis's texts should not express support for the existence of something absolutely unconditioned.

The second question is: If we can find textual support for attributing such a position to Novalis, can Novalis's fundamental critique of systematic philosophy be rendered consistent with his commitment to a first metaphysical principle (as Frank claims) or are the two fundamentally inconsistent (as Beiser argues)? Beiser puts the charge of inconsistency as follows: "The tension between Novalis's critique of philosophy and his own philosophical ambitions runs even deeper, however. Although he doubts the possibility of a first principle, he attempts to discover one himself; and although he casts doubt on all knowledge of the absolute, he does not hesitate to speculate about its nature."[34] In short, Beiser thinks that Novalis is inconsistent when he seeks a first metaphysical principle (the unconditioned or the Absolute) after denying that we could have knowledge of it.

We can address the first question by looking at a series of passages where Novalis speaks about the absolute and the unconditioned. For example, in the *Fichte-Studien* he makes the following remark:

> What do I do when I philosophize? I think about a ground. Thus a striving after thinking about a ground underlies philosophizing. However, a ground is not a cause in the proper sense – but rather an inner constitution [*Beschaffenheit*] – connection with the whole. All philosophizing must therefore end with an absolute ground. If this were not given, if this conception were to contain an impossibility – then the drive to philosophizing would be an infinite activity – and for that reason without end, because an eternal desire for an absolute ground would be present that could be satisfied only relatively – and hence would never cease.[35]

33 In light of this, Nassar claims that Novalis is criticizing the notion of "an original unconditioned ground that lies outside of, but nonetheless conditions reality" (2014, 31).

34 Beiser (2002, 416). Nassar (2014, 31) is sympathetic to Beiser's charge.

35 Novalis, Fragment 566 (1977, 2:269).

In this passage Novalis *seems* to be saying that doing philosophy commits one to an absolute ground. However, Nassar reads the passage differently, stressing the conditionality of the entire line of thought in such a way that she can avoid seeing Novalis as committed to an unconditioned metaphysical ground.[36]

Since this passage can be read in different ways, we must consult other passages, such as the following series of notes (also from the *Fichte-Studien*):

> 76. We must explain the unconditioned by way of the conditioned, the conditioned by way of the unconditioned. [...]
> 83. [...] / Acting is the expression / the utterance / of being, of the reality, of the I, thought the expression / the utterance / of not being. The latter is in all cases limited, conditioned, the former is unlimited, unconditioned. [...]
> 88. Why free action and moral action are one – There is only One unconditioned [*Ein Unbedingtes*] of this kind – consequently they must be one and the same, since both are unconditioned.[37]

In these passages, Novalis seems to be endorsing the idea, first suggested by Kant, that explanation is possible only on the basis of conditioning relations between what is conditioned and what is unconditioned, and then noting that the former is limited while the latter is unlimited. In fact, Novalis even seems to accept the idea that free and moral action involves something practically unconditioned, an idea that Kant advances as well (albeit with various qualifications). In short, we do find some textual evidence in the *Fichte-Studien* to support the idea that Novalis accepts the unconditioned, much as Kant did.

Further, in notes contained in the so-called *Kant-Studien*, Novalis comments on the unconditioned in ways that support this interpretation. For example, in reacting to the Preface of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, Novalis notes:

> The *unconditioned*, which reason necessarily and justifiably demands in things in themselves for everything conditioned and thereby demands the series of conditions as completed, drives us beyond the limits of the world of appearances; /or beyond ourselves./
> In dogmatism the unconditioned cannot be thought without contradiction. In relative idealism the contradiction falls away.
> The *determination* of the rational concept of the unconditioned is left merely to practical reason.[38]

36 Nassar develops a fuller interpretation (2014, 273, n. 40).
37 Novalis (1977, 2:144, 146, 147). I have consulted and, in many points, followed the translation in Novalis (2003, 42, 44, 45).
38 Novalis (1977, 2:386).

Again, Novalis seems to be agreeing with Kant's basic idea that reason necessarily demands the unconditioned in light of its interest in the totality of conditioning relations that conditioned objects stand in. Granted, since the unconditioned is posited on the basis of reason rather than intuition, we cannot have cognition of the unconditioned, but reason does still demand that it exist. And he also clearly thinks, like Kant, that the unconditioned exists "beyond the limits of the world of appearances."[39] So he is thinking of the unconditioned as transcending the empirical world rather than as being a part of it (as Nassar suggests). Now it cannot be ruled out that Novalis is simply summarizing Kant's position rather than stating his own, but if Novalis is speaking in his own voice, there is sustained textual evidence that favors reading him as committed to the existence of something absolutely unconditioned, and for doing so on grounds that derive from distinctive features of Kant's position.

But, turning now to the second question, is such a position coherent, given that Novalis criticizes systematic philosophy and the first unconditioned principles that would be required for it? It is crucial here to distinguish between (broadly) epistemological and metaphysical issues. As noted above, Novalis clearly rejects epistemological foundationalism and, with it, the possibility of a systematic philosophy *insofar* as systematic philosophy requires knowledge of a single unconditioned principle on which all other knowledge would rest. However, the fact that we cannot *know* the Absolute *as a first principle* that would be the foundation of all of our knowledge, does not entail that we cannot be *committed* to the *existence* of the Absolute as a *metaphysically unconditioned* first being. If we put the point in terms that Kant has made available, one should not conflate the logical use of reason and the unconditioned *cognitions* on which a series of syllogisms would rest, on the one hand, and the real use of reason and the unconditioned *beings* on which a series of conditioned objects would depend, on the other hand. Rejecting knowledge of an unconditioned cognition does not require rejecting the possibility of an unconditioned being.

Even if the distinction between epistemological first principles and metaphysically unconditioned grounds allows one to avoid attributing an explicit contradiction to Novalis, one might still wonder whether the two elements can come together in a coherent picture. For if our cognitive limitations prevent us from knowing that something is absolutely unconditioned, how can we represent it at all? And, even if we can somehow represent it, why should we think that it actually exists in the way that we represent it? Since Novalis is aware of Kant's position, he could have been attracted to the idea that we can certainly form an

39 Beiser suggests that Novalis identifies the Absolute with God (2002, 416).

idea of an unconditioned object even if such an object cannot be given to us in sensible intuition and thus cannot be determined or cognized. Insofar as such ideas function as regulative principles, we can form representations that help us to regulate, or guide, our understanding as it forms judgments. Further, if Novalis accepts the argument that Kant attributes to reason, as he seems to, namely that if something conditioned exists, then so must the totality of conditions, and thus the unconditioned, he could well be committed to a position that closely follows Kant's in precisely these respects.

However, Novalis does seem to be making some innovative moves that go well beyond Kant. For example, he seems to think that the Absolute cannot, on his view, be represented intuitively (in sensible intuition), in agreement with Kant, or discursively (by way of concepts or ideas), because the absolute is prior to the kind of discursivity and limitation that is characteristic of concepts (and ideas). As a result, he sees the need to discover new means for representing the Absolute. Later in his career, he suggests that aesthetic experience of the Absolute is possible and that it can be represented or expressed by way of a variety of literary techniques. However, one may be able to find traces of these views in Novalis's early period as well.

Manfred Frank, however, has pointed out a different and intriguing line of argument.[40] For he has provided an analysis of Novalis's account of self-consciousness, according to which self-consciousness involves (1) reflection, which inverts (like a mirror), and thus distorts, what it represents, and (2) feeling, which provides some kind of immediate awareness of being. Accordingly, the element of feeling involved in self-consciousness provides assurance of the existence of something that is properly characterized as Absolute, since it is prior to all discursivity and limitation. Frank also suggests that, on Novalis's view, if one were able to invert the representation that one gets from reflection in self-consciousness, one could recover a representation that accurately reflects its object prior to its original inversion, just as one can use two mirrors to have one's right hand appear on the right rather than the left side of one's body. Needless to say, this model would need to be worked out in detail, but it can seem to provide interesting new answers to central questions involved in the foundation of Novalis's account.

Taken together, what these points reveal is that Novalis's views do in fact involve the conditioned and the unconditioned and emerge from his reflections not only on Fichte, but also on Kant. Further, Novalis seems to go beyond Kant in at least two significant respects. First, he seems to reject Kant's idea that reason's

40 Frank (1997, Vorlesung 32).

ideas are representations of unconditioned objects, since he thinks that these ideas cannot adequately represent their objects, though he may also not have presented much of an explicit argument in defense of this view (since he merely claims rather than argues that the absolute is prior to all discursivity). Second, his reflections on how one might be able to represent the absolute in ways that are neither discursive nor intuitive represent a fundamentally novel systematic position. It is true that Kant emphasizes aesthetic experience in the third *Critique* and notes there that it plays a fundamental role within his systematic philosophy, but he does not attribute the same role to it that Novalis does. Still, the main point holds, namely that Novalis does directly engage with Kant's position on the unconditioned in a way that leads to central features of his account.

5 Friedrich Schlegel on the Absolute

Friedrich Schlegel may well be both the least and the most philosophical of the German Romantics. He is the least philosophical in the sense that he devotes less time to narrowly philosophical topics than he does to literary issues such as poetry. Yet he is the most philosophical in the sense that the conclusions that he draws from premises he shares with other German Romantics are far more wide-ranging and radical. Specifically, from his rejection of a foundationalist epistemology and first principle of philosophy, he infers not simply that coherentism and a monistic position reminiscent of Spinoza follow, but also that philosophy itself must begin *in medias res* and with infinitely many propositions (rather than with only one) and be fully historical and regulative, rather than a priori and constitutive. He argues further that philosophy cannot be systematic and must instead find expression in fragments and in symbolic representations such as allegory, wit, and irony.[41]

Now it is commonplace to recognize that Schlegel was heavily influenced early in his career by a number of post-Kantian figures, such as Fichte (before their break), Schelling, Novalis, Niethammer, and, in 1797, Schleiermacher.[42] What is noted less often, however, is that Schlegel may also have been reacting to Kant,[43] and, what's more, he may have been accepting central elements of Kant's position on the issue of the unconditioned, rather than rejecting Kant's position, as is sometimes thought.

41 See also Frank's assessment (1997, 863).

42 For excellent accounts of the figures who influenced Schlegel, see Frank (1997, Vorlesung 34) and Beiser (2002, 436, 443).

43 Both Frank and Beiser do not explicitly mention any positive influence by Kant.

To see this line of influence, it is essential to understand the basic logic underlying Schlegel's account of what he calls "*Wechselerweis*". His first idea, which he shares with Niethammer and others, is that there can be no first principle from which everything else is derived. But rather than infer that therefore nothing can be known (since there is no first principle from which anything would have to be derived) and that therefore our justifications must ground out in belief, as Jacobi maintains, Schlegel suggests that propositions (along with the realities that are expressed in them) both must be justified and can be justified, but only if they are mutually supporting (albeit in complex ways that involve the finite and the infinite and the unity of the two in the absolute).[44] As he puts it: "What Jacobi offers for this: 'that every proof [*Erweis*] already presupposes something as proven' (*Spin.* p. 225) holds only against those thinkers who proceed from a single proof. However, what if a reciprocal proof [*Wechselerweis*] that is unconditioned from without, but reciprocally conditioned and conditioning, were now the ground of philosophy?"[45] What we find Schlegel suggesting is that the propositions of philosophy can be unconditioned (or unjustified) *from without*, but they are not therefore completely unconditioned (or unjustified), since they can be (1) conditioned by each other reciprocally and (2) reciprocally conditioning each other.

What is striking about this account is two-fold. First, the basic term that Schelling is using to describe his position is that of conditioning, just as Kant does with the logical use of reason, since for Kant the premises of a syllogism condition the conclusion. Thus, Kant is the distinctive source of the fundamental terms of Schlegel's account.[46] Second, though Schlegel accepts that the propositions of philosophy can condition each other reciprocally (and must do so to be justified), he seems to reject the idea that such propositions could be either conditioned "from without" (e. g., by an unconditioned first principle) or unconditioned. Now this might seem to go against Kant in a fundamental way, since Kant insists that reason requires (or demands) the unconditioned. However,

44 As for the necessity of justification, Schlegel remarks: "The Absolute itself is indemonstrable, but its *philosophical assumption* must be justified analytically and established [*erwiesen*]" (Schlegel 1958, 2:512, No. 71).

45 Schlegel (1958, 2:72). Note that the very term "Wechselerweis" suggests not a problematic circularity, but rather an abundance of justificatory force. This word choice reflects his response to skeptical attacks based on circular reasoning.

46 Schlegel also uses Kant's terms of the conditioned and the unconditioned in one of his characterizations of irony. Irony "contains and incites a feel of the indissoluable conflict of the unconditioned and the conditioned, of the impossibility and necessity of complete communication" (Schlegel 1958, 2:159, No. 108).

here one must recall that Kant allowed for two different ways in which something could be unconditioned, namely either by a series with a terminal member that was, unlike the other members of the series, itself unconditioned or by a series all of whose members were conditioned, but where the series itself was unconditioned. With this distinction in mind, it is clear that Schlegel could be developing a version of Kant's second alternative, since the *Wechselerweis* is a set of mutually justifying propositions, where the set as a whole has no justification external to it. So, again, Schlegel is in fact accepting rather than rejecting the logic of conditioning relations that Kant introduced (though the notion of a reciprocal conditioning relation does not sit well with Kant's theory of syllogisms, which envisions entailment relations that necessarily go in only one direction).

Now Nassar has argued that Kant's views on the unconditioned cannot have played the role that I have attributed to it in Schlegel's development, since on her view, Schlegel rejects the unconditioned in both its epistemological and metaphysical guises. Nassar summarizes her interpretation of Schlegel's position as follows:

> Schlegel's fundamental critique of an unconditioned ground or principle has to do with the fact that the unconditioned must exist outside the sphere of conditions. [...] This is problematic for several reasons. First, it instantiates a dualism between the unconditioned and the system such that the unconditioned cannot be expressed in the system. In addition, it develops (or is based on) a mode of thought which externalizes and objectifies the unconditioned. Finally, it maintains a dogmatic stance toward the unconditioned – herein the unconditioned is something external to and other than the cognizing subject. Unlike the unconditioned, the infinite [...] is not external or opposed to the system – rather, it is one of the elements of the *Wechselerweis* (the other being the finite). (2014, 119)

I must confess that I am not yet convinced by these three critical points. If one asserts that there is a first unconditioned principle, such as an axiom, from which other propositions follow, there is a clear epistemological difference between the ways in which the axioms and the non-axiomatic propositions are known (namely immediately vs. mediately), but it is not obvious why that difference should be pernicious. Insofar as the axiom along with its consequences amounts to an axiomatic system, it is difficult to see why the axiom is not somehow expressed "in" the system. Along similar lines, one might not think that an axiom necessarily "externalizes" or "objectifies" what it is about, as Nassar's second point claims (though further clarification of these notions could shed light on what is problematic with such a commitment). Finally, accepting an axiom may not be tantamount to dogmatism. For if the axiom in question is a self-evident proposition, one might think that its being self-evident suffices to avoid the charge of dogmatism, even if one might still acknowledge the need

for an explanation of what makes that proposition self-evident (e. g., in terms of the clarity and distinctness of one's perceptions of it).

But more importantly, Nassar also argues that Schlegel rejects the unconditioned as an ontological posit in favor of the infinite that, to become actual, must move out of indeterminacy and become determinate and thus finite. Schlegel's radical historicism and dynamism can certainly seem to be at odds with the unconditioned, simply because everything is historical and thus mutable and one might think that the unconditioned would have to be eternal. However, even here one might pause. For one, Schlegel himself seems to think that the infinite is never fully instantiated in the finite, even if it reveals itself through the finite (sometimes as what is *not* there). For another Schlegel seems at times (e. g., in the *Kölner Vorlesungen*) to equate the infinite with the divine. And insofar as the divine is unconditioned in all respects, the infinite might simply be one respect in which the divine is unconditioned, especially if one disassociates some of the extraneous elements that Schlegel seems to think go along with the unconditioned. So perhaps, despite what he can seem to say, Schlegel may accept something unconditioned after all, and thus be closer to Kant's position on this point as well.

6 Conclusion

What has emerged from considering the views of Schelling, Novalis, and Friedrich Schlegel is that central aspects of their fundamental positions not only are inspired by Kant's philosophy in general, but also make specific use of Kant's distinctive framework of conditions and the unconditioned. Schelling accepts, with Kant, that there must be something unconditioned, and then goes beyond Kant's position by arguing that an absolutely unconditioned principle can be posited only by a self-positing, self-posited self that is absolutely independent and neither an object nor a subject, even if it may be difficult to understand what such a thing might be. Novalis, who is influenced by others in Jena at the time in rejecting a foundationalist epistemology and with it knowledge of first principles, is, like Kant, committed to the existence of something unconditioned, which is a first metaphysical principle that is nonetheless consistent with his fundamental critique of systematic philosophy. Schlegel's distinctive notion of a *Wechselerweis* entails an unconditioned principle that involves a plurality of mutually supporting (conditioned and conditioning) principles, a position that is not only consistent with, but also made possible by the conditioning relations that Kant introduced.

However, what has also emerged from considering these three German Romantics is that, despite Kant's pivotal influence, they end up with positions that depart from his in significant ways. By not recognizing the different kinds of conditioning relations that Kant articulates, Schelling ends up with a Spinozistic monism that overlooks a number of potentially attractive metaphysical options. Novalis goes well beyond Kant insofar as he seeks ways of representing the unconditioned other than through ideas of reason, where aesthetic experience, different literary devices, and a novel account of self-consciousness come to play dominant roles, even in the absence of decisive objections to reason's ideas of particular unconditioned objects. Finally, even though Schlegel's notion of a *Wechselerweis* makes use of conditioning relations, that notion itself is inconsistent with Kant's understanding of how conditions work in syllogisms and suggests that Schlegel may be redefining what conditioning relations are so that he is, again, more radical than his Romantic brethren. In these ways, we can see that Kant's relation to early German Romanticism reveals fundamental similarities coupled with interesting differences.

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