

HEGEL'S CRITIQUE OF KANT'S STANDPOINT OF FINITUDE

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My central aims here are (1) to explicate and defend the claim made by Hegel and other post-Kantians that there is a contradiction at the heart of Kant's theoretical philosophy, and (2) to provide insight into the nature of Hegel's system by seeing how it is formed in response to this real problem in Kant. Kant is committed to a real contradiction, I claim, with his appeal to affection by the thing in itself. This appeal amounts to the claim that our reception of empirical content is *unconditioned* by the understanding's activity. The claim that contradicts this emerges in Kant's clearest explanation of how the categories make experience possible. We can see that they do so, he argues, by seeing that our reception of empirical content is *conditioned* by the understanding's activity. Kant's followers J.S. Beck and Fichte champion Kant's latter thought. I claim that their readings are true of Kant's best thought, even though Kant rejects them. He only rejects their interpretations because he cannot abandon the former thought. But Beck and Fichte see, as Kant does not, that a commitment to thing-in-itself affection in light of Kant's explanation of how the categories make experience possible would constitute what Hegel later calls "a self-contradictory ambiguity." Hegel's critique of Kant's "standpoint of finitude" diagnoses why Kant is led to affirm both of these incompatible thoughts. The philosophical motivation behind the shape Hegel's system takes comes to light through an examination of this diagnosis.

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1.0 THE *CRITIQUE*'S CONTRADICTION AS THE KEY TO POST-KANTIANISM: REVERSING LONGUENESSE'S ANSWER TO "KANT ODER HEGEL?"

This idealism therefore becomes the same kind of self-contradictory ambiguity as Skepticism... it fails equally with Skepticism to bring together its contradictory thoughts of pure consciousness being all reality, while the extraneous impulse or sensations and ideas are equally reality. ... It is involved in a direct contradiction; it asserts essence to be a duality of opposed factors, the *unity of apperception* and equally a *Thing*; whether the Thing is called an extraneous impulse, or an empirical or sensuous entity, or a Thing-in-itself, it still remains the same, i.e. extraneous to that unity.

- Hegel, 1807: 144¹

This thing in itself was therefore the point of departure beyond which Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* could never move, and because of which it *had to* fail as an independent science. Right from the start one urged it to altogether discard this thing in itself... Kant appeared ambivalent... statements are contradicted by others... Kant, therefore, remained bogged down in what was for him an insurmountable contradiction.

- Schelling, 1841: 123-4

¹ In all quotes, italics indicate emphasis in the original, emboldened emphasis is my own.

Thesis statement: There is a contradiction between the Transcendental Analytic and the Transcendental Aesthetic of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In the Analytic, Kant explains how the categories can be conditions of the possibility of experience. In the B Deduction, he does so via what is in effect an appeal to

(P1): Our reception of empirical content is conditioned by the understanding's activity.

But **(a)** Kant is committed to affection by the thing in itself, and **(b)** such affection is equivalent to

~ (P1): Our reception of empirical content is *unconditioned* by the understanding's activity.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Kant's master thought in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is that the categories "are conditions of the possibility of experience, and are thus also valid *a priori* of all objects of experience."² I'm concerned in this paper with three things. First, the fundamental *agreement* between the readings of this master thought given on the one hand by J.S. Beck and Fichte in the 1790s, and those given by Schelling and Hegel after 1799 on the other. They agree that in the B Deduction Kant effects the proof for the quoted thesis by articulating there *a concept of sensibility* issuing in (P1) above.

Second, the fundamental *difference* between the Beck-Fichte reading of the *Critique's* theory of sensibility as a whole, and the Schelling-Hegel reading of the same. The difference is that Beck and Fichte *assume* that the theory of sensibility yielded by the B Deduction coheres with the theory of sensibility given in the Aesthetic. This assumption impels them to deny Kant's commitment to affection by the thing in itself. They see, and Schelling and Hegel think that they are right to see, that such affection would amount to $\sim(P1)$. Kant's 1799 rejection of Beck and Fichte thus impels Schelling and Hegel to abandon the assumption of the *Critique's* coherence.

Third, the difference between Longuenesse's response to this 1799 event and Hegel's (§3.3). Longuenesse holds that the *Critique* coheres, that Kant is committed to (P1), and committed to affection by the thing in itself. To deny Kant's commitment to $\sim(P1)$, she must thus deny **(b)**, that affection by the thing in itself is equivalent to our reception of empirical content

² B161. Translations from the *Critique* are from the Guyer / Wood edition.

being unconditioned by the understanding's activity.³ I will argue that this is implausible, and amounts to solipsism (§3.2).

Throughout, "is coherent" means, "does not suffer a real contradiction."

1.1.1 The new problem of affection as the key to post-Kantianism

A proof that even the friends of the *Critique* don't know what they are about is that they don't know where they ought to locate the object that produces sensation.

- Beck to Kant, 6.17.1794. Zweig, 1999: 480

Kant opens the *Critique* speaking of "objects that stimulate our senses and in part themselves produce representations, in part bring the activity of our understanding into motion." (B1) It is, as Beck reports, "certainly important to a great many" post-Kantians, whether Kant means the "object" spoken of here to be an appearance or a thing in itself. (Zweig, 1999: 513) Beck and Fichte stake their fates on the claim that Kant means an *appearance* to be the affecting object.

They do so, because they see that the *Critique* would be subject to a real contradiction if Kant intends the affecting object to be a thing in itself. The contradiction that *they* see the *Critique* in danger of is that between (P1) and ~(P1) of my thesis statement. It is Beck and Fichte who offer the formulation of "the problem of affection" I give there. In the two major sections of this paper (§2, §3), I will argue, in turn, that Kant does in the *Critique* commit himself to both (P1) and ~(P1).

³ See (1998) *Kant and the Capacity to Judge* (KCJ), pp.299-300.

Beck and Fichte are defenders of the *Critique's* coherence.⁴ The value of their work for critics of the latter like myself, however, is that it allows a formulation of the problem of affection that renders useless the Kantian's appeal to the usual "escape clause."⁵ This latter is the appeal to Kant's entitlement to "think" the causal influence of the thing in itself. It accompanies the concession to the post-Kantian objector that Kant is not entitled to "know" either the thing in itself or this relation of affection thought to hold between it and the subject. An escape cannot be made through this appeal, however, if Kant's master thought indeed involves an appeal to (P1), and yet his appeal to thing-in-itself affection indeed implies \sim (P1). *That* contradiction is real.

Beck and Fichte stand in thorough agreement with Jacobi's claim that one is "unable to stay within" the *Critique's* system with "the presupposition" of affection by the thing in itself. In bringing new clarity to the problem, they strengthen the force of that claim. They differ, however, in that Jacobi had also insisted that one "could not enter the system" *without* this presupposition.⁶ Jacobi, G. Schulze ("Aenesidemus") and Maimon all claim the *Critique's* incoherence, citing its appeal to affection by the thing in itself. Beck and Fichte defend the *Critique's* coherence by denying that Kant *ever made* the presupposition of thing-in-itself affection. Appropriately, they attempt to justify this denial by offering interpretations of B1 - the system's entry point. Kant talks there of "**objects** that stimulate our senses." "What this term

⁴ Throughout, I'm speaking only of pre-1799 Beck and Fichte. In 1800, Fichte no longer counts himself or "Prof. Beck, author of the "Standpoint Theory," among the members of the Kantian school, just as Kant too distinguishes himself from this author," and from Fichte himself. (Fichte, 1994: 189n)

⁵ Van Cleve (1999), *Problems from Kant*, p.137.

⁶ From Jacobi's 1787 "On Transcendental Idealism," an Appendix to *David Hume über den Glauben, oder Idealismus und Realismus. Ein Gespräch*, selection translated in Sasson, 2000: 173.

signifies for Kant,” Fichte insists and Beck with him, is *not*, as Jacobi thought, a thing in itself, but rather an appearance.⁷

Kant, however, accuses Beck’s reading of amounting to “an exegesis that would explain away sensibility.”⁸ Similarly, in the “Declaration concerning Fichte’s *Wissenschaftslehre*” of August 7, 1799, Kant insists that “the *Critique* is to be taken *literally* in what it says about sensibility” in the same sentence in which he rejects “the *standpoint* (of Beck or of Fichte)” (Zweig, 1999: 560). These rejections, in conjunction with Kant’s endorsement of J. Schulze in 1797, confirm Kant’s commitment to affection by the thing in itself.⁹ They show how important it is to Kant to hold on to a conception of sensibility that suffers affection by the thing in itself.

Now, Schelling and Hegel *agree* with Beck and Fichte on the following: Kant’s B Deduction explanation of how the categories make experience possible is incompatible with the idea that we are affected by a thing in itself.¹⁰ Because of this agreement, Kant’s rejection of

⁷ See Fichte’s 1797 “Second Introduction to the *Wissenschaftslehre*”, in Fichte, 1994: 72-3, and Fichte, 1988: 420.

See J.S. Beck’s 1796 *The Standpoint from which the Critical Philosophy is to be Judged*, in di Giovanni and Harris, 2000: 204-49, especially p.230, and Zweig, 1999: 513, and also 480, 514-5, and 518.

⁸ See Beck’s letter to Kant of 7.20.1797 in Zweig, 1999: 514.

⁹ Kant answers his question, “which one of the disputants has really interpreted at least the main points of my system in the way I want them to be interpreted?” in the “Open Declaration” to Schlettwein of 5.29.1797. Schlettwein had specifically asked whether “Reinhold, Fichte, Beck, or someone else was the correct interpreter.” (Zweig, 1999: 510-1. Fichte notes Kant’s endorsement in §6 of the *Second Introduction*, complaining of J. Schulze, “Over and over again, he expresses his agreement with Herr Eberhard’s assertion *that the objective ground of appearances lies in something that is a thing in itself.*” (Fichte, 1994: 65) (See next note.)

¹⁰ We’ll see in §3.2 that the goal of §6 of Fichte’s *Second Introduction* is to defend his claim that Kant is only committed to (P1). Its point, that is, is to deny Kant’s commitment to thing-in-itself affection and (equivalently for Fichte) \sim (P1). Hegel takes Fichte’s (P1)-defending reading as true to the text of Kant’s Deduction. This is shown especially by how Hegel opens the Preface to *The Difference between Fichte’s and Schelling’s Systems of Philosophy*: “In the principle of the deduction of the categories Kant’s philosophy is authentic idealism; and it is this principle that Fichte extracted in a purer, stricter form.” (Hegel, 1801: 79) And “This principle is most definitely articulated in [Kant’s transcendental] deduction.” (80) Cf. pp.69, 74, 120-2 of Hegel’s 1802 *Faith and Knowledge*. These are texts written when allied with Schelling. And see especially the words “more consistent” at p.27 of the 1812/16 *Science of Logic*: “In its more consistent form, transcendental idealism did recognize the nothingness of the spectral *thing-in-itself*,

Beck and Fichte impels Schelling and Hegel to turn resolutely critical of Kant's thinking. We need to examine and evaluate this agreement, then, to evaluate this critical turn against Kant. We'll find the *justification* for Hegel's critique of Kant in this agreement. Longuenesse, we'll see, has missed it.

Fichte, and especially Beck, find the key to Kant's explanation of *how* the categories make experience possible in the theory of sensibility yielded by the B Deduction. The key component of this reading, we'll see in §2.1, is the following thesis about the Aesthetic's forms of intuition: they can only *be* the forms of intuition they are in the Aesthetic, forms capable of receiving empirical manifolds, *through* a unity supplied by the understanding's activity.¹¹ The *Critique's* critics hold that the Aesthetic presents us with the contradictory of this claim: that our forms of intuition receive the "content" or "matter" of empirical cognition *prior to* the activity of the understanding through which experience is made possible.

Beck's *Standpoint* aims to show the *Critique's* critics that it is not contradictory. Its big idea is to *begin* with the theory of sensibility presented in the Deduction and only *then* go on to explain the doctrine of the Aesthetic. (Zweig, 1999: 480) The *Critique* only *appears* contradictory to its critics, Beck contends, because *its* method of presentation is the reverse of this order. (Beck, 1796: especially 219 and 236, also pp.209, 226, 231)

this abstract shadow divorced from all content left over by critical philosophy, and its goal was to destroy it completely."

¹¹ See here especially what Beck says about space at BKH, pp.220-1, 225, 236. Cf. the phrase Beck uses as he explains to Kant his answer to Jacobi's question (which object affects us?) at C, p.513, "determinations which I receive by means of the original activity of the understanding." See Fichte, IW, p.73, and §2 of his (1795) "Outline of the Distinctive Character of the *Wissenschaftslehre*," where "sensation has been deduced as an action of the I," in EPW, p.252. See also the deduction of space and time there. Hegel agrees with Beck and Fichte that Kant himself affirms this about his forms of intuition. This is patent at FK, pp. 69, 74, 120-2.

Beck's mistake, however, and Fichte's too, is to *assume* that the Aesthetic *has* to be consistent with what they find Kant doing in the Deduction.

We must agree, therefore, that it is not *prior* to the synthesis, but *in* it, that space is a 'manifold of homogeneous parts'... That this exegesis is in conformity with the intention of the *Critique* as set out in the Transcendental Aesthetic – of this we cannot be more firmly convinced.
(Beck, 1796: 236)

Beck and Fichte are right to agree with Jacobi's claim that the *Critique's* affecting object *cannot* be a thing in itself. Assuming the *Critique's* coherence, they make the mistake of inferring that its affecting object *is not* a thing in itself. After falling from his favor (Zweig, 1999: 515), Beck pleads to Kant,

It never occurred to me to try to construct an exegesis that would explain away sensibility. As I said, I could not close my eyes to the light I glimpsed when the idea came to me, to start from the standpoint of the categories and to connect what you are especially concerned with in your Transcendental Aesthetic (space and time) with the categories. Herr Reinhold has corrected you, when you said: Space is an a priori intuition; his expert opinion was that you ought rather to have said, "The representation of space is an intuition." But I show him that space itself is a pure intuition, that is, the original synthesis of the understanding on which objective connecting... rests.
(Zweig, 1999: 514; cf. Beck, 1796: 236)

The incompatibility between the concept of sensibility yielded by the Deduction, and the concept of a sensibility that would be affected by the thing in itself, is quite clear to Beck and Fichte. So much so, that they find the idea that Kant assumed thing-in-itself affection quite impossible to believe. If he did, Fichte bemoans, "then Kant would be in utter contradiction with himself, and this would be obvious to everyone." Giving his opinion of Reinhold's suggestion that "Kant had given even a hint that he posited the origin of external sensation in *something-in-itself distinct from the I*," Fichte responds, "I consider *this* to be impossible; it contradicts Kant's whole system at every single point, as well as contradicting the clear declarations which he has

repeated a hundred times.”¹² And, in the process of his eleven page proof that Kant is *not* committed to thing-in-itself affection in §6 of the *Second Introduction* itself,

Until such time as Kant explicitly declares, in so many words, that he derives sensation from an impression produced by the thing in itself, or, to employ his own terminology, that sensations have to be accounted for within philosophy by appealing to a transcendental object that exists in itself outside us, I will continue to refuse to believe what these interpreters tell us about Kant. But if he does make such a declaration, then I would sooner take the Critique of Pure Reason to be the product of a most remarkable accident than the work of a human mind.¹³

But of course, such a declaration was forthcoming. It is precisely what turns Schelling and Hegel resolutely against Kantianism. For they agree with Beck and Fichte on the incompatibility the latter two perceive: Kant explains how the categories make experience possible *through* a certain conception of sensibility. The forms of intuition pertaining to this sensibility require the understanding’s activity to be what they are. This sensibility is thus incompatible with any concept of sensibility that would suffer affection by a thing in itself. This is so, because the reception of empirical content by the forms of intuition pertaining to the latter sensibility would be *unconditioned* by the understanding’s activity. (They agree to the gloss on what thing-in-itself affection amounts to in **(b)** of my thesis statement above.)

Since Schelling and Hegel agree with Beck and Fichte on this, they see Kant’s rejection of Beck and Fichte as confirmation of Jacobi’s, G. Schulze’s and Maimon’s view that the *Critique* suffers real contradiction. Their reading of the *Critique* after 1799 is then guided by the

¹² From Fichte’s letter to Reinhold of 7.4.1797, announcing his *Second Introduction*. (Fichte, 1988: 420) As we’ll see in §3.2, the occasion for the *Second Introduction* is Reinhold’s challenge to Fichte’s claim that Kant’s and Fichte’s systems are identical. The “fundamental difference” between them, Reinhold claims, is Kant’s commitment to thing-in-itself affection. (Fichte, 1994: 64-5)

¹³ Fichte, 1994: 71. Compare all of pp.65-76. Contrast the quoted text to the post-1799 text of Hegel’s, Hegel, 1802: 74: “with respect to sensations and their empirical reality nothing remains but to think that sensation comes from the things in themselves.”

following question, at once critical and diagnostic: “How is a real contradiction at the heart of the *Critique* to be explained?” (See my epigraphs.)

My thesis is that Schelling and Hegel were right to take this lesson from Kant’s rejection of Beck and Fichte. My goal is to motivate once more their question for the *Critique* by bringing the assumption of its coherence into question.

In taking this view, I’m aiming at a thorough reversal of Longuenesse’s position on the question, “Kant oder Hegel?” My engagement with and critique of her reading of Kant will be central here. She holds that the *Critique* coheres, that we should reject Hegel’s critique of Kant’s “standpoint of finitude,” and that we should rather “retreat once and for all into the Analytic of all three *Critiques*.”¹⁴ As we’ll see, I’m in fundamental agreement with her reading of the *Critique*’s Analytic. My claim, however, is that this true reading fails to cohere with the features of Kant’s theory of sensibility required for thing-in-itself affection. Hegel’s critique of Kant is predicated on the claim that Kant’s commitment to affection by the thing in itself leads him into contradiction. Because, as we’ll see, Longuenesse fails to see anything worth criticizing in this commitment of Kant’s, she fails to comprehend the motivation for Hegel’s critique. She thus misses its nature, its force, and its necessity. My focus on the fate of Beck and Fichte’s readings is designed to illuminate all three.

¹⁴ Longuenesse, “Point of View of Man or Knowledge of God”, in Longuenesse, 2007: 189. In both this paper and “Hegel on Kant on Judgment,” also in Longuenesse, 2007, she considers, but finds “every reason to doubt” Hegel’s critique of Kant, along with his “efforts to provide a justification for the transition from the standpoint of finite consciousness to the standpoint of the absolute” (2007: 217, cf. 191).

1.1.2 The Critique's Contradiction

The interpretations of Kant given by Beck and Fichte are relevantly like the modern interpretations given by Longuenesse and McDowell.¹⁵ The likeness between Fichte's and Longuenesse's readings has not been lost on Longuenesse's critics. They infer from this likeness that Kant would reject Longuenesse's reading, and for the same reason that he rejected Fichte's.¹⁶ In §3.1, I'll argue that this argument is sound. I contend, however, that the significance of its conclusion should be reversed: we should not return to the concept of sensibility Kant holds on to in rejecting the reading of the Deduction Longuenesse shares with Fichte. This is the sensibility needed for receiving content from a thing in itself, a concept of sensibility contradicting the concept of sensibility yielded by the B Deduction. Rather, Kant's reason for rejecting these readings, I say, marks the point at which a thorough critique of the Critique should ensue. In §3.2, I'll be quite concerned to distinguish the likeness of Longuenesse's reading to Beck's and Fichte's from the crucial sense in which they're unlike. She retains, while they, to their great credit, expel, the existence of the thing in itself (see §2.4).

What Beck's, Fichte's, Longuenesse's and McDowell's interpretations all share is as follows. They all share a certain reading of how Kant in the B Deduction works out his thesis that the categories, the forms of unity supplied by the activity of the understanding, "are

¹⁵ Longuenesse remarks on how her reading aligns with McDowell's view in her 2005 *Kant and the Human Standpoint*, pp.38n.30, 141n.41. On p.38 she claims that "Kant was right to insist on this distinction [between receptivity and spontaneity], and... one of the benefits of my interpretation is its making clearer how Kant could remain true to this distinction while radically challenging what we have come to call, after Sellars, 'the Myth of the Given.'" I'll be challenging both parts of this statement, in §2.2 and §3.2 respectively. I incline more towards Sellars' view that Kant is "certainly not" free of Mythical Givenness. (Sellars, 1956: §1)

¹⁶ See Allison, 2000: 75-6; Sedwick, 2000: 89-90; Fichant, 1997: 24, n.11; and, at least hinting at the same argument, Pippin, 1997: 322-3. For Longuenesse's attempt to preempt the strike, see Longuenesse, 1998: 300. For her denials of the likeness, see Longuenesse, 2005: 6, 37-8, 65-6.

conditions of the possibility of experience, and are thus also valid *a priori* of all objects of experience.”¹⁷ They all find Kant arguing, not only that these forms of unity condition the empirical content given through sensibility, but something further. They all find him arguing there that these forms of unity must condition the *very getting* of empirical content *as it is given* through sensibility, or the very *receiving* of that content. Kant shows that the categories are universally and necessarily valid for all that comes before the senses, they claim, by showing them to be conditions of the possibility of the reception of empirical manifolds. This shared thesis is (P1) from my opening statement of the contradiction.

(P1): The understanding’s activity conditions our reception of empirical content.¹⁸

I agree with these four interpreters that Kant’s master thought requires, and that he himself affirms, (P1). As I stated in opening, my thesis is that Kant is committed to the real contradiction between (P1) and ~(P1) below. I hold that **(a)** he is committed to affection by the thing in itself, and that **(b)** such affection is equivalent to

~(P1): Our reception of empirical content is *unconditioned* by the understanding’s activity.

¹⁷ These words at B161 close the third paragraph, and with it the first partition of §26. This section, and indeed this paragraph and its footnote (B160n), anchors these four interpretations. See especially Longuenesse, 1998: 9, ch.8; McDowell, 2009a: 28, n.10.

¹⁸ Beck, Fichte, and Longuenesse all find Kant arguing for the following thesis: the understanding’s *activity* supplies the unity that conditions the reception of empirical content. (By “activity” I refer always to the “transcendental synthesis” of Kant’s *Critique*; the claim of these interpreters, then, is that Kant’s *transcendental* activity conditions or makes possible *empirical* passivity. It is all to the good if the reader exclaims, “I don’t know what that means!”: determining its meaning yielded post-Kantian philosophy. If Hegel is right, Kant didn’t fully grasp its meaning either.) McDowell recommends a conception of experience which involves a *passive* actualization of the understanding’s unity in sensibility. Since he aligns this thought with his reading of Hegel’s *critique* of Kant, however, this doesn’t mark a disagreement with the former three with regard to Kant’s view. Hence the wording here in P1. In any case, our concern from here on out will only be with the former three.

I'll first sketch the justification for finding Kant committing himself to (P1) in his argument for the B Deduction's conclusion. I'll be extremely brief here, though I realize most Kantians deny that Kant is committed to (P1), and hold him to only be committed to \sim (P1). My focus in this paper, however, is my quarrel with Beck, Fichte, and Longuenesse. These three take Kant to be committed to (P1) only. My main target of course is what is shared by both "(P1)-only" and " \sim (P1) only" parties: the thought that the *Critique* coheres.

More traditional, anti-Fichtean Kantians might bid me *adieu* at this point. If they do read on to §3.1, however, they'll see that I at least agree with Longuenesse's critics on one point: Kant *does* reject Fichte's reading, and *would* reject Longuenesse's, *because* he is committed to \sim (P1), which both Fichte and Longuenesse deny (Fichte, 1994: §6; Longuenesse, 1998: 299).

1.2 THE ACTUALITY AND SUPERIORITY OF KANT'S COMMITMENT TO (P1): THE SPECULATIVE AND REFLECTIVE SYLLOGISMS (1.2.1-2), HEGEL'S CRITIQUE OF KANT AS EXPLAINING KANT'S COMMITMENT TO THE LATTER (1.2.3), AND THE PROGRESS BEYOND KANT MADE BY BECK AND FICHTE (1.2.4)

1.2.1 The speculative syllogism

The four listed interpreters and I essentially see (P1) as the conclusion of the following two-premise argument. I call it "the speculative syllogism," and present it symbolically below.

Its first, uncontroversial premise is the thesis of the Aesthetic: space and time, as *a priori* forms of sensible intuition lying in the subject, are conditions of the possibility of the reception

of empirical manifolds. Read “>” for this syllogism as “is a condition of the possibility of.” (1s): (FI > REM).

The second premise presents our controversial reading of the *synthesis speciosa* or synthesis of the transcendental imagination of §24. Kant argues here as follows. *Because* there are *a priori* forms of sensible intuition, this synthesis, which “is still an exercise of spontaneity,” can “determine the form of sense *a priori*.” This *a priori* “effect of the understanding on sensibility” must be read, we claim, as asserting the following thesis: this synthesis of the understanding is a condition of the forms of intuition *being* what they are in the Aesthetic, namely, conditions of the possibility of the reception of empirical manifolds. (2s): (SU > FI).

(P1) follows as the conclusion of these two premises: (SU > FI), and (FI > REM), *therefore* (SU > REM): “a synthesis of the understanding is a condition of the possibility of the reception of empirical manifolds.” Equivalently, “the understanding’s activity conditions the reception of empirical content.” I’ll note the controversy over the claim that Kant himself draws this same conclusion in his §26 in a moment.

The speculative syllogism

(1s)	FI > REM	(Transcendental Aesthetic)
(2s)	SU > FI	(§24’s “effect of the understanding on sensibility”)
(P1)	∴ SU > REM	(§26.3, B160n’s “formal intuition” = Aesthetic’s FOI)

This, then, is how we see the Deduction as discharging its task. The principle of Kant’s transcendental deductions generally is this: a representation (here, the category) can only be shown to be *a priori*, or equivalently, universally and necessarily valid of a set of objects (here,

appearances), on the following condition. The former has to be a condition of the possibility of the latter (see A92-4/B124-7). Other readings let the empirical manifolds be received in the form of intuition (e.g.) space *prior* to the understanding's activity. Below, I'll be agreeing that, and explaining why, this too has to be Kant's view (§2.2 and §2.3 respectively). But the four listed interpreters and I find *Kant himself* thinking something different and incompatible with this in the B Deduction. We above saw Beck insist that "it is not *prior* to the synthesis, but *in* it, that space is a 'manifold of homogeneous parts.'" (Beck, 1796: 236) We find Kant here proving the categories valid for "everything that may ever come before our senses" (B160) through the thesis that the understanding's activity is a condition *of empirical manifolds themselves* coming before the senses – through (P1), the conclusion of the speculative syllogism. Thus, as Longuenesse puts it, "anything given in space and time, **just by being given** in space and time, stands under the unity of apperception and thus the categories." (Longuenesse, 1998: 37; cf. 33)

Kant himself very much appears to be thinking exactly those three steps of the speculative syllogism in the first three sentences of the third paragraph of §26. He notes that "the synthesis of the apprehension of the manifold of appearance," which is the synthesis through which perception becomes possible, "must always be in agreement with" the form of intuition time. Here, he nods to the Aesthetic's thesis (1s). He now moves to the controversial second step (2s), bringing our attention to the *unity* that the form of intuition, *as presented in the Aesthetic*, possesses.

But space and time are represented *a priori* not merely as forms of sensible intuition, but **also** as intuitions themselves (which contain a manifold), and thus **with the determination of the unity** of this manifold in them (**see the Transcendental Aesthetic**).

Here is attached the famous footnote, discussed below. In the main text, he follows through to our conclusion: Since (1s) our reception of empirical manifolds is conditioned by the form of intuition, and (2s) this form of intuition has a unity that only the understanding can provide, (P1) that unity is “**already given** *a priori*, along with (not in) these intuitions, **as condition of** the synthesis of all apprehension.”

Now my thesis is as follows. There is so much controversy over whether or not to ascribe (2s) and (P1) to Kant, because the text is objectively ambiguous. The text is ambiguous, I claim, because, *as well as* needing these two theses to complete his Deduction, Kant *also* needs their negations. He needs their negations to keep in place his original way of *distinguishing* sensibility and the understanding, receptivity and spontaneity – the distinction, indeed, that lies at the heart of his critique of rationalism.¹⁹

1.2.2 The reflective syllogism

Both cannot be thought together in one and the same conception of sensibility.

Kant, *On a Discovery*, 8:219

For $\sim(P1)$ and $\sim(2s)$, the negations of the speculative theses (P1) and (2s), the “ $>$ ” should be read as “is prior to and independent of.” The “ $>$ ” of the speculative syllogism above should *also* be read as “is prior to,” though there “is prior to” equates to “is a condition of the possibility of.”

¹⁹ At (Pippin, 1997: 322), Pippin worries that Longuenesse’s reading of the Deduction “threatens to collapse” this distinction. I say that it does, but that this reading is true, both of Kant’s text, and of his “speculative” intention. With Hegel, I distinguish the latter from Kant’s “reflective” intention. (See especially the *Preface* to the *Difference* essay.) Justification for such a distinction can be found at A314/B370 and A834/B862. (See below in the text.)

The “is prior to” of the second thesis and conclusion of the reflective syllogism do not. This syllogism shares its first premise with the speculative syllogism above. Its second premise is $\sim(P1)$, and its conclusion $\sim(2s)$.

The reflective syllogism

(1s) $FI > REM$ (Transcendental Aesthetic)

$\sim(P1)$ $REM > SU$ (Affection by the thing in itself [T.I.I.]. This thesis is required by the assumption of the “original separation” of the T.I.I. from the subject (“finitude”): see §2.3.)

$\sim(2s)$ $\therefore FI > SU$ (Concept of sensibility *required* for $\sim(P1)$. The need for it is expressed at B145.)

First, Kant needs, I claim, $\sim(P1)$ ($REM > SU$): “our reception of the empirical manifold must be prior to and independent of the synthesis of the understanding.” This is equivalent to our original $\sim(P1)$: “our reception of empirical content is unconditioned by the understanding’s activity.” With most post-Kantians, I hold that this is equivalent to Kant’s thought that we are affected by the thing in itself. We’ll see in §3.2 that Longuenesse does not agree to my equation between thing-in-itself affection and “our reception of empirical content is unconditioned by the understanding’s activity” ($\sim(P1)$). I think that that denial is extremely implausible. By the time we get there, I hope you’ll agree. (This is a denial of **(b)** in my thesis statement.) I don’t discuss “double affection” here, but my attitude towards it is the same.

Why Kant needs $\sim(P1)$, I’ll explain in §2.3. *Since* he needs it, he also needs $\sim(2s)$. This is a concept of a *form of intuition* that does not cohere with the speculative concept of the same,

(2s) (SU > FI). This speculative claim was our reading of the *synthesis speciosa* of §24 above, the claim that this synthesis is a condition of the form of intuition *being* what it is in the Aesthetic, namely, a condition of the possibility of the reception of empirical manifolds. He needs that *not* to be true of his form of intuition, however, for it to be able to receive the “matter” or “content” from the thing in itself prior to and independently of the understanding’s synthesis. This reflective syllogism employs the same first premise as the one appearing in the speculative syllogism above, the thesis of the Aesthetic, (1s) (FI > REM). Combined with $\sim(P1)$ (REM > SU), we get the reflective syllogism’s conclusion, $\sim(2s)$: (FI > SU): “the pure form of intuition must be receptive of the content of empirical cognition prior to and independently of the synthesis of the understanding.” In the context of a certain assumption explained in §2.3, he needs the manifold to be *given* by the thing in itself, and *in* the form of intuition that appears in the reflective syllogism, to avoid *solipsism*.

He gives voice to this need at B145. Speaking of the pure form of sensible intuition, he insists that “the manifold for intuition must already be *given* prior to the synthesis of the understanding and independently from it,” for otherwise, we’d be “think[ing] of an understanding that itself intuited.”

It is because of his adherence to $\sim(2s)$ that he rejects Beck, the great champion of (2s): Kant accuses Beck of endorsing the view that we have a faculty of intellectual intuition (which Beck denies).²⁰

²⁰ It is J. Schulze who accuses Beck of this, but Kant agrees with the charge. Beck: “if I wanted to get a little bit angry with Herr Schulze, I would say that I have more right to accuse him of thinking he has an intellectual intuition than he has to make this accusation against me.” (Zweig, 1999: 513) Cf. p.514: “It never entered my mind to say that the understanding creates the object: a piece of naked nonsense! How can Herr Schulze be so unfriendly as to charge me with this?” I quote and defend the statements in Beck’s *Standpoint* that J. Schulze and Kant *took* for “the understanding produces objects” (Zweig, 1999: 518) in §2.4.

In closing §2.1, I claimed that Kant needs $\sim(2s)$ ($FI > SU$) because his original distinguishing of sensibility from the understanding relies on it. Confirmation for this claim comes in the fact that Kant sees Beck's championing of (Kant's own) $(2s)$ ($SU > FI$) as undercutting this distinction. Kant's letter is missing, but we have Beck's response. "Pained indeed by the thought that I have fallen from your favor" (520), Beck tries to counter Kant's reasons for rejection.

I believe I have given an accurate exposition of the *Critique* and therefore do not regard myself as deviating from it – for nothing concerns me more than to distinguish sensibility (the faculty of being affected by objects) from the understanding (the faculty of thinking objects, relating this subjective material of sensibility to objects).
(Zweig, 1999: 519)

My claim, then, is that there are *two* senses of "form of intuition" in the *Critique*, and that they do not cohere. On one conception the form of intuition is what it is – that which, as the Aesthetic explains, conditions the reception of the "matter" or "content" of empirical cognition – *prior to* the understanding's activity. On the other conception, the form of intuition is what it is *only through* the understanding's activity. The former is the reflective, the latter the speculative concept of a form of intuition.

The following table presents the reader with the two pairs of contradictory theses across from each other. Read ">" as "prior to" for explicit contradictions.

Reflective syllogism

(1s) FI > REM (Trans. Aesthetic)

~(P1) REM > SU (assumption of T.I.I.)

~(2s) \therefore FI > SU (B145)

Speculative syllogism

(1s) FI > REM (Trans. Aesthetic)

(2s) SU > FI (§24's *synthesis speciosa*)

(P1) \therefore SU > REM (§26.3, "formal int."= FoI)

Now, I side with Longuenesse and Beck on the following. To understand §26, it is necessary to take Kant's argument to be *about the form of intuition* of the Aesthetic, as the speculative syllogism has it. I agree, that is, that it is necessary to take the second half of the Deduction to call for a "rereading" of the Aesthetic's theory of space and time (the forms of intuition).²¹ I thus agree with Longuenesse that the "formal intuition" of the footnote Kant adds after completing the argument must be equated with the Aesthetic's "form of intuition." In the note, he tells us that "the *form of intuition* merely gives the manifold, but the *formal intuition* gives unity of the representation." This ununified "form of intuition" of B160n clearly can't be the "form of intuition" of the Aesthetic, for it is obvious that the latter is a unified totality. We've noted what supports the equating of B160n's "formal intuition" with the Aesthetic's "form of intuition": in the text of §26 itself to which the note attaches, Kant points us to the Aesthetic to confirm that space and time are given *there* "**also** as *intuitions* themselves... and thus with the determination of the *unity* of this manifold in them (see the Transcendental Aesthetic)." It is hard to see what work that "also" in the second sentence of the main text would be doing if the

²¹ See Longuenesse, 1998: 12, 208, 213, 299, title of section 214-227. As noted in opening, a "rereading" of the Aesthetic on the basis of the Deduction is the very *idea* of Beck's *Standpoint*.

“unity” it points to wasn’t supposed to be read back into the “forms of” intuition of the first sentence, and to lead us through to (P1) itself in the third.

But is it not odd that Kant *adds* this note, and uses “form of intuition” and the newly introduced “formal intuition” as he does here? Longuenesse, following Allison, is driven outside the *Critique* to answer the “new paradox” of what B160n’s “form of intuition” refers to. (Longuenesse, 1998: 217f.) Indeed, B160n’s “form of intuition” *cannot* be equated with the Aesthetic’s “form of intuition.” But wouldn’t Kant have assumed that his reader would take B160n’s “form of intuition” to refer to the “form of intuition” that they had been reading about all along in *this* book?

It is as if Kant’s intention is to claim that the speculative syllogism that he has just reasoned through in concluding §26 *does not* really involve a rereading of the Aesthetic’s “forms of intuition.” It is as if he is claiming that the argument only pertains to this newly coined “formal intuition,” and that the Aesthetic’s “form of intuition,” which now “merely gives the manifold,” is to be left alone - *not* re-read. It is as if he *himself* is worrying that such a “rereading” would amount to a “fundamental revision,” a “change in doctrine” or a “correction” of his theory of the forms of intuition as presented in the Aesthetic. Such is what Longuenesse’s critics Allison and Fichant take her “rereading” to amount to.²² Longuenesse wonders whether Kant intends something similar herself, before the assumption of the *Critique*’s coherence drives her outside the *Critique*.

²² See Allison, 2004: 192 and n.67; Allison, 2000: 75-6; and Fichant, 1997. Longuenesse adamantly insists that what she calls for is a *mere* rereading, and is no way a revision or correction, at Longuenesse, 2005: 6, 34 and 67. “What I think is that everything that was said in the Transcendental Aesthetic about the nature of space and time stands, but is brought into new light by the argument of the Deduction.” (34)

If this analysis is correct, we should conclude that the space and time described in the Transcendental Aesthetic are products of the figurative synthesis of imagination, and as such are what Kant calls, in section 26, *formal intuitions*. Yet it might be objected that in the texts quoted here, Kant insists on the distinction between *forms of intuition* and *formal intuitions*. Only the second are “represented with the determination of the *unity* of [the] manifold,” only they are expressly related to figurative synthesis. **Perhaps, then, we should rather conclude that the *forms of intuition*, which are the proper object of the Transcendental Aesthetic, are *not* related to *synthesis speciosa*.** Only *formal intuitions* are... (Longuenesse, 1998: 216)

I agree with Longuenesse that Kant really “intends” us to equate B160n’s “formal intuition” with the Aesthetic’s “form of intuition,” and to find him asserting the speculative syllogism. I contend, however, that he *also* “intends” us to *not* equate those two, but to rather equate the “form of intuition” of B160n with the “form of intuition” of the Aesthetic. He needs us to *not* make the former equation, and make only the latter, to save his reflective syllogism - and his original distinction of sensibility from the understanding with it. It appears that Kant “sometimes spoke, or even thought, contrary to his own intention.” (A314/B370) We are forced, I think, to follow Hegel in distinguishing Kant’s speculative intentions from his reflective intentions (cf. n.19 above).

The two theses of the reflective syllogism that Allison and Fichant are concerned to defend, $\sim(2s)$ and $\sim(P1)$, *are* then genuine theses of Kant’s. On this point we are in agreement, in shared opposition to Longuenesse. She denies that they are Kant’s thoughts, for she holds Kant committed to their two contradictories ((2s) and (P1)), and, like Beck and Fichte, holds that the *Critique* coheres.

Of course, though I agree with Longuenesse’s critics here, we have quite different attitudes towards these two theses that we recognize, contra Longuenesse, as Kant’s thoughts. Allison writes,

I do not think that Longuenesse intends her revisionary account of space and time as a complete rejection of Kant's theory of sensibility in the manner of post-Kantian idealism.²³

He is right about Longuenesse. Noting this suggestion of Allison's, and a similar one made by Sedgwick (Sedgwick, 2000: 89-90), as she brings her response to them both to a close, she writes,

The German Idealists... (especially Hegel) chastised Kant for remaining adamant in distinguishing receptivity (passivity) and spontaneity (activity) in our cognitive capacities. As for me, my view is that Kant was right to insist on this distinction, and I do not think anything in my reading of the *Critique* leads to a loosening of it in any way. (Longuenesse, 2005: 38)

Here she annexes a note which reads "On this point, see my [Point of View of Man and Knowledge of God]"; I noted above that she there rejects Hegel's critique of Kant.

My goal is to show that this "complete rejection of Kant's theory of sensibility" by the post-Kantians was done, first, to remove the contradiction at the heart of the *Critique*, and second, *for the sake of Kant's better theory of sensibility*. The essence of the latter is the conception of the form of intuition conditioned by the *synthesis speciosa*: the form of intuition of the speculative syllogism presented in the second half of the B Deduction. Beck and Fichte understood *that* Kantian conception of sensibility better than Kant understood it himself. Kant needs the concept of sensibility Allison and Fichant would have us return to, the one articulated around ~(P1), only because he assumes affection by a thing in itself. They would have us follow through on Kant's reflective intention. I follow Beck, Fichte and Hegel in following through on *the Critique's own* speculative intention. I agree with Allison, Fichant, and Sedgwick that Longuenesse is doing the same, and indeed in a way that undercuts the original way Kant

²³ Allison, 2000: 76. Longuenesse adamantly denies both the likeness of her reading to Fichte's, and the suggestion that her reading undercuts Kant's original understanding-sensibility distinction, in 2005: 6, 37-8, 65-6. Cf. 1998: 300.

conceives “the radical distinction between sensibility, endowed with form specific to it, and the understanding” (KHS, p.66) - against her protests to the contrary. Unlike any of them, I think that such undercutting is philosophically progressive, and a service to Kant’s best intentions.

1.2.3 Hegel’s Critique of Kant’s Standpoint of Finitude: a very brief sketch

The question must be *yours*, sir, when [J. Schulze] asks, quite justifiably, in this connection, “What ‘sensation’ can mean, if there is no such thing as sensibility, I fail to understand.”
- Beck to Kant, 6.24.1797, Zweig, 1999: 517-8

Why is Kant committed to the thesis that our reception of empirical content is unconditioned by the understanding’s activity ($\sim(P1)$)? Hegel’s critique of Kant’s standpoint of finitude claims that, at the very base of his thinking, Kant has *assumed* an original separation of the real object from the subject. “The subject” referred to here is the transcendental subject to whose sensible and intellectual forms presented nature conforms. This conformity of nature to the subject’s forms is what Kant expresses by likening transcendental idealism to the hypothesis of Copernicus (Bxvi). According to Kant, only transcendental idealism can explain how synthetic *a priori* judgments can be possible. According to this doctrine, the objects of our experience, the appearances that conform to our forms, only exist *as* they conform to our forms in relation to the subject. They do not exist in this way, that is, as they are *independently* of this relation, or: as they are in themselves.²⁴

By “assumed an original separation,” I mean precisely this: Kant has assumed of the real object, which he thinks of as a thing in itself, that its distinction or separation from the subject is

²⁴ On this conformity and this consequence of it, see e.g. A114, A125, B164, and A505-7/B534-5.

already in place, *prior to* the transcendental activity of this subject. Now, *with that assumption in place*, Kant has to insist that the “matter” or “content” of empirical cognition is given by this thing in itself, independently of the understanding’s activity, to prevent the conformity of the *appearing* objects to the subject’s forms from entailing solipsism. It is, that is, because Kant has assumed – or, better, imagined – a thing existing in itself and standing over against the subject prior to its transcendental activity, that he has to posit the subject as originally passive in relation to this imagined object.²⁵ By “originally passive” I mean again passive *prior to* the transcendental activity. He has to assume that we are originally passive in relation to these objects he has imagined the existence of (the relation of affection), in order to prevent us from being completely cut off from these objects he has imagined the existence of (to avoid solipsism).

The I of the I think is absolute *qua* subject, just as the thing in itself beyond the subject is absolute.
(Hegel, 1802: 75)

Because of this assumption, he is compelled to thwart the expression of his own speculative syllogism. A fair number of post-Kantians recognized fairly soon that, for Kant’s master thought to work, the reception of the matter of empirical cognition had to be conditioned by the forms supplied by the understanding’s activity, as the speculative syllogism has it. (Longuenesse recognizes it at 1998: 299.) But Kant’s assumption of original separation prevents him from accepting that fact about his own thought. *Because* the assumption of original

²⁵ See here Hegel’s “simple remark” against “the so-called thing in itself” at (1812/16: 16), and his jibe that “the impossibility of an answer is thoughtlessly implanted in the question” (“*what* the thing in itself is”) on p.94.

separation stays in place till the end, he is unable to recognize, and compelled to reject, those who rightly infer the conformity of the matter to the form. (But see n.31 below.)

The problem is that his position requires the matter to conform, and to not conform, to the form. It *must* conform for the master thought to work. It *must not* because, with the original separation in place, its conforming – the master thought being carried through - entails solipsism (cf. Hegel, 1802: 92-3). Instead of acknowledging the problem, he is forever appealing quite unhelpfully to the supposed difference in origin between the form of empirical cognition and its matter. Thus, for instance, he writes to Beck in 1792,

Eberhard's and Garve's opinion that Berkeleian Idealism is identical to Critical Idealism... does not deserve the slightest bit of attention. For I speak of ideality in reference to the *form* of *representation* while they construe it as ideality with respect to the *matter*, i.e., ideality of the *object* and its existence itself.²⁶

When Kant responds to Eberhard himself in 1790, he agrees with the latter that things in themselves are the source of the matter of sensibility. Eberhard had found the *Critique* implying otherwise. Here, Kant gives the following quite awful fudge.

The *Critique*... says the objects as things in themselves *give* the matter to empirical intuition (they contain the ground by which to determine the faculty of representation in accordance with its sensibility), but they *are* not the matter thereof. (*On a Discovery*, 8:215)

It is because Kant assumes the original separation of the thing in itself from the subject, then, that he needs $\sim(P1)$, “our reception of empirical manifolds is unconditioned by the understanding's activity,” which I say is equivalent to the relation of affection to this thing in itself. For the same reason he needs the reflective concept of the form of intuition that can

²⁶ Zweig, 1999: 445. Beck, who was quite concerned with how to properly distinguish Kant's position from Berkeley's, found this suggestion unhelpful. For his more subtle account of the distinction, see Beck, 1796: 207, 229, 237.

receive that manifold, ~(2s), “the form of intuition must be capable of receiving a manifold [from the thing in itself] prior to and independently of the understanding’s activity.” Without these theses, he thinks, we’d be “intellectually intuiting,” or committing ourselves to the idea that the understanding creates the object.

This thing in itself was therefore the **point of departure** beyond which Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* could never move, and because of which it *had to* fail as an independent science.
(Schelling, 1841: 123; our second epigraph)

1.2.4 The Progress beyond Kant made by Beck and Fichte

One ought not to define “intuition,” in the Transcendental Aesthetic, as a representation immediately related to an object or as a representation that arises when the mind is affected by the object. For not until the Transcendental Logic can it be shown how we arrive at objective representation.

- Beck to Kant, 5.31.1792, Zweig, 1999: 414. Cf.

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Kant’s failure to understand Beck and Fichte’s readings, like their failure to understand his unwillingness to endorse their readings, entirely derives from the following fact. Beck and Fichte have abandoned Kant’s assumption of original separation, but have failed to make explicit to Kant the fact that they have done so. Assuming Kant’s coherence, they deny that he explains our acquisition of empirical content through thing-in-itself affection. This historical error makes them blind to the fact that Kant *has* assumed the *existence* of an object prior to the subject’s transcendental activity. This blindness is patent in the way they defend the coherence of Kant’s own presentation of transcendental idealism. The centerpiece of these defenses is their denials that Kant has assumed such an original separation.

Let me take this opportunity to state this point quite clearly and simply: The essence of transcendental idealism as such, and, more specifically, the essence of transcendental idealism as presented in the *Wissenschaftslehre*, is that the concept of existence is by no means considered to be a *primary* and *original* concept, but is treated purely as a *derivative* one, indeed, as a concept derived through its opposition to activity, and hence, as a merely *negative* concept.

(Fichte, 1994: 84)

Appearances are the objects of cognition that affect us, and produce sensations in us. No thought is to be given in this connection to things in themselves; and anyone who construes the *Critique's* assertion that objects affect us to mean 'things in themselves' proves thereby that he has not attained to the standpoint from which this *Critique* is to be judged.

(Beck, 1796: 230)

It may be difficult to grasp... for the categories of relation just expounded concern the existence of things, and it would seem that to posit this existence as a whole in the original synthesis and recognition of the understanding, as we have just done, is a typically idealistic move.

(Beck, 1796: 228)

These statements are not solipsistic. For Beck and Fichte, there is nothing *more* real, or *otherwise* real, than that which is sensibly presentable to us through the aesthetic function of the categories. Having abandoned the assumption of the *existence* of the thing in itself, they are not, as Kant is, stuck in the "self-contradictory ambiguity" that "fails... to bring together its contradictory thoughts of pure consciousness being all reality, while the extraneous impulse or sensations and ideas are equally reality." (Hegel, 1807: 144)

Because Kant reads "activity" in their statements from the point of view of his original separation, however, they strike him as solipsistic. He reads their deductions of existence from the understanding's activity from the point of view of an understanding *originally cut off from real objects*. He proves himself unable to unimagine what they expel under force of logical necessity. This change in sense "activity" undergoes as it moves from Kant's mouth to Beck's

and Fichte's doesn't make them bad Kantians. It just makes them, as Hegel said, "more consistent" ones (1812/16: 27, quoted in n.10 above).

In the next section, I'll argue for Kant's commitment to $\sim(P1)$ against the specific ways of denying it of Beck, Fichte, and Longuenesse. To begin, I'll spell out the argument against Longuenesse's reading based on its likeness to Fichte's that Longuenesse's critics gesture at (§3.1). Secondly, I'll champion Beck and Fichte's rejection of the thing in itself over Longuenesse's retaining of it (§3.2). And lastly, I'll make plain the fundamental *difference* between Hegel's response to Kant's 1799 rejection of Beck and Fichte, and Longuenesse's (§3.3).

1.3 IN DEFENSE OF ASCRIBING $\sim(P1)$ TO KANT: OPPOSING THE ASSUMPTION OF THE *CRITIQUE*'S COHERENCE SHARED BY LONGUENESSE'S CRITICS, BECK AND FICHTE, AND LONGUENESSE

1.3.1 Longuenesse's critics

I hold that Kant *does* reject Beck's and Fichte's readings, and *would* reject Longuenesse's reading, *because* he is in fact committed to $\sim(P1)$. Here, I agree with the thought Longuenesse's critics appeal to in accusing her of Fichteanism (see n.17). We've noted that Longuenesse adamantly denies any relevant likeness to Fichte Longuenesse, 2005: 6, 37-8, 65-6).

Longuenesse's critics

(Prem1) Longuenesse's reading is like Fichte's in that they both affirm (P1) and deny \sim (P1).

(Prem2) Kant rejects Fichte's reading *because* Fichte affirms (P1) and denies \sim (P1).

(Conc) Kant *would* reject Longuenesse's reading.

The argument, I believe, is sound. It is strengthened, note first, by replacing "Fichte" in both premises with "Beck," Kant's other definitively rejected pupil. The "likeness" between Beck and Longuenesse is much more palpable. With regard to the evaluation of "Kant would reject Longuenesse *for the same reasons* he rejects x," it helps, first, that we have the extensive Kant-Beck correspondence presenting these reasons. We have to be slightly more "speculative" with regard to Kant's reasons for rejecting Fichte, which gives Longuenesse more wiggle room. Second, it helps that, unlike Fichte, Beck focuses on the explication of Kant's texts.

We noted in §2.2 the major similarity in those explications: Beck and Longuenesse both champion (2s). This is the claim, which we say is Kant's, that the understanding's activity is a condition of the form of intuition conditioning the reception of empirical content. Both thus take the Deduction as calling for a "re-reading" of the Aesthetic's doctrine of space and time. I argued in §2.2 that Kant rejects Beck *because* Kant adheres to \sim (2s), the reflective concept of the form of intuition needed to receive empirical content from a thing in itself. Too clear an expression of Kant's own (2s) undercuts his original way of distinguishing sensibility from the understanding. Thus he rejects Beck. He would reject Longuenesse for the same reason.

Let's turn, however, to the argument of Longuenesse's critics as it stands. The first premise is true of Longuenesse: the central thesis of KCJ, as I read it, is that the Deduction

affirms the speculative syllogism, and with it (P1).²⁷ Her denial of \sim (P1) can be found at Longuenesse, 1998: 299.

And what is stated in the first premise is certainly right about Fichte's reading of Kant. Fichte gives his "proof" that his philosophy "is in complete accord with Kant's and is nothing other than Kantianism properly understood" in §6 of his *Second Introduction*. The proof responds to Reinhold's challenge to Fichte's claim that the two systems are identical. There is, Reinhold claims, a "fundamental difference" between the two. It is true of Kant's system, Reinhold contends, but not of Fichte's, that

with respect to [experience's] *empirical content*, by means of which it possesses objective reality, it must be grounded within the I *by something different* from the I.²⁸

This "something different" is of course the thing in itself. Reinhold's claim contra Fichte here is that Kant explains our reception of empirical content through affection by the thing in itself, whilst it is central to Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* to utterly oppose this thought, which it equates with "dogmatism," and rather explain the empirical content given in sensation through the I's activity.²⁹

The "fundamental difference" Reinhold claims, then, is this. Kant's system, since it posits thing-in-itself affection, is *only* committed to \sim (P1), whilst the *Wissenschaftslehre* is *only* committed to (P1).

²⁷ This is compatible with expressions of its central thesis that reference the "clue" or the table of judgments. For Beck's reference to the same, see Zweig, 1999: 438.

²⁸ Fichte quotes Reinhold's 1797 *Selected Miscellaneous Writings*, Vol. 2, pp.341-2, here at Fichte, 1994: 65.

²⁹ See Fichte, 1988: 252, "sensation has been deduced as an action of the I," and 411, "Kant clings to the view that the manifold of experience is something given – god knows how and why. But I straightforwardly maintain that even this manifold is produced by us through our creative faculty."

And indeed, Fichte sets out to prove precisely that Kant's system, like the *Wissenschaftslehre*, is *only* committed to (P1). He spends eleven pages trying to prove that the answer to the following "purely historical" question is "no".

The (purely historical) question is this: Did Kant really base the empirical content of experience upon *something distinct from the I*?

I am quite well aware that this is how Kant has been understood by every "Kantian," with the sole exception of Herr Beck, whose book dealing with the subject, the *Only Possible Standpoint*, appeared after the publication of the *Wissenschaftslehre*. This is also the way in which Kant is understood by the interpreter who has recently been authorized by Kant himself, viz., Herr Schulz, whom I mention in this context only for this reason. Over and over again, he expresses his agreement with Herr Eberhard's assertion *that the objective ground of appearances lies in something that is a thing in itself* and that it is only for this reason that phenomena are *bene fundata* [well grounded]. (Fichte, 1994: 65)

The first premise, then, which determines the *likeness* of Longuenesse's reading and Fichte's, is true: Fichte and Longuenesse both hold Kant to be committed to (P1), and they both hold him to not be committed to \sim (P1).

The second premise is also likely true: Kant rejects Fichte's reading *because* Fichte affirms Kant's commitment to (P1) and denies Kant's commitment to \sim (P1). As I mentioned, though, we're forced to be a little speculative on this "because". It was Fichte's opinion, for what it's worth, that what Kant had read before rejecting him was precisely this *Second Introduction*.³⁰ So it's likely, at least, that Kant read, or otherwise heard about, Fichte's long and vigorous denial of Kant's commitment to \sim (P1), and was compelled to affirm the difference between that presentation of him and his actual view.

I think, then, that the conclusion is true, as is the following expansion of it: Kant *would* reject Longuenesse's reading, *because* Longuenesse (like Fichte) denies Kant's commitment to \sim (P1). This shows that Kant is indeed committed to \sim (P1).

³⁰ Zweig, 1999: 561, n.2 to Kant's 8.7.1799 "Declaration concerning Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*."

Now, what Longuenesse's critics *really* want, of course, is, "Kant is *only* committed to $\sim(P1)$." This I will not give them. In conjunction with the just expanded conclusion, I hold the following. Longuenesse's reading of Kant's explanation, in the B Deduction, of how the categories make experience possible, is true of Kant's text. She is right to find the key to that explanation in Kant's assertion of (P1).

Her critics and I agree, then, to (Prem1) below. We disagree, however, in that I deny the *Critique's* coherence (Prem2). I thus deny their inference to the conclusion that Kant is not also committed to (P1). It is with that conclusion that they judge Longuenesse's reading false of Kant's text.

Longuenesse's critics

(Prem1) Kant is committed to $\sim(P1)$. (b/c he rejects the $\sim(P1)$ -denying Fichte, Longuenesse.)

(Prem2) The *Critique* coheres.

(Conc) Kant is not committed to (P1). (Longuenesse contends that he is; her reading is false.)

In summary, then, my view is this: Kant *would* reject Longuenesse's reading, *because* he is committed to $\sim(P1)$ which she denies, and yet she is right to find Kant affirming (P1) in the B Deduction.

1.3.2 Opposing Beck's, Fichte's, and Longuenesse's denials of $\sim(P1)$: the *unlikeness* of Longuenesse and Fichte (and Beck)

I turn now to a defense of my thesis that Kant is committed to $\sim(P1)$ against the specific ways in which Beck, Fichte, and Longuenesse claim that he is not so committed. I am faced with a significant difference, however, between Beck and Fichte's denial of Kant's commitment to $\sim(P1)$ on the one hand, and Longuenesse's on the other. My goal now is to begin to reverse Longuenesse's judgment on the "Kant oder Hegel?" question by criticizing her way of denying Kant's commitment to $\sim(P1)$.

Beck's and Fichte's denials come by way of denying Kant's commitment to affection by the thing in itself. They agree with my gloss in **(b)** of my thesis statement: *if* Kant is committed to affection by the thing in itself, *then* this commitment is equivalent to $\sim(P1)$. Beck and Fichte agree with their predecessors Jacobi, G. Schulze and Maimon, as well as their successors Schelling and Hegel, on the following proposition. Longuenesse stands with Kant in opposition to it.

P2: *If* Kant holds that the object affecting us is a thing in itself, ***then*** the *Critique* suffers real contradiction.

Beck and Fichte differ from the other five who agree to (P2), only in that they deny the antecedent. This is a significant difference: their interpretations essentially *are* denials of (P2)'s antecedent. They both hitch their fates to the claim that Kant always intended the affecting object to be an *appearance*. But there are no greater champions of the truth of (P2) itself than Beck and Fichte.

It is their gallant attempts to defend the *Critique's* coherence against claims to the contrary, in fact, that force the contradiction in (P2)'s consequent to full light. The "to (P1) or ~ to (P1)" formulation of the problem of affection I've been working with throughout is theirs. As I noted in §1.1, this formulation of the problem renders useless the Kantian's appeal to the usual "escape clause."

It is easy to refute Beck and Fichte's arguments against Kant's commitment to ~(P1) though, for, with regard to the issue in question (the *Critique's* coherence), they are utterly circular. They amount to

Beck-Fichte

(Prem1) Kant is committed to (P1) (Transcendental Deduction)

(Prem2) The *Critique* coheres (Assumption)

(Conc) Kant is not committed to ~(P1), which is equivalent to affection by the thing in itself.

The reader is encouraged to examine pp.65-76 of the *Second Introduction* in Fichte, 1994, and Fichte, 1988: 420, to see that this is true of Fichte. Beck's *Standpoint* too fits the form; its attempt to refute the charge that "the *Critique* argues circularly," is likewise circular. (Zweig, 1999: 480)

The reader is asked to note that the shared "Beck-Fichte" form is essentially the argument of Longuenesse's critics "flipped": ignore, perhaps, the gloss in the conclusion. Move the negation sign in the conclusion of "Beck-Fichte" to the (P1) of (Prem1) and you have "Longuenesse's critics." It is that around which these opposing arguments flip that is my target: the shared "(Prem2) The *Critique* coheres."

Longuenesse's critics	Beck-Fichte
(Prem1) Kant is committed to $\sim(P1)$.	(Prem1) Kant is committed to (P1).
(Prem2) The <i>Critique</i> coheres.	(Prem2) The <i>Critique</i> coheres.
(Conc) Kant is not committed to (P1).	(Conc) Kant is not committed to $\sim(P1)$.

Now come back to considering the gloss in the Beck-Fichte conclusion: “Kant is not committed to $\sim(P1)$, **which is equivalent to affection by the thing in itself.**” Against this conclusion, Kant’s 1799 rejection of Beck and Fichte, like his 1797 endorsement of J. Schulze, confirms his commitment to affection by the thing in itself. Longuenesse accepts this commitment of Kant’s (Longuenesse, 1998: 22n.11, 218n.12, 300). The fundamental error of her work on both Kant and Hegel, I claim, is that she fails to turn critical of it. She is *historically* right to accept Kant’s commitment to thing-in-itself affection. Beck and Fichte are historically wrong to deny it. But they are *philosophically* right to agree with Jacobi that one is “unable to stay within” the *Critique’s* system with “the presupposition” of affection by the thing in itself (Sassen, 2000: 173). She, like Kant, is philosophically wrong to disagree with this.

Longuenesse ascribes (P1) to Kant, holds that the *Critique* coheres, and thus denies his commitment to $\sim(P1)$ (Longuenesse, 1998: 299). She thus shares the Beck-Fichte argument just presented, with the very crucial difference that the highlighted gloss on $\sim(P1)$ in the conclusion is not available to her. By failing to turn critical of Kant’s thought of thing-in-itself affection, she has to retain what Beck and Fichte, to their great credit, expunge from transcendental idealism. In *their* quest to make the *Critique* cohere, they purge from Kant’s master thought thing-in-itself affection. They negate that affection *along with* their negation of $\sim(P1)$: the highlighted gloss in

their (Conc) above not available to Longuenesse. In their interpretations of Kant, they make the philosophically progressive historical error of purging from transcendental idealism the *existence* of the thing in itself (§2.4).

But Longuenesse does not follow them in this advance. Unlike Beck and Fichte, she accepts Kant's commitment to affection by the thing in itself. And she finds no problem with it. She thus has to deny Kant's commitment to $\sim(P1)$ *otherwise* than by denying his commitment to affection by the thing in itself. She is compelled, then, to deny **(b)** above: she denies that Kant's commitment to thing-in-itself affection is equivalent to our reception of empirical content being unconditioned by the understanding's activity (299-300). She must deny this equation, for she accepts the left side to be Kant's commitment (thing-in-itself affection), but to preserve Kant's coherence must deny that the latter is ($\sim(P1)$).

Surely, however, the denial of this equation is extremely implausible. Her critics accuse her of being Fichtean. In being *like* Fichte in endorsing (P1) over $\sim(P1)$, yet *unlike* Fichte in retaining the *existence* of the thing in itself, her view is unstable: she is not Fichtean enough. She takes Kant's view to be that things in themselves exist *prior* to our transcendental activity, affect us, yet supply neither the form, nor the matter, nor the content of empirical cognition. She endorses this view, but I contend that it clearly amounts to solipsism.

In the Aesthetic, Kant writes, "That in the appearance which corresponds to sensation I term its *matter*." (A20/B34) "Rereading" this text in accordance with the speculative syllogism, Longuenesse correctly infers that "we now have to admit that even the *matter* of appearances, that which "corresponds to sensation," depends on a synthesis of imagination." (Longuenesse, 1998: 299) She pre-empts the anti-Fichtean Kantians, who will take this to imply "Fichtean and

Hegelian idealism” and the disappearance of “the distinction between receptivity and spontaneity,” through the following (300).

“Sensation” is defined as “the effect of an object on the capacity of representation, insofar as we are affected by it.” The most plausible way of interpreting the notion of “affection,” in these initial paragraphs of the *Critique*, is to understand it as the affection of the representational capacities *by a thing in itself*, that is, by something external to our representational capacities (something that functions as an “added condition” to our representational capacities in the grounding of representations). [Note: “On this point I agree with Allison.”] *Sensation* so considered is strictly *given*, in no way a product of synthesis.

She is right that “the most plausible way of interpreting the notion of ‘affection,’ in these initial paragraphs of the *Critique*, is to understand it as the affection of the representational capacities *by a thing in itself*.” She is right that understanding this affection as giving us the matter of empirical cognition unconditioned by the understanding’s activity cannot cohere with Kant’s master thought. But she is wrong to think that that gloss doesn’t present exactly what Kant is thinking for thing-in-itself affection.

As we saw in §2.3, it is Kant’s assumption of the original separation of the thing in itself from the subject that leads him to assume affection by it: “*sensation... is strictly given*, in no way a product of synthesis.” We also saw, however, that he has to think that affection as giving us the matter of empirical cognition to avoid solipsism. The way he distinguishes himself from the solipsist Berkeley confirms this (*Pro.* 4:289, 4:374). We also saw that Beck and Fichte avoid solipsism in *their* clear-headed presentations of the speculative syllogism by *expelling* the thing in itself (§2.4). For them, there are no objects *other than* those presented sensibly through the understanding’s activity. But Longuenesse, we see, affirms the speculative syllogism, *leaving the assumption of original separation in place*.

This is solipsism. There are the *really* real objects, the things in themselves forever beyond our ken, and then there's the form, the matter, and the content of our empirical cognition on the other side. The view is thoroughly ensconced in the self-contradictory ambiguity that fails to bring together its contradictory thoughts of pure consciousness being all reality, while the extraneous impulse or sensations and ideas are equally reality.

1.3.3 Longuenesse oder Hegel?

The fact that Longuenesse fails to see anything worth criticizing in Kant's commitment to thing-in-itself affection is quite significant for her reading of the period as a whole. As I noted in §1.1, she holds that the *Critique* coheres, that we should reject Hegel's critique of Kant's standpoint of finitude, and that we should rather "retreat once and for all into the Analytic of all three *Critiques*." (Longuenesse, 2007: 189) Now, Hegel agrees with Beck, Fichte and Longuenesse that Kant's master thought requires (P1) (see n.10 above). But note now the significant parting of the ways at this point.

Hegel agrees with Beck and Fichte et al. on (P2): *if* Kant is committed to thing-in-itself affection, *then* the *Critique* suffers real contradiction. He also agrees with those two that it would suffer this contradiction *because* thing-in-itself affection amounts to \sim (P1), which contradicts the master thought: he agrees to **(b)**. Longuenesse disagrees, we've seen, with both thoughts. Now, *because of these disagreements*, Longuenesse and Hegel take Kant's 1799 rejection of Beck and Fichte in very different ways. Longuenesse, recall, shares the following argument with Beck and Fichte, the "flip" of her Kantian opponents' argument.

Longuenesse

(Prem1) Kant is committed to (P1). (Transcendental Deduction)

(Prem2) The *Critique* coheres.

(Conc) Kant is not committed to \sim (P1).

Kant's 1799 rejection confirms his commitment to thing-in-itself affection. Longuenesse registers this. Discussing how the post-Kantians faced the problem of the "apparent incoherence" of "Kant's talk of things in themselves," she writes,

There is no doubt that Kant himself never gave up this presupposition, even if the conclusions of the Transcendental Analytic [(P1)?] doom any characterization of the relation between the object "considered in itself" and our representational capacities to remain problematic.³¹

Call Kant's reaffirmation of his commitment to thing-in-itself affection in the face of the post-Kantians' problems with it "1799". 1799 doesn't impel Longuenesse to question the *Critique's* coherence (Prem2). It, with (Prem1), remains in place for her. She thus retains the conclusion held in place by those premises: she retains her opposition to the idea that Kant is also committed to \sim (P1). She is thus led to the denial of (b) which I argued in §3.2 leads to solipsism: things in themselves exist, affect us, but supply neither the matter nor the content of our empirical cognition.

³¹ Longuenesse, 1998: 22n.11. Her "no doubt" is not perfectly true. In the *Opus Postumum*, as B. Tuschling reports, "Kant, following Solomon Maimon, Fichte, and, above all, Beck, was engaged in deducing the object from the activities of the subject – if not, indeed, from an "original representing" (*ursprünglichen Vorstellen*) by the subject, and this not only with respect to the intuitive and intellectual forms of space, time, and categories, but also with respect to the rational form of existence *per se*. Thus Kant accepts some of the criticism of his successors." Tuschling suggests that Kant was confronted by, but failed to solve, the unpleasant dilemma of whether or not to "deny altogether the possibility that things in themselves affect the self." (Tuschling, 1989: 215)

Contrast Hegel's reaction. Unlike Longuenesse, he agrees with Beck and Fichte on what thing-in-itself affection amounts to: $\sim(P1)$, our reception of empirical content being unconditioned by the understanding's activity. Kant's confirmed commitment to this affection thus doesn't impel him to think that this affection can be made to cohere with the master thought. It rather appears to him as confirmation of Kant's actual commitment *to the contradictory of the Deduction's thought*. Hegel's reading of the *Critique*, especially after 1799, is guided then by this critical-diagnostic question: "How is the existence of a real contradiction at the heart of the *Critique* to be explained?" (See my epigraphs. Schelling, I believe, takes the same lesson from 1799. See n.10.) The crucial difference between Hegel's reception of 1799 and Longuenesse's, then, comes in the highlighted (Prem2) below. (And, of course, in the conclusion.)

Hegel

(Prem1) Kant is committed to (P1). (Transcendental Deduction)

(Prem 2) Beck and Fichte are right that thing-in-itself affection = $\sim(P1)$. Thus, such affection doesn't cohere with the Deduction.

(Prem3) 1799: Kant is committed to thing-in-itself affection.

(Conc) The *Critique* suffers contradiction.

At Longuenesse 2005: 33n.24, Longuenesse cites Hegel's FK in her list of "predecessors" - a list to which Beck should rightly be added. The difference between her reading, however, which maintains the coherence between the Analytic and the Aesthetic, and Hegel's, which abandons it, is visible in the emboldened words below.

Reason is nothing else but the identity of heterogeneous elements... One can glimpse this Idea through the shallowness of the deduction of the categories. With respect to space and time one can glimpse it, too, though **not where it should be**, in the transcendental exposition of these forms, but later on, in the deduction of the categories, where the original synthetic unity of apperception finally comes to the fore. Here, the original synthetic unity of apperception is recognized also as the principle of the figurative synthesis, i.e., of the forms of intuition [(2s) (SU > FI)]; space and time are themselves conceived as synthetic unities, and spontaneity, the absolute synthetic activity of the productive imagination, is conceived as the principle of the very sensibility **which was previously characterized only as receptivity**.

(Hegel, 1802: 69-70; cf.74)

Longuenesse, we've seen, registers that there's a critique here, but rejects it (Longuenesse, 2005: 38, quoted on p.18 above). But the problem of affection doesn't appear when she evaluates Hegel's critique. Since nothing like (Prem2) appears in her analysis, she simply bypasses the actual justification Hegel has for his critique. Unlike Longuenesse, I think that more insight into the *Critique* can be had by asking Hegel's question of it than by assuming its coherence. My presentation of the conflicting speculative and reflective syllogisms presented in §2.1 and §2.2 above is an attempt to illustrate this.

Longuenesse would derive an advantage from accepting Kant's commitment to $\sim(P1)$ and thus the *Critique's* contradiction. If she could accept the fact that Kant's commitment to thing-in-itself affection is worth criticizing, she could concede to Allison, Sedgwick and Fichant that she abandons or "revises" part of Kant's theory of sensibility, without having to concede either that she gets Kant's master thought wrong, or that she doesn't preserve everything worth preserving. She'd be entitled to say that what she revises is a concept of sensibility of Kant's which contradicts *Kant's own* better concept of sensibility. She could say that it is in the name of Kant's own speculative intention that she abandons the sensibility Kant needs to think of as receiving empirical content from a thing in itself, unconditioned by the understanding's activity. Since she denies $\sim(P1)$, it is anyway true that what is "strictly *given*, in no way a product of synthesis," is

for her Kant “discarded as something useless.” (Longuenesse, 1998: 300, and Hegel, criticizing Kant, at 1812/16: 518) Recognizing and not criticizing thing-in-itself affection thus does nothing for her – except, perhaps, appease anti-Fichtean Kantians (see Longuenesse, 1998: 299-300; Longuenesse, 2005: 6, 37-8, 65-6). And the cost of endorsing the preservation of the thing in itself’s *existence* in this half-way Fichteanism, I’ve claimed, is that her view is “forever sliding into psychological idealism” or solipsism (Hegel, 1802: 76; cf. 1812/16: 520).

1.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS: THE CRITIQUE’S INCOHERENCE AS THE KEY TO POST-KANTIANISM

Longuenesse is compelled to deny the likeness of her reading to Fichte’s, because she agrees with her critics on the following thought: if she indeed is, as they charge, “drawing Kant too close toward Fichtean and Hegelian idealism,” then she must be wrong about Kant, for “no one will grant [this] in good faith to be true to Kant’s **intention**.” (Longuenesse, 1998: 300) Sedgwick is right to “suspect that she agrees with me that the attempt to narrow the **gap** between Kant and the latter idealists... rests upon a misunderstanding of Kant.” (Sedgwick, 2000: 90) But must it? Are Fichte and Hegel’s positions not predicated on having properly understood Kant?

What is shared between Longuenesse and her critics here is the assumption that the *Critique* presents a coherent position on sensibility. It is the very same assumption that spelt tragedy for Beck and Fichte, and constitutes the central error in their readings of the *Critique*. 1799 impels Schelling and Hegel to abandon the assumption. The overarching *difference* between the Schelling-Hegel and the Beck-Fichte stages of German Idealist readings of the

Critique, in fact, is precisely that the former abandons the latter's assumption of the book's coherence.

Thus do they ask their question for the *Critique*: how is a real contradiction at its heart to be explained? Hegel's critique of Kant, I contend, answers *this* question well. It explains how Kant came to be committed to incompatible conceptions of sensibility. We saw in §1.1 how adamantly Fichte adheres to the impossibility of what Hegel tries to explain. (Fichte, 1994: 71; Fichte, 1988: 420)

Before such insights as Schelling and Hegel claim in answer to *their* question for the *Critique* can be heard, however, the following must be recognized. To consider even the possibility of what they say about the *Critique* being true, the assumption of its coherence must at least be questioned. (See my epigraphs.)

If the *Critique* coheres, post-Kantianism is ill-motivated. If, in the other hand, Kant “sometimes spoke, or even thought, contrary to his own intention,” then the post-Kantian developments of his thought could merely be responses to the need to liberate the *best* of “Kant's intentions.” This holds also for the resolutely critical readings of Schelling and Hegel. It is possible, furthermore, that they actually come, with ever deepening insight, to “understand him better than he understood himself.”³² The “gap” between Kant and his successors would then rest, not upon a misunderstanding of Kant, but rather on them managing “to peel off the shell that keeps the inner inspiration from seeing daylight.”³³

³² Kant, A314/B370, and Longuenesse, 1998: 300, quoted above. Cf. A834/B862.

³³ From Schelling and Hegel's 1802 “Introduction to the Critical Journal”, in di Giovanni and Harris, 2000: 278 (speaking of Kant), and Sedgwick, 2000: 90, quoted above.

I have endeavored to bring the assumption of the *Critique's* coherence into question. In doing so, I hope to have motivated this picture of post-Kantian idealism as *progressing* in its articulation of the *Critique's* best thought. The shell must be seen, and removed once more.³⁴

³⁴ My method of seeking entry into post-Kantianism by uncovering the *Critique's* incoherence stands opposed to the entry into the same that Paul Franks announces on p.6 of his otherwise excellent (2005) *All or Nothing*.

2.0 HEGEL'S CRITIQUE OF KANT'S STANDPOINT OF FINITUDE

2.1 AGAINST THE DOGMA OF KANT'S COHERENCE

The unified totalities space and time are sensible conditions on our knowledge, are forms of our sensible intuition. Kant presents this thesis in the Aesthetic, but there is controversy amongst interpreters of Kant with regard to how he intends this thesis to be understood. Allison and Pippin, for instance, take this to be a doctrine completed in the Aesthetic, and relied upon in the Deduction.³⁵ Longuenesse, McDowell and Waxman, by contrast, take the Deduction to be most

³⁵ Two especially clear expressions of Allison's commitment to this thesis are: (1) at Allison, 2004: n.66 to p.191, he uses the completeness of the Aesthetic as the *premise* through which to refute an objector's critique of his 1st edition reading; (2) Speaking of Longuenesse's 're-reading' thesis (discussed below), Allison consistently calls it a 'revision' thesis, despite Longuenesse's correction of this characterization. See Allison, 2000: 73. Despite Longuenesse in her accompanying response correcting this mischaracterization (Longuenesse, 2000), he insists on her interpretation ascribing to Kant a "fundamental revision" of his Aesthetic at Allison, 2004: 192. See also 114, 191-2.

In his *Hegel's Idealism*, Pippin can be found following Allison here in his sharing the thought that, *if* Kant in the second half of the Deduction "extends" the intellectual conditions on thinking an object into the conditions on manifolds even being given (the proper topic of the Aesthetic), *then* Kant's system collapses, it undercutting "his strict distinction between intuition and understanding" (Pippin, 1989: 30). Notice him also writing in his review of Longuenesse's book, "According to Longuenesse, after the second half of the B Deduction, Kant had "radicalized" his deductive procedure far more than has been realized, **completely reinterpreting** "the manner in which things are given to us" (235), and so had **engineered a major reconstruction** of the "Transcendental Aesthetic" itself (as Kant seems to imply in several famous footnotes.) Any such claim about an intellectual "generation" (242) of space and time "and thereby the form of appearances" and so forth must be presented very carefully. It **threatens to collapse** the understanding-sensibility distinction..." (Pippin, 1997: 322). Throughout, all **emphasized** emphasis is my own, whereas *italics* indicate emphasis in the original.

In being a defender of Kant against post-Kantian criticisms generally, and through his rejection of Longuenesse's interpretation in particular, Allison can be seen to think the shared 're-reading → revision → collapse' thought *false*. Pippin, however, as an endorser of Hegel's critique of Kant, thinks it *true*

essentially a “re-reading” of this thesis of the Aesthetic, whereby the understanding’s role in making space and time possible as forms of sensible intuition is made explicit.³⁶ We can put the question separating them thus: does Kant affirm or deny that a synthesis of the understanding is required to yield space and time as forms of our sensible intuition?

The answer, I claim, is both. The problem is that there are two sequences of thought in Kant’s mind that not only interfere with each other but that, when made explicit, can be seen to directly contradict each other, affirming in turn that the form of intuition is given both *prior* and *posterior* to a synthesis of the understanding. We’ll call these, respectively, Kant’s ‘reflective’ and ‘speculative’ sequences of thought. The ambiguities throughout the *Critique* and in the Deduction in particular that give rise to the interpretive controversy attest to the unresolved tension between them in Kant’s thinking. Now instead of “following [the] more or less standard practice among Anglo-American interpreters [... of] develop[ing], on the author’s behalf, the most philosophically powerful arguments and considerations compatible with their texts,”³⁷ where this commits us to seeking and finding the *coherence* of the author’s thinking – the above mentioned authors, in taking Kant’s *intention* to be found on one side of the ambiguity exclusively, so adhere³⁸ - instead of fighting “passage against passage merely, and word against

(Pippin, 1989: 24-32). But it’s their *sharing* the hypothetical that puts them on one side of the either-or seesaw regarding Kant’s *intentions* that I wish to bring attention to and put into question here. It’s the fact that Pippin adopts this ‘Aesthetic Complete’ dogma from Allison that accounts for his taking as Hegel’s target the supposed “Kantian **reliance** on pure intuitions” (Pippin, 1989: 25) in the Deduction.

³⁶ The term is Longuenesse’s: see Longuenesse, 1998: 208, 213, 299, title of section 214-227; ‘new reading’, p.9. See McDowell, 2009a: 28, n.10; at 73 he claims that “The B Deduction is framed to avoid a certain objection” and “Kant organizes the B Deduction so as to forestall this objection”, the objection basically being that the Aesthetic *is* complete in accounting for objects being available to outer sense. See also Waxman, 1991.

³⁷ This is how Paul Franks expresses a principle he adheres to at Franks, 2005: 6.

³⁸ Pippin does see Kant as arguing against himself in the second half of the B Deduction, but this ‘re-reading’ is a mere aberration from what he takes to be Kant’s singular, reflective (see below) intention. Against this, Longuenesse and McDowell are clearly right that the ‘re-reading’ of the Aesthetic is central

word,”³⁹ what needs to be comprehended is that there are reasons for Kant both to affirm that a synthesis of the understanding is required for space and time to be forms of sensible intuition, and reasons for him to deny it. I claim that Hegel, who everywhere in his discussion of Kant affirms the contradictory nature of Kant’s thinking, comprehended and explained these opposing reasons in Kant’s thinking.⁴⁰ One’s understanding of the coherence of the B Deduction greatly increases, I claim, once one abandons the dogma of the coherence of the B Deduction. In the following text from the Introduction to the Critical Journal, I take Hegel to be demanding that we abandon the dogma of Kant’s coherence, and replace it with the task of distinguishing Kant’s opposing sequences of thought.

to Kant’s intention in the Deduction, and thus the thought behind it *also* constitutes a central intention of Kant’s.

³⁹ Fichte, 1982: 59.

⁴⁰ I claim that speculative Kant speaks and thinks contrary to reflective Kant’s intentions, and vice versa. Here’s a sample of the evidence that Hegel sees things so: Hegel and Schelling, 1802: 278 and 280-1, where Hegel asks how “the Critical Philosophy... can be preserved and made valid [by itself] in spite of **its own better knowledge** and the Idea of Philosophy that floats before its mind?”; “On the Relation of Skepticism to Philosophy”, Hegel, 1802a: 352: “It is the spirit of the Kantian philosophy to be conscious of this supreme Idea, but to set to work expressly to root it out again. Thus **we can distinguish two types of spirit that become visible in the Kantian philosophy**, one being that of the philosophy which is continually ruined by the system, the other that of the system which aims to do the Idea of Reason to death”. From *Faith and Knowledge*, Hegel, 1802: 78: “it is for the sake of dear mankind and its cognitive faculty, that Kant so little esteems **his thought** that [...]”, 89: “it is [Kant] himself who establishes the opposite experience of thinking a nondiscursive intellect. He himself shows that his cognitive faculty is aware [...] also of reason and the In-itself [...] **In the experience of his thinking he finds both thoughts**. However, in choosing between the two his nature despised the necessity of thinking the Rational”; 92: “the highest Idea is corrupted with full consciousness, while reflection and finite cognition are exalted above it”. From *Science of Logic*, Hegel, 1812/16: 592: “It will always stand out a marvel how the Kantian philosophy recognized the relation of thought to sensuous reality, beyond which it did not advance, as only a relative relation of mere Appearance, and **perfectly well recognized and enunciated** a higher unity of both in the Idea in general and, for example, in the Idea of an intuitive understanding, and yet **stopped short** at this relative relation and the **assertion** that the Notion is and remains utterly separate from reality - thus **asserting** as *truth* what **it declared** to be finite cognition, and **denouncing** as an unjustified extravagance and a figment of thought what **it recognized** as *truth* and **of which it established the specific notion**.” Cf. §§238-9 from the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, quoted below.

The genuinely scientific concern here is to peel off the shell that keeps the inner aspiration from seeing daylight [...] Here [where “it is evident that the Idea of philosophy has been more clearly cognized”], what matters is not to set the Idea of philosophy off in relief, but to uncover the nooks and crannies that subjectivity makes use of in order to escape from philosophy, and to make the weakness, for which any limitation offers a secure foothold, visible both on its own account and with respect to the Idea of philosophy *qua* associated with a subjectivity. (Hegel and Schelling, 1802: 278)

Understanding the details of this feature of Hegel’s reception of Kant is the key to appreciating how it might be possible to “use Kant against Kant,” and how a system which affirms, explicitly against Kant’s claims to the contrary, *the Idea* - the derivation of the *content* of thought from its form - might yet have a just claim to be genuinely Kantian. The basic contours of Hegel’s system, we’ll see in closing, can be understood by seeing how Hegel develops and resolves this contradiction in Kant.

So what are these opposing sequences of thought? The first, the ‘speculative’ sequence of thought, derives from the problem the Deduction is set to resolve: showing the categories valid for “all that can come before our senses”.⁴¹ The second, the ‘reflective’ sequence of thought, derives from an orienting thought of Kant’s that Hegel takes aim at: that the categories / unity of cognition / forms of thought come from the *finite* subject, the subject already conceived of as distinguished from and in relation to a world of objects, the subject conceived as in a *passive* relation to objects *prior* to the activity through which the categories / unity of cognition originate.

We will present these two sequences in turn, but the following observation needs to be made before presenting the interpretation of the speculative sequence. There are two features of the interpretation that, said together, sound almost nonsensical: the interpretation claims to be

⁴¹ B145, B160. References to the *Critique of Pure Reason* are to the standard A and B pagination of the first (1781) and second (1787) editions, respectively. Translations are from Guyer and Wood, 1998.

true of Kant's thought – to be, as it were, *the* true interpretation of the central thoughts Kant expresses in the Deduction – *and* to be expressed in such a way that, were Kant to see them expressed as such, he might not be able to sanction them as his own thoughts. Behind the incredulity this conjunction might inspire, however, is the dogma that thoughts must be most clearly understood by the one expressing them; that the understanding of a proposition or sequence of thought could not possibly be trumped by a subsequent interpreter. Now notice that Kant introduces his *Dialectic* by claiming that the thoughts to be presented there are a better interpretation of Plato's own thoughts than Plato himself was privy to. In making this claim he affirms that it is “not at all unusual” to find the just mentioned dogma falsified.

I note only that when we compare the thoughts that an author expresses about a subject, in ordinary speech as well as in writings, it is not at all unusual to find that we understand him better than he understood himself, since he may not have determined his concept sufficiently and hence sometimes spoke, or even thought, contrary to his own intention.⁴²

Now Hegel of course claims that his interpretation of Kant is an instance of the type of interpretive event to the possibility and commonality of which Kant here attests. But further, Kant's brief account of how such an interpretive event is possible fits this case: Kant himself, Hegel claims, has not determined *his* highest concept, the principle of the unity of apperception, sufficiently: he has failed to realize that a consequence of the claim that “the unity of consciousness is that which alone constitutes the relation of representations to an object, thus their objective validity [their *truth*]”⁴³ is that the affirmation that “the manifold for intuition must

⁴² A314/B370. Compare Hegel's remark, directed specifically at Kant, concerning “the confusion into which formalism falls whenever it sets out to explain something and which makes it **say the opposite of what it intends**” (1812/16: 594).

⁴³ B137, in §17 of the Deduction, entitled, “The principle of the synthetic unity of apperception is the supreme principle of all use of the understanding”. This is the third sentence of Hegel's three sentence long quote from Kant at 1812/16: 584, in “The Notion in General,” the opening chapter of Book III of the *Science of Logic*. Hegel refers

already be *given* prior to the synthesis of understanding and independently from it,”⁴⁴ where this has the character of a *necessary thought*, i.e. is claimed to be a *true* representation of the way things are, *cannot*, given that what it asserts directly contradicts the stated principle, be such. Hegel sees that Kant failed to realize what Fichte realized – though in 1797 Fichte denies that Kant failed to realize it - that Kant’s (merely apparent?) positing of a thing in itself as the ground of our sensations is something rendered not possibly true by the principle that all possible truth is known through the unity of consciousness.⁴⁵ But as we’ll see when the reflective sequence of thought is presented, in taking the categories to arise from the finite I, or from “the point of view of man,” Kant has no alternative but to affirm these propositions which directly contradict his speculative sequence of thought.⁴⁶ Due to this conflicting sequence of thought, the influence of

back to his quoting of the text at p.590, claiming - against what he takes to be Kant’s understanding of his own proposition - that “Here, therefore, the *objectivity of thought* is specifically enunciated, an identity of Notion and thing, which is *truth*.”

⁴⁴ B145.

⁴⁵ “So long, therefore, as Kant does not expressly declare in so many words, *that he derives sensation from an impression given by the thing-in-itself...* for so long I shall decline to believe what his expositors have to tell of him.” (Fichte, 1982: 58) It is likely that Hegel is responding directly to this text at 1802b, 74: “[W]ith respect to sensations and their empirical reality **nothing remains but to think** that sensation comes from the things in themselves. [...]” Fichte’s denial of Kant’s commitment to affection by a thing in itself fundamentally animates his dialectic of the finite and infinite I. “Insofar as the self is restricted by the not-self, it is finite; in itself, however, as posited through its own absolute activity, it is infinite. These two, its infinity and its finitude, are to be reconciled.” (Fichte, 1982: 137) Fichte’s distinguishing here of what he seeks to reconcile importantly prefigures Hegel’s distinguishing of Kant’s reflective and speculative syllogisms.

⁴⁶ Longuenesse structures her researches into German Idealism generally (inc. Kant) by framing the ‘Kant or Hegel’ question, ‘Point of View of man or Knowledge of God?’ (see esp. preface to 2005; preface to 2007: xviii-xix; titles of part II and ch.5 of 2007; closing remarks of ch.6 of 2007: 217); the title of 2005 comes from A26/B42: “We can accordingly speak of space, extended beings, and so on, only from the human standpoint,” the question’s second disjunct from Hegel’s “ever-renewed insistence that he means to reinstate metaphysics as knowledge of God” (2007: 190). She concludes her article that takes this question as its title by expressing her view that, while “Hegel is right in seeing a tension within Kant’s philosophy between “point of view of man” and striving towards knowledge of God,” the better path is “a resolution symmetrically opposed to the one Hegel is attempting: a systematic development of the “point of view of man” ” (2007: 191). Similarly, she closes ch.6 by throwing doubts on the plausibility of Hegel’s adopting “as the building block for the reconstruction of [his] metaphysics a concept “I” inherited from Kant, but which for Kant... [was that] of a finite consciousness. Whether it was at all **possible to abandon** this “human standpoint” to which Kant rigorously limited himself, precisely in those parts of his

which upon the speculative Hegel seeks to remove in his system, Kant ‘spoke, and even thought, contrary to his own intention’ (the intention of showing the categories as valid for all that can come before the senses), and his system suffered the fate of suffering from the “self-contradictory ambiguity... [that] fails... to bring together its contradictory thoughts of pure consciousness being all reality, while the extraneous impulse or sensations and ideas are equally reality”.⁴⁷

When reading the presentation of the speculative sequence, then, assent should be withheld from thoughts that may arise of the form ‘this can’t be what Kant *means* because...’, for if the reason for doubt is captured in the subsequent presentation of Kant’s reflective sequence of thought – for example, if the reason is ‘...because of what Kant says at B129 and B145’ - then my view is: yes, Kant does think this other thing that prevents him assenting to the speculative thoughts as presented in this form, but those thoughts contradict what the speculative thoughts either express or require. And instead of attempting to make cohere sequences of thought which cannot be made to cohere, what’s needed here “is to peel off the shell that keeps the inner aspiration from seeing daylight.”⁴⁸ Attesting to the truth of Sellars’ judgment that Kant is “certainly not”⁴⁹ free of it, we’ll see this shell (the reflective sequence) to be of a piece with Mythical Givenness. The desirability of abandoning it can then be more readily appreciated, and

system which Hegel professed to admire the most [...] **one has every reason to doubt**. Despite his efforts to provide a justification, for the transition from the standpoint of finite consciousness to the standpoint of the absolute, I suggest one can hail only as a strange and grandiose philosophical novel Hegel’s presentation [...]” (2007: 217). The present paper attempts to reverse this decision by making clear Hegel’s case that it is *necessary* to abandon ‘the point of view of man’ in the way Kant understands this if we are to hold on to the speculative sequence of thought of Kant, of which part III of Longuenesse’s KCJ is the most rigorously worked out account.

⁴⁷ Hegel, 1807: §238.

⁴⁸ Hegel and Schelling, 1802: 278.

⁴⁹ Sellars, 1997: §1.

the claim to the Kantian origins of Hegel's Idea (which is in many ways manifestly un-Kantian) will be put in starker relief.

2.2 THE SPECULATIVE SYLLOGISM

Here [in the Transcendental Deduction] the original synthetic unity of apperception is recognized also as the principle of the figurative synthesis, i.e. of the forms of intuition; space and time are themselves conceived as synthetic unities, and spontaneity, the absolute synthetic activity of the productive imagination, is conceived as the principle of the very sensibility which was previously characterizes only as sensibility. - Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, pp.68-9.

In §13 and §14 of the *Critique* Kant tells us that the only way a representation can be shown to be *necessarily* and *universally* (equivalently, *a priori*) valid for a set of items is for the former to be revealed as a condition of the possibility of the latter. The transcendental deduction of space and time – their being revealed as necessarily and universally valid of all possible appearances – was thus performed in the Aesthetic by showing them to be conditions of the possibility of things even appearing.⁵⁰ The corresponding “principle toward which the entire investigation [the Deduction] must be directed” is for the categories to be revealed as *a priori* conditions of the possibility of experience.⁵¹

What this principle in truth means, I claim, is that the categories are conditions of the possibility of the mere reception of empirical manifolds. (It is largely for the sake of this interpretation of the principle that the above preamble was necessary.) The truth of the interpretation is revealed, I claim, by the theses ((2s) and (Cs) in the table below) Kant uses as

⁵⁰ A89/B121-2; A93/B125.

⁵¹ A94/B127.

means to the end of proving this principle, this proof being completed at the end of the first partition of §26, which ends at B161 with “... the categories are conditions of the possibility of experience, and are thus also valid *a priori* of all objects of experience.” The central texts relied upon in demonstrating that Kant actually *thinks* these theses and uses them in his argument are some of the key claims from §24, the first three sentences of the third paragraph of §26 (the paragraph which concludes the proof with the just quoted words), and the attached note at B160n.

We can represent the speculative syllogism concluding in the interpretation of the principle quoted thus: (1) The form of intuition is prior to the relation of passivity, this latter being the relation between the finite I and the independent object whereby the former is passive and through which empirical manifolds are received. This is the thesis of the Aesthetic, the thesis well illuminated by Daniel Warren in his article “Kant and the Apriority of Space”, and the thesis the interpretive controversy over which we mentioned in opening. We can represent it symbolically thus: (1r/s) FI > P, where ‘>’ can be read as ‘prior to’ or, for this sequence of thought, ‘makes possible’. The ‘r/s’ subscript indicates the fact that this thesis, as we’ll see, is likewise the first premise of the reflective sequence of thought. Only steps (2) and (3) are exclusive to the speculative sequence. They concern the ‘re-reading’ or revisiting of the first thesis and, as they explicitly contradict the latter two steps of the reflective, are not ascribed to Kant without controversy.

(2) A synthesis of the understanding is required for the forms of intuition to *be* forms of intuition, for the sensibility they realize to be a stem of the cognitive faculty. This is the “possible and necessary *a priori*”⁵² *synthesis speciosa* of §24, the *transcendental* synthesis prior

⁵² B151.

to experience and making it possible, the first “effect of the understanding on sensibility,”⁵³ which is “the ground of all the others” or (equivalently) that whereby “the understanding determines sensibility”.⁵⁴ That this synthesis makes possible the form of intuition which in turn makes the relation of passivity possible is indicated by Kant saying that through it alone the categories “acquire objective reality, i.e. application to objects that **can be** given to us in intuition”⁵⁵ – the tense here, and in Kant saying that through this synthesis the understanding “is capable of itself determining sensibility inwardly with regard to the manifold that **may be** given to it in accordance with the form of intuition”⁵⁶ indicates the crucial moment of the claim, that this synthesis is *prior* to the relation of passivity, prior to and condition of the possibility of the reception of empirical manifolds. Indeed at B154 he says that apperception and its synthetic unity “applies, **prior** to all sensible intuition of objects in general”. Symbolically, we represent this thesis (2s) $SU > FI$. My claim here that (2s) is a true interpretation of Kant’s thought is buttressed by the role it plays as middle term in facilitating the conclusion of the speculative syllogism, (Cs): $\therefore SU > P$.

Kant proves the categories valid for all that come before our senses through this conclusion (Cs) and the means to it (2s) in the third paragraph of §26, the argument of which runs thus:⁵⁷

⁵³ B152.

⁵⁴ B160n.

⁵⁵ B151.

⁵⁶ B153.

⁵⁷ I suggest that Kant’s meaning and intention in the third paragraph is more apparent if we at first *forget* the existence of B160n, especially the claim there that “the form of intuition merely gives the manifold”. The note of course was written after, and my claim will be that it was inspired by Kant’s own perception of the fact that the propositions he needs to affirm here to complete the deduction ((2s) $SU > FI$ and (Cs) $SU > P$) contradict those he needs to affirm due to his having assumed the standpoint of the finite I ((2r) $P > SU$ and (Cr) $FI > SU$). See p.16 below

The synthesis of apprehension must be in agreement with the form of intuition, time. Time is *also* a pure intuition, thus contains its unity (see the Aesthetic). Synthetic unity is given with *this* (the pure intuition) and thus *also* given as the condition of all synthesis of apprehension. This synthetic unity can only be that prescribed by the categories to a given intuition in general, only applied to our sensible intuition.

For the Deduction to work, I submit, Kant needs the “also” to be read backwards, as it were. Consider the move from pure intuitions having their unity to this unity being given as the condition of all synthesis of apprehension. This move is only *useful* in the proof if it connects with the synthesis of apprehension mentioned in the first sentence. There, it was said to be in agreement with the *form of intuition*. So he *does* want to say what the proof demands, that this synthetic unity is indeed given along with the *form of intuition*. That requires the “also” being read backwards, and that requires the claim that a form of intuition (something which precedes and conditions all that could possibly come before our senses) only *is* a form of intuition *through* a synthesis of the understanding. It also requires, of course, “the form of intuition merely gives the manifold” being *false*.

This line of thought can be connected with the formulaic presentation thus: The form of intuition is the *condition* of the relation of passivity, the relation through which things “come before our senses” (1r/s) $FI > P$. To show the validity of the forms of combination (the categories) *for* this relation of passivity, then, the synthetic unity that can only come through a synthesis and that guarantees conformity to the forms of combination needs to be ‘given along with’⁵⁸ this condition for the relation of passivity, the form of intuition. (He *needs* (2s) $SU > FI$ *for* (Cs) $SU > P$, this last being that through which the categories’ validity can be known.) Now

⁵⁸ See B161.

the proof that Kant *thinks* and *affirms* these two formulas comes from the ‘also’ of the first sentence: the **same** time (FI) that’s by (1r/s) the condition of the relation of passivity is **also** the time which possesses its unity *only through* a synthesis. (This time of (1r/s) requires *as condition of the possibility of it as the FI prior to P* the sequence inclusive of (2s) and issuing in the conclusion (Cs). Thus: the ‘re-reading’ or (better here) ‘supplement’ of (1r/s).)

Now the crucial moment of this ‘re-reading’ or speculative interpretation of Kant as Longuenesse and McDowell present it is to basically equate the ‘formal intuition’ of B160n, the space and time that, in possessing their unity, “presuppose a synthesis” through which alone they “are first *given* as intuitions,” with the Aesthetic’s ‘forms of intuition’.⁵⁹ McDowell and Longuenesse see Kant in the final throes of the B Deduction basically arguing thus: things can only come before the senses through the form of intuition. The form of intuition has a unity, and that unity must come from a synthesis of the understanding. There is thus a priority of the synthesis of the understanding to the priority of the form of intuition to the relation of passivity, and this is what explains the conformity of *all that may be given through* the form of intuition to the categories: things (manifolds, objects) can only be given through the unity of the form of intuition, and since this unity was bestowed by the understanding, these given things must conform to the understanding’s unity, and hence the categories. It is clear that this is equivalent to finding Kant thinking the speculative syllogism as here presented: (1r/s) FI > P, (2s) SU > FI, \therefore (Cs) SU > P. Such interpreters see Kant finding the solution to the problem of the validity of the categories for all that can come before the senses through the claim that the understanding’s form is already involved in the deliverances of sensibility (that given through the relation of

⁵⁹ See Longuenesse, 1998: 214-227, esp. pp. 218-19. Longuenesse speaks of an ‘equation’ at 1998: 219, 219, 223, 225. Compare McDowell, 2009a: 28, n.10.

passivity). It is no coincidence that this reading is championed by interpreters deeply sensitive to the problem of Mythical Givenness.⁶⁰

But if this *is* Kant's thought, why doesn't he clearly affirm that the Aesthetic's forms of intuition, to *be* forms of intuition, presuppose a synthesis, hence the involvement of spontaneity? Why is there enough ambiguity in the text to allow a defender of the reflective Kant like Henry Allison to deny this proposition?⁶¹ Most troublingly, why does Kant in this infamous footnote appear to *deny* this very proposition through which the validity of the categories is, by the light of McDowell, Longuenesse and the truth, revealed, by saying that this synthesis yields "formal intuition" (something new), which is here *distinguished* from 'form of intuition' through the former possessing and the latter supposedly lacking the understanding-bestowed unity?

Longuenesse and Allison, defenders of speculative and reflective Kant respectively, are in agreement that Kant can't "mean" by the 'form of intuition' of B160n the 'form of intuition' on display in the Aesthetic, for the latter plainly *does* possess unity, while the former is defined as that which lacks it. Both operating under the dogma of Kant's coherence, they look *outside* the *Critique* for the clue to Kant's reference here.⁶² But it's Sellars who is closer to the truth here with his related claims that Kant is "certainly not" free of Mythical Givenness,⁶³ that he is "fighting his way towards a clarity of structure which he never achieves,"⁶⁴ and that he has mongrelly crossbred two to-be-distinguished sequences of thought into his notion of an

⁶⁰ McDowell's case is obvious. Longuenesse, in closing her response to Allison and Sedgwick, writes, "one of the benefits of my interpretation is its making clear how Kant could remain true to this distinction [between sensibility and understanding] while radically challenging what we have come to call, after Sellars, "the Myth of the Given" " (2005: 38; cf. 141.)

⁶¹ See Allison, 2004: 114, 192-3.

⁶² To his engagement with Eberhard (Kant, 1790). See Allison, 2004: 345, n.32, and Longuenesse, 1998: 222 and n.18, and 2005: 72, where she corrects her point against Allison in light of his response in Allison, 2000.

⁶³ Sellars, 1997: 14.

⁶⁴ Sellars, 1967: 2.

intuition.⁶⁵ Our concern is with the mongrel crossbreeding in the notion of a *form of* intuition, and it's because it has to do work for the opposing sequence of thought that Kant needs to (not only affirm but *also*) *deny* that a synthesis of the understanding is required to yield the form of intuition. It's this sequence of thought that is centrally targeted by Hegel in his critique of Kant's standpoint of finitude or "point of view of man". It is now time to introduce this opposing sequence of thought.

2.3 THE REFLECTIVE SYLLOGISM AND THE STANDPOINT OF FINITUDE

We must not place Kant's merit in this, that he put the forms, as expressed in the categories, into the human cognitive faculty. - Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, p.79⁶⁶

Consider Stephen Engstrom's defense of Kant in "Understanding and Sensibility" against

discussions relating Kant to later idealists, and to Hegel in particular, that [claim that,] in depicting the human cognitive power as divided into two stems, with one of them, sensibility, having special forms of its own, Kant introduces into his account an unacceptable subjectivism, reflected in his claim that our cognition is of appearances, not things in themselves.⁶⁷

The *reason* Kant distinguishes sensibility from the understanding, Engstrom informs us, is to acknowledge the fact that in theoretical cognition the existence or actuality of the object we come to know is prior to, independent of and cause of our representation of the object. The

⁶⁵ Sellars, 1967, esp. ch.1. Cf. the talk of "two lines of thought tangled together" at 1997: 15.

⁶⁶ Cf. pp.72-3: "The whole transcendental deduction...cannot be understood without distinguishing what Kant calls the faculty of the original synthetic unity of apperception from the Ego which does the representing and is the subject."

⁶⁷ Engstrom, 2006: 19.

implication implicit in Engstrom's paper is that, since this priority is in accordance with the facts, and this truth is the reason for Kant's distinguishing sensibility from the understanding, it is a justified distinction, and Hegel's critique of it is ill-motivated.

This would be an appropriate response to the Hegelian critique of Kant, *if* Hegel was in agreement with Kant that the unity of consciousness from which the categories arise is that of the "finite thinking being".⁶⁸ As the non-metaphysical interpreters of Hegel basically *do* take this to be the case, this defense of Kant against *the non-metaphysical* Hegel is just.⁶⁹ Hegel, however, is not in agreement with Kant on this point, and for this reason the true Hegel must be distinguished from the non-metaphysical Hegel. As Longuenesse attests,

Kant and Hegel disagree in their answer to the question: what *is* the unity of apperception? For Kant, it is the unity of a finite consciousness [...] For Hegel [...] it is the same "reason," or intuitive understanding, which Hegel found in Kant's solution to the dialectics of aesthetic judgment. Now, to interpret the transcendental unity of apperception in these terms is to say that it is the source not only of the form but also of the matter of appearances.⁷⁰

Hegel's rejection of the claim that a sensibility separated from the understanding provides the content or matter for cognition thus comes through his rejection of the claim that the unity of consciousness and hence the categories are to be ascribed to the finite I, a rejection he sees as *necessary* to the task of making sense of Kant. Citing the *finitude* of the finite I's cognition against Hegel, as Engstrom does, begs the question, which is, 'does Kant's *way of*

⁶⁸ B72.

⁶⁹ Pippin essentially takes "the extraordinary claim about Kant that Hegel makes" (1989: 17) at Hegel, 1812/16: 584 ("It is one of the profoundest and truest insights...") to imply that Hegel too takes the unity of consciousness doing the work in the Deduction to be that of the finite I, *missing* what Hegel says *critically* of this "profound principle" on p.589, and what he'd already said about the Deduction in the passages from *Faith and Knowledge* quoted in opening this section.

⁷⁰ Longuenesse, 2007: 187.

acknowledging our finitude get it right?’⁷¹ Kant’s view, as Hegel sees it, is led by its “confusion” over how to acknowledge our finitude to “say the opposite of what it intends”:⁷² from its intention to place us finitely – wouldn’t this intention find satisfaction in the affirmation that we arise through nature, that *nature* is the condition of the possibility of *our* being? – it ends up positing the finite I as existing in itself prior to the existence of nature! Why is this implied by Kant’s view? Because Kant places the conditions of the possibility of nature in the cognitive faculty of the finitely placed I, and as Fichte observes, “the conditions for the possibility of a thing ought surely to precede the reality thereof”.⁷³

But what do I mean when I say that Kant ascribes the categories to the finite I? What justice is there for this characterization, when the Deduction reveals the cognitive faculty as that through which nature becomes possible? And why would we want to abandon this standpoint, and ascend from the point of view of man to knowledge of God?

As Kant puts it at the end of the Deduction, the unity of consciousness / the categories make nature possible.⁷⁴ Only so could they be revealed as *valid* for all of nature - could their universality and necessity, or equivalently their *a priority*, be shown, for this can only come through the categories *preceding* that of which they are valid in this very sense: making possible. Now *of this very same understanding that makes nature possible* Kant says, at B145, “the manifold for intuition must already be *given* prior to the synthesis of the understanding and independently of it”. It is *this* claim of Kant’s, that the understanding which makes nature

⁷¹ “[I]t seems clear that the reason why Kant describes human cognition as involving receptivity is that it is finite, or dependent” (Engstrom, 2006: 11). We will see Hegel’s challenge to Engstrom’s claim that the “finite character of theoretical cognition is perfectly captured in Kant’s account” (12), and his reasons for asserting the *necessity* of the ascension in principle or point of view, in the following paragraphs.

⁷² Hegel, 1812/16: 594.

⁷³ Fichte, 1982: 64.

⁷⁴ A114, 125, B159, B163.

possible is that of the being that is originally not active but rather *passive* in its relation to the objects it comes to know, that we mean by saying Kant ascribes the categories to the finite I.

Kant's claim at B145 that the manifolds must be given prior to and independently of the synthesis of the understanding is equivalent to the claim that the relation of passivity (the relation through which manifolds are received) must be prior to the synthesis of the understanding. This gives us the second premise of the *reflective* sequence of thought: (2r) $P > SU$. If the relation of passivity must occur prior to the synthesis of the understanding, then likewise the *vehicle* of this relation, the form of intuition, must be given prior to the synthesis of the understanding (as Kant anyway affirms with the opening words of the rewritten Deduction at B129). The symbolic expression of this, (Cr) $FI > SU$, can be seen to follow from the two premises of the reflective syllogism. This syllogism is laid beside its speculative counterpart below, so that the contradiction in Kant's thinking can be intuited at a glance.

	Reflective (r)	Speculative (s)
1	$FI > P$	$FI > P$
2	$P > SU$	$SU > FI$
C	$\therefore FI > SU$	$\therefore SU > P$

(Cs), through which the validity of the categories is shown, contradicts the thought expressed at B145, (2r). The conclusion of the reflective sequence (Cr) contradicts (2s), the thesis discernible in §24 and the use of that section (see the reference to it in closing B160n) in the third paragraph of §26. *It is the awareness of this latter contradiction that impels Kant to*

write B160n, to affirm the speculative sequence for the newly coined ‘formal intuition’, and to claim that “the form of intuition merely gives the manifold”. It represents Kant’s attempt to save his reflective sequence of thought, a sequence of thought wrung from or expressing the thought orienting his entire project, that the categories arise from the finite I, in light of his 1787 awareness that his speculative sequence of thought *contradicts* it. In the very moment in which “the principle basis for my system articulated in the *Critique*”⁷⁵ is brought to completion, then, Kant is confronted with a plain contradiction in one of his central notions. B160n, in claiming that the speculative sequence applies to ‘formal intuition’ when, for the thoughts to make sense, it must have been *thought* and *affirmed* for ‘form of intuition’, represents nothing less than a rare moment of *sophistry* of this “great, grey mother of us all”.⁷⁶

2.4 APPEARANCES AND THINGS IN THEMSELVES

In his defense of Kant against the Hegelian attack, Engstrom makes claims about Kant’s account of theoretical cognition that are directly opposed to Hegel’s own. “Nothing sullies its objectivity, or credentials as cognition,”⁷⁷ writes Engstrom, whereas Hegel counters that, according to the definition of truth as the agreement of cognition and its object which Kant ‘grants and presupposes,’⁷⁸ “the fundamental assertion of transcendental idealism, that reason as cognitive is incapable of apprehending things-in-themselves” is “an untrue conception,”⁷⁹ that the claimed cognition the account is of is, by principles internal to the account, in fact not cognition. Crucial

⁷⁵ From the Preface to the long footnote in the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, 4: 474.

⁷⁶ Brandom, 2000: 79.

⁷⁷ Engstrom, 2006: 20.

⁷⁸ A58/B82.

⁷⁹ Hegel, 1812/16: 593.

to resolving this dispute of course is the truth regarding what Kant means ('intends') by saying that our knowledge is of mere appearances, and not of things in themselves. Engstrom claims,

That Kant calls these objects [of our theoretical cognition] "mere appearances" indicates, not that they lack *independence* of our cognitive power *in respect of form* [...] but that - in contrast to things known as they are in themselves by an intuiting intellect - they lack *dependence* of it *in respect of existence*. As he makes clear, they are the very objects we've all along taken ourselves to be able to know (A30/B45).⁸⁰

Neither the negative part of this claim (that in calling these objects appearances Kant *doesn't* mean to affirm a lack of independence with respect to form) nor its positive part (that Kant means for appearances to *lack* dependence on the cognitive faculty with respect to *existence*) can, however, be maintained. In both versions of the Deduction Kant attempts to defuse the 'strangeness' of the doctrine presented there, that nature is made possible through the cognitive faculty, that the latter is the origin of the laws or combination to be found in nature, by affirming that these laws and appearances exist only in relation to the subject, not as they are independently of the subject (as they are in themselves).⁸¹ The *point* of Kant's novel claim that the objects of our cognition are appearances and not things in themselves is precisely to deny that they exist independently of the cognitive faculty, for by his lights it's precisely this thesis that's required to explain the possibility of us having a certain kind of knowledge of them that must

⁸⁰ Engstrom, 2006: 20.

⁸¹ "That nature should direct itself according to our subjective ground of apperception, indeed in regard to its lawfulness even depend on this, may well sound quite contradictory and strange. But if one considers that this nature is nothing in itself but a sum of appearances, hence not a thing in itself but merely a multitude of representations in the mind, then one will not be astonished..." (A114), cf. A129-30; "It is by no means stranger that the laws of appearances in nature must agree with the understanding and its *a priori* form... than that the appearances themselves must agree with the form of sensible intuition *a priori*. For laws exist just as little in the appearances, but rather exist only relative to the subject in which the appearances inhere, insofar as it has understanding, as appearances do not exist in themselves, but only relative to the same being, insofar as it has senses... appearances are only representations of things that exist without cognition of what they might be in themselves" (B164).

precede being given these objects, *a priori* knowledge, e.g. in mathematics and pure natural science. The solution to the Antinomies, furthermore, is that the entities of the regresses, *since* mere appearances and not things in themselves, *do not exist* prior to the actual regress, and do not exist otherwise than through it, i.e., otherwise than through their relation to the human cognition that brings them to be. “Appearances in general are nothing outside our representation, which is just what we mean by their transcendental ideality” (A507/B535).

If appearances lacked dependence on our cognition with respect to existence, they could be the kind of thing that could *affect* us. Kant would have then acknowledged the finite nature of our cognition, the fact that the object we come to know is prior to and cause of our representation of it, *through* the concept of appearance. Engstrom’s thinking that this *identity* between the objects that affect us and the objects we come to know holds for Kant’s thinking is apparent in the words emboldened below from his description of the two “opposite” directions of dependence at work in the Deduction.

The Transcendental Deduction’s task [... is] explaining how the pure concepts can relate a priori to objects, notwithstanding that **the latter** exist independently of the actuality of our cognition (A85/B117). In the Transcendental Deduction, Kant relies on the Copernican proposition that the objects we can know must conform to our cognition to reconcile the a priori status of the pure concepts with the second condition [the priority of the existence of objects to the existence of our representations of them...] by explaining how the direction of dependence in respect of *form* can be the opposite of the direction of dependence in respect of *existence* (A92/B124-5).⁸²

⁸² Engstrom, 2006: 23, n.13. This claimed identity, equivalent to the claim that it is *appearances* that affect us, is also on display at Engstrom, 1994: 378.

But at Bxxvii, A251 and elsewhere, Kant affirms that, from the *mere concept* of appearance, we *must* posit a thing in itself as the ground of it.⁸³ Kant's official position has to be that the object to which we are originally in a passive relation, the object which, by B145, we are related to *prior* to the synthesis of the understanding, is the thing in itself. As B145 makes plain, Kant attempts to acknowledge our finitude by saying that the relation of passivity whereby a manifold is received from an independent object is *prior* to the synthesis through which the objects we thereby know (appearances) are cognized. The objects that are correspondingly thought to be *active* to this moment of the finite I's passivity, since they are conceived *as* such *prior* to that moment of synthesis through which appearances (*natural* objects) become possible, cannot therefore themselves be appearances, and thus can only be things in themselves.

Support for this claim comes from the fact that Kant endorsed Court Chaplain Schulz's interpretation of his philosophy whilst rejecting the interpretations of J.S. Beck and Fichte (12:367-8 and 12:370-1; Zweig, pp.510-11 and 559-60). It was as fundamental to the interpretations of the latter two that the affecting object was an appearance as it was to Schulz that the affecting object was a thing in itself. Beck:

If I were to give my judgment concerning this difficulty, which is certainly important to a great many people, and if I were to determine what your *Critique* actually means, when, on the first page of the introduction, it speaks of objects that affect the senses – whether it means by that things in themselves or appearances – I should answer that... the object that affects me must therefore be appearance and not thing in itself.⁸⁴

Fichte comes to the same conclusion in his examination of Kant's statements that "objects are given to us" (B33) and that "objects affecting our senses partly of themselves

⁸³ Indeed, in the same sentence to which Engstrom points in his reference to A30/B45 in the quote two pages above, Kant says that the "**true** correlate" of our representations is the thing in itself.

⁸⁴ 12:165; Zweig, 1999: 513. Cf. 12:168; Zweig, 1999: 514-5.

produce representations...” (B1; Fichte, 1982: 58-60). In these pages from his Second Introduction, Fichte is explicitly engaging and contradicting “the commentator [that Kant] has recently endorsed, Herr *Schulz*,” who concedes “that *the objective ground of appearances lies in something that is the thing-in-itself*” (Fichte, 1982: 53). It is, I claim, *because* Beck denies that the affecting object is a thing in itself, that Kant – under the influence, surely, of Schulz – takes Beck, against the latter’s protests, to both affirm intellectual intuition (12:166; Zweig, 1999: 513) and “to explain away sensibility” (12:167; Zweig, 1999: 514). Just as Kant takes Fichte’s system for an “attempt to cull a real object out of logic” (12:371; Zweig, 1999: 559), he accuses Beck of thinking “that the understanding creates the object” (12:168; Zweig, 1999: 514).

Now Beck had twice pointed out to Kant that he ought not to have defined “intuition” in the Aesthetic as a representation related immediately to an object, given that the possibility of a representation’s relation to an object is not explained until the Analytic (at 11:311 and 11:338; Zweig, 1999: 396 and 414). To my mind, Kant never adequately acknowledges Beck’s point, and it is because Kant has, fundamentally and inconsistently, assumed the transcendental subject to stand in relation to objects prior to its activity, and because he hears Beck’s and Fichte’s claims in light of this assumption, that he can find nothing but absurdity in their denial of affection by a thing in itself. Kant’s endorsement of Schulz and rejection of Beck and Fichte shows that he rejects interpretations like Engstrom’s that take the affecting object to be an appearance.

Jacobi’s influential expression of puzzlement about the critical philosophy, part of which reads that without the thing in itself he couldn’t enter into it, is thus just. Since it is only through the concept of an unknowable thing in itself that Kant acknowledges the priority through which Engstrom attempts to defend Kant from Hegel’s ‘unacceptable subjectivism’ charge (the priority

of the existence of the object to our representation of it), the refutation of the charge fails, and Hegel's claim that Kant leaves us with what is, by his own lights, an untrue cognition, stands.

This criticism of Kant has obvious affinities with the old charge that Kant is close to Berkeley. Notice, however, that Kant first counters the accusation of Berkeleyanism in the *Prolegomena* not by affirming, as he would if Engstrom were right, that his *appearances* exist independently ("space and time, together with all that they contain, are not things nor qualities in themselves, but belong merely to the appearances of the latter: up to this point I am one in confession with the above idealists" [appendix, 4:374]), but rather by affirming his commitment *to the thing in itself* ("...Whereas I say, that things as objects of our senses existing outside us are given, but we know nothing of what they may be in themselves, knowing only their appearances, i.e., the representations which they cause in us by affecting our senses." *Remark II* to §13, 4:289). In the place where we would expect it most, then, Kant does *not* affirm but, in being "one in confession with" Berkeley, explicitly denies the negative part of Engstrom's claim, that the existence of the appearances is prior to the existence of our representation. In claiming that appearances exist prior to our representations and cause them, Engstrom has turned appearances into things in themselves.

We can show that Kant must think a *thing in itself* at the other end of the relation of passivity from another angle. We have *a priori* knowledge of the natural (spatiotemporal) world. The necessity and universality characteristic of that knowledge is only possible, Kant thinks, if this knowledge *precedes* the objects that are given to us through sensibility. According to Kant, it *further* follows that the objects which are *subject* to this unity coming from the subject can exist *with* this unity only in cognition, only in relation to the subject; here he infers to a

proposition Hegel will *deny*: that they could *not* exist with this unity *independently* of their being in relation to the subject.⁸⁵

Now this inference of Kant's is revealing of his orienting assumption that the subject is *already distinguished* from its objects *prior* to the synthesis of the understanding: that *first* there is the relation of the subject to its objects, and *then* there is the synthesis through which a certain class of objects (appearances) become known, as is necessary for B145 to have meaning.⁸⁶ It is this unthought (see sec.5 below) relation to an other that is targeted in Hegel's charge against the 'finite'⁸⁷ or 'reflective'⁸⁸ nature of Kant's philosophy. We can thus say the following about Kant's inference to the claim that the object can't exist with the unity through which it is known independently of the event of cognition through which it is known: just as Kant's reason for *affirming* this inference is based on this orienting assumption of the subject being distinguished from its object prior to the synthesis of the understanding, Hegel's justification for *denying* this inference comes through his revealing the invalidity *by Kant's own lights* of this orienting assumption, and his abandoning of it.

It follows from Kant's orienting assumption that the objects exist as they truly are *prior* to the synthesis of the understanding. To say that the unity through which objects are known doesn't pertain to them independently of their being known is to say that the more the object conforms to the unity, the *less true* of the genuine object (the transcendently real one, the thing in itself) it is. Now Kant's speculative sequence of thought concludes with the thought that manifolds given through sensibility *completely* conform to the understanding's unity. This

⁸⁵ See e.g. A26/B42, A114, B164.

⁸⁶ Compare Hegel, 1812/16: 587: "in the Kantian transcendental philosophy [...] the empirical *material*, the manifold of intuition and representation, **first exists on its own account, and then** the understanding *approaches* it, brings *unity* into it and by abstraction raises it to the form of *universality*."

⁸⁷ See e.g. the preface to Hegel, 1801.

⁸⁸ See Hegel, 1812/16: 45.

thought is required by the conjunction of two thoughts: the principle of transcendental deductions generally, that universal and necessary validity is only possible for a representation if it makes that *of* which it is thus valid possible, and the interpretation of Kant's Copernican thought we've defended, that the understanding's unity, in making space and time as forms of intuition possible, makes the reception of empirical manifolds possible. Now if Kant were to *affirm* that sequence of thought *from the standpoint of his orienting assumption of finitude*, he would be the horrible solipsist long forgotten commentaries accused him of being. It would mean that even the manifolds received by the already-distinguished-from-objects I, since received through a transcendently subjectivizing unity, had nothing to do with those objects from which it was already distinguished, and from which it is supposed to be receiving some information.⁸⁹ This worry that the speculative sequence implies solipsism when affirmed from the standpoint of finitude is expressed by Kant when he tells us at B145 that the *reason* why the manifold must be given prior to and independently of the understanding - the reason for affirming that the content of cognition comes from a sensibility distinguished from the understanding - is that if this were not the case our knowledge would be intellectual intuition.

To avoid our cognition being completely unconnected from the objects it is supposed to be about, then, Kant absolutely requires the subject to be able to receive a manifold independently of its transcendently subjectivizing unity. This manifold must thus come, through the relation of passivity posited as *prior* to the synthesis effecting that unity, from a thing in itself. Of course the speculative sequence affirms that the manifold is *not* received independently of cognition's unity, which is why Hegel says, the emboldened 'it' being the

⁸⁹ I mean this expression 'transcendently subjectivizing' to express the Kantian view that the characteristics of objects that are given through the understanding's unity do *not* pertain to the same objects as they are independently of the understanding's unity; that that the unity through which objects are known doesn't pertain to objects independently of that knowledge.

manifold said at B145 to be given independently of this unity, that “the understanding... *lets it drop as something useless*, but useless only for the notion”.⁹⁰

It is clear from this *why* Kant must sophistically pretend that his speculative sequence of thought does *not* involve his notion of a form of intuition. Manifolds are given *through* the form of intuition, so if the former must be given prior to and independently of the synthesis of the understanding, so must the latter. (Here we simply express again the fact that (Cr) follows from (1r/s) and (2r).) It is to preserve the notion of the form of intuition as an organ that receives a manifold *from a thing in itself* that Kant says in B160n that it “merely gives the manifold,” for if this form of intuition was, as the speculative angel on his right shoulder has whispered to him, given through a synthesis of the understanding, it would, its opposing left-shoulder reflective devil counters, leave us cut off completely from the objects that exist prior to and independently of our representations of them. Being unwilling or unable to undertake the rethinking of the system acknowledgement of the contradiction would require, or perhaps just having “run out of time and patience,”⁹¹ Kant fudges the contradiction with the footnote.

Sellars was hip to the fact that Kant thinks the relation of passivity as a relation to things in themselves,⁹² and as mentioned above, I’m also in agreement with him that Kant has mongrelly crossbred opposing sequences of thought into some of his central notions. To “peel off the shell that keeps the inner aspiration from seeing daylight,” we need, I suggest, to distinguish two senses of ‘form of intuition’: let the FOIts be that of which the speculative sequence is affirmed,

⁹⁰ Hegel, 1812/16: 587. Compare Hegel’s talk of the ‘incomprehensibility’ of the Deduction at Hegel, 1802b: 92-3. It is incomprehensible to Hegel, I claim, because he recognizes the sequences of thought it attempts to reconcile as contradictory, and not just “opposite”, as Engstrom contends (Engstrom, 2006: n.13).

⁹¹ Guyer and Wood suggest this explanation, rather than Kant’s being satisfied with the rest of the book, for why no changes were made to the second edition of the *Critique* beyond the *Paralogisms*. (“Introduction” to their edition of the *Critique*, pp.72-3.)

⁹² See e.g. Sellars, 1967: 37. Cf. Waxman, 1991: 52.

the form of intuition given through the *synthesis speciosa*, given through the *re-reading* or ‘supplement’ of (1r/s) by (2s) and (Cs). The subscript expresses the fact that this is a form of intuition belonging to a *transcendental* sensibility. The presence of the FOIts and the speculative sequence of thought that leads to in Kant’s thinking attests to the truth of the ‘re-reading’ interpretation of Longuenesse and McDowell.

For the form of intuition that Kant needs to receive a manifold from a thing in itself *prior* to the synthesis of the understanding, I suggest the term FOIeo. Since the unity of cognition as Kant thinks it makes transcendently subjective that which is subsumed under it, Kant casts his form of intuition as an organ ejected from this transcendently subjectivizing unity of consciousness: eo = ejected organ. Kant’s reflective self needs this organ to receive a manifold from the thing in itself, even though his speculative self will let this manifold “drop as something useless”.⁹³ The unity of this organ is thus *not* given through the understanding, only the unity of the FOIts is. As one is prior and one is posterior to the synthesis of the understanding, these concepts cannot be made to cohere. It would be equally appropriate to call the FOIeo a FOImg, for a Mythically Given manifold is all it yields. Its presence, and the reflective sequence of thought that leads to it in Kant’s thinking, attests to the truth of the ‘Aesthetic Complete’ interpretation of Allison and Pippin (which is indeed contradictory to the ‘re-reading’ interpretation), and also to the truth of Sellars’ claim that Kant is “certainly not” free of Mythical Givenness.⁹⁴ McDowell has erroneously taken leave of his great transcendental empiricist,

⁹³ Hegel, 1812/16: 587.

⁹⁴ Sellars, 1997: §1.

Mythical Givenness problematic revealing master in affirming *against him* the dogma of Kant's coherence.⁹⁵

2.5 HEGEL'S TARGET IS KANT'S *UNTHOUGHT* THOUGHT

We can thus say the following about Kant's original orienting assumption, his unjustified and not made explicit originating thought: to acknowledge the priority of the existence of the object to the existence of our representation of it he envisages the I of the supreme principle as *already* related to objects, already placed as finite, *before* the synthesis of the understanding, *before* the unity of consciousness is effected through its activity. Otherwise put, he conceives of the categories or unity of consciousness as arising through a subject which is conceived as *already* separated from, *already* opposed to objects. (This is equivalent to saying that the categories arise from the finite I, for as mentioned above it's the unthought relation to an other that's targeted in the charge of 'finitude'.) This orienting thought however is a relating of the I to an object (objects), a relating that, according to §17 of the Deduction, is *only possible through* the unity of consciousness. It is a *distinguishing* of the I from its objects thought by Kant to pertain prior to that through which alone, by his own lights, all true distinguishing, and indeed all *truth*, can be grasped.⁹⁶ In support of the *Idea* against Kant's denial of it, Hegel writes, thinking only

⁹⁵ Most clearly in the *Woodbridge Lectures* (reprinted in McDowell, 2009a): see esp. the opening pages of the first and second lecture.

⁹⁶ By 'objective validity' Kant either means 'truth' or 'possible truth'. Thus at B137 Kant says that "the unity of consciousness is that which alone constitutes" the truth or possible truth of a representation or proposition; likewise in §19 Kant says that the "is" in a proposition indicates the cognition's relation to the objective unity of apperception (the unity of consciousness). As Fichte says somewhere, propositions should be made to justify themselves, and it is plain that the 'is' in Kant's orienting unthought thought, 'the manifold **is** given prior to the synthesis of the understanding and independently of it' not only cannot

according to Kantian principles, “The demonstrated absoluteness of the Notion relatively to the material of experience... consists in this, that this material as it appears *apart from* and *prior* to the Notion **has no truth**.”⁹⁷ J.S. Beck and Fichte are the first to begin to comprehend the fact that this distinguishing of the finite I from the objects independent of it (the ‘not-I’) must be derived from Kant’s “supreme principle”. Turning more resolutely critical, Hegel further comprehends *Kant’s* failure to *think* this distinguishing *through* his supreme principle. In line with my use of A314/B370 and the similar thoughts expressed by Hegel at 1812/16: 594 quoted above, then, I claim that Hegel’s critique of Kant’s standpoint of finitude is not a matter of opposing certain propositions to various *explicitly held* propositions of Kant, but is rather a critique of what’s *unthought* in Kant’s thinking, and I mean in particular his way of acknowledging our finitude being unthought in relation to his own supreme principle.⁹⁸ This character of Hegel’s critique of Kant as a critique of an orienting *unthought* thought on Kant’s behalf is on display in the following passages:

The critical philosophy...[claims] that we place our thoughts as a medium between ourselves and the objects, and that this medium instead of connecting us with the objects rather cuts us off from them. But this view can be countered by the **simple observation** that these very things which are supposed to stand beyond us and, at the other extreme, beyond the thoughts referring to them, are themselves figments of subjective thought, and as wholly indeterminate they are only a single thought-thing – the so-called thing-in-itself of empty abstraction.⁹⁹

justify itself but by the above in conjunction with what it asserts in fact *refutes* itself. As Hegel says in a text quoted below, it is indeed a “simple observation” that refutes Kant’s standpoint.

⁹⁷ Hegel, 1812/16: 591. Compare Hegel’s diagnosis of Kant’s ‘forgetful’ confusion concerning truth on p.593.

⁹⁸ The term “unthought” comes from Heidegger, 2002: 36.

⁹⁹ Hegel, 1812/16: 36.

It is the greatest inconsistency to admit, on the one hand, that the understanding knows only appearances, and to claim on the other hand that **this knowledge** is absolute, by such statements as: “Cognition can go no further”; “Here is the natural and absolute limit of human knowledge.”... It is **thoughtless**...¹⁰⁰

One reason we must abandon the ‘point of view of man,’ then, is that it leads, in Kant’s thinking at least, to a transgression of its own principles. What appears as “the point of view of man” in Kant’s thinking is *itself refuted* by his own “supreme principle of all use of the understanding”.¹⁰¹ But what is Hegel suggesting when he encourages us to move towards “knowledge of God,” and how might we *justify* such a move?

2.6 KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

“The Notion in General” introduces the ‘moving beyond’ Kant that Book III of the *Science of Logic* represents. It motivates this moving beyond through a dialectical engagement with Kant’s thinking, especially in the B Deduction. In this crucial chapter, Hegel explicitly takes on Kant’s thinking “as regards the relation of the understanding or the Notion to the stages *presupposed* by

¹⁰⁰ Hegel, 1817/27: §34, p.65.Cf. §74 of the *Phenomenology*: Kant’s “instrument” view “presupposes that cognition which, since it is excluded from the Absolute, is surely outside of the truth as well, is nevertheless true”.

¹⁰¹ Title of §17, which contains the texts (B136; B137) grounding Fichte’s and Hegel’s speculative interpretations: Fichte takes B136 (Fichte, 1982: 48), Hegel B137 (Hegel, 1812/16: 590) to already imply that the manifold is *not* given independently of and prior to the synthesis of the understanding. It should be noted that Longuenesse’s rejection of Hegel’s alternative, this “strange and grandiose philosophical novel” (Longuenesse, 2007: 217) in favor of the ‘point of view of man,’ isn’t an endorsement of Kant’s view simpliciter - she finds Hegel’s perception of a ‘tension’ in Kant true: 2007: 191 - but is rather a defense of “the view that Kant’s critical philosophy **offers the tools** for a resolution symmetrically opposed to the one Hegel is attempting: a systematic development of the “point of view of man” which is quite different from the Lockean “empirical psychology” Hegel is accusing Kant’s transcendental philosophy of collapsing into” (191).

it,”¹⁰² and as I read it basically accuses Kant of a “misunderstanding”¹⁰³ in the way he goes about acknowledging the priority of the existence of the object to the existence of our representation of it. Hegel views Kant’s claim (e.g. at B129, B145) that the manifold for intuition is given prior to and independently of the synthesis of the understanding as essentially suffering from the same category mistake that Kant, in motivating his own Transcendental Deduction, accused Locke and Hume of: to acknowledge the priority of the existence of the object to our representation of it, Kant holds that the manifold for intuition is given *prior* to that through which alone all *truth* is possible (the synthesis of the understanding; B137). In doing so, however, he has confused an issue concerning our *acquisition* of a representation with the issue of explaining that representation’s *truth* (its possible status *as cognition*).¹⁰⁴ This is an important element of what I take to be Hegel’s meaning in the following text.

A capital misunderstanding which prevails on this point is that the *natural* principle or the *beginning* which forms the starting point in the *natural* evolution or in the *history* of the developing individual, is regarded as the *truth*, and the *first* in the *Notion*. Now, in the order of nature, intuition or being are undoubtedly first, or are the condition for the Notion, but they are not on that account the absolutely unconditioned; on the contrary, their reality is sublated in the Notion and with it, too, the illusory show they possessed of being the conditioning reality.¹⁰⁵

I take the “undoubtedly” in this sentence to indicate Hegel’s acknowledgement of a *truth* behind Kant’s reason for claiming that the content or matter of cognition is given prior to the synthesis of the understanding. Yes, we are finite, acknowledges Hegel, and indeed, it is the

¹⁰² Hegel, 1812/16: 586. The issue is of central concern from p.586-590.

¹⁰³ Hegel, 1812/16: 588. Hegel’s target here is broader than just Kant, but definitely inclusive of Kant.

¹⁰⁴ See CPR, A86-7/B118-9.

¹⁰⁵ Hegel, 1812/16: 588. Cf. p.591: “the Notion has *subjugated* being and essence, which from other starting points include also feeling and intuition and representation, **and which appeared as its antecedent conditions**, and has proved itself to be their *unconditioned ground*.” What’s important here is Hegel’s relegating to the *order of nature* the priority which Kant thinks interferes with the priority of the understanding’s form to the objects known through it, the priority through which *a priori* truth (*a priori* cognition) is possible.

priority of the existence of the object to the existence of our knowledge of it, and that our original relation to this object is one of passivity, that constitutes this finitude. But Hegel's crucial move here is to *relegate* this priority to "the order of nature".

For Kant, the unity of consciousness makes nature possible. By B145, this *same unity of consciousness* must be given a manifold through a relation of passivity prior to its activity through which nature is made possible. The relation of passivity, as *prior* to that through which nature is made possible, is thus *not natural*. As the categories are only valid for natural events, however, this means that we cannot apply them to this relation, and cannot claim as knowledge, 'the independent object *causes* our representation,' as of course we need to, and as is *required* to acknowledge our finitude. (Otherwise put: the problem of affection is real.)

If we follow Hegel's ascension in principle, however, and undergo with him "the transition from the standpoint of finite consciousness to the standpoint of the absolute,"¹⁰⁶ this problem, and the problem of the contradiction between the speculative and the reflective sequences of thought that originates from Kant's taking the categories / unity of consciousness to arise from a finite I, are dissolved. Like Hegel's, Kant's metaphysics of the categories is an account of the conditions of the possibility of nature, but *unlike* Hegel's it is *of* the cognitive faculty *of* the finite I. Hegel's, by contrast, is "*prior* to the creation of [*both*] nature **and** a finite mind".¹⁰⁷ His categories derive from the *infinite I*, the I which is *not* originally opposed to objects but is *prior* to the separation of the finite I from its object. For Hegel as for Kant, the

¹⁰⁶ This is how Longuenesse describes it before disparaging it at 2007: 217.

¹⁰⁷ SL, p.50, changing Miller's "before" to "prior". I'm quoting here from the sentence Longuenesse cites (along with many others) at HCM, p.xviii as the central interpretive node for approaching the *Science of Logic*: "It can therefore be said that this content [the *Science of Logic*] is the exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence prior to the creation of nature and a finite mind."

unity of consciousness (the Notion) / the categories make nature possible,¹⁰⁸ but as this unity of consciousness is *not* that of the finite I, we can say for Hegel what we *cannot* say for Kant: *nature makes the finite I possible*; the entire being of the finite I on this view arises through nature and is *thoroughly natural*. In taking the unity of consciousness through which nature becomes possible as arising from the finite I, however, Kant by contrast must necessarily posit the finite I as a *thing in itself* existing *prior* to the event (the synthesis of the understanding) through which nature arises, for here the finite I's cognitive faculty is the condition of the possibility of nature, and (again), as Fichte points out, "the conditions for the possibility of a thing ought surely to precede the reality thereof".¹⁰⁹ Here we have the unpalatable Kantian *dualism*: the split 'I' as necessarily posited, unknowable but thinkable as free thing in itself, and as unfree, knowable appearing I.

The problem of affection is solved in Hegel's philosophy in the following way. For Hegel, nature receives its categorical unity *prior* to the arising of the finite I. Thus, although he agrees with Kant that *the finite I's* own activity is *posterior* to the passive relation of sensibility through which the priority of the existence of the object to the existence of our representation of it is acknowledged, this posteriority *doesn't imply* for Hegel, as it does for Kant, either (1) that the relation of passivity is itself outside of nature, nor (2) that the relation cannot be known through the categories.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ At the end of the *Logic* we read that the *Idea* "freely releases" itself to become "the *externality of space and time* existing absolutely on its own account without the moment of subjectivity" (1812/16: 843).

¹⁰⁹ Fichte, 1982: 64. As we've seen, Kant acknowledges the "quite contradictory and strange" (A114; cf. B164) nature of the proposition that nature arises through the finite I, defusing the worry through the reminder that nature is merely the realm of that which only exists in relation to the subject (appearance) and not the world as it is in itself.

¹¹⁰ The claim, then, is that for Kant, the *relation of the independent object to the finite I whereby the latter is passive*, is *not* an event in nature, whilst Hegel, through his ascension in principle, has found a way to

The virtue of Hegel's ascension in principle can be seen by coming at it through the more traditional angle of seeing it as improving on Kant's "unacceptable subjectivism"¹¹¹ by providing a more satisfying account of the objectivity of our knowledge. We've claimed, citing Bxxvii and A251, that Kant *does* posit things in themselves as existing, and shown why he must. We've further seen that, as a consequence of taking the unity of cognition to be contributed by the *finite* I (the I conceived as distinguished from its objects prior to the unity of cognition being effected), Kant infers that these objects do *not* possess the unity through which they're known independently of their relation to the finite knowing subject. For Hegel, however, the infinite I gives rise to nature, and nature in turn gives rise to the finite I. Natural objects thus possess the categorical unity they derive from the infinite I *prior* to the arising of the finite I. Thus, when the finite I comes to know *through* this unity of cognition, it doesn't violently subsume the object

conceive of it as natural. It is this italicized relation that's of concern in McDowell's work on how to conceive *impressions*. McDowell focuses certain central problems of modern philosophy on this relation, explaining that, by thinking opposing thoughts of it, an antinomy is generated for it: the relation between the independent object and the finite I whereby the latter is passive, the relation whereby we enjoy impressions, is required, since it grounds knowledge, to be within the normative space of reasons, and yet it is also (often unthinkingly) thought to be a relation in (mere first) nature, thus subject to the realm of law and *not* possibly normative. I see Hegel as laboring *against Kant* for the sake of being able to conceive the relation whereby the finite I is passive in relation to its objects as a *natural* relation, as McDowell so labors (e.g. against Davidson). But there is a crucial difference in their projects, for Hegel does *not* wish, as McDowell does, to correct Kant's deeply held intuition that the unity of cognition and of the sensible world arises through the *activity* of the 'I' of the supreme principle.

Kant's speculative sequence needs thought-like (categorical) unity to be in play in the relation of passivity; the "none other than"s of B144 and B161 *assert* this, but because (1) unity arises only through activity, (2) the finite I is *passive* in this relation, and (3) the activity through which the categories arise *is* that of the finite I (his primary unthought thought), Kant is barred from being able to conceive *how* the categories could be actualized in this relation. (Notice what Kant concedes [of the A Deduction] in the footnote in the preface of the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science*, 4: 474: he has shown the *that* but not, he concedes, the *how* categories make experience possible.) Now whilst McDowell abandons (1), Hegel (for reasons also I think connected with his reception of Aristotle) adheres stringently to it. Instead he jettisons (3) and undertakes the ascension in principle. "We must not place Kant's merit in this, that he put the forms, as expressed in the categories, into the human cognitive faculty." (Hegel, 1802b: 79; cf. 72-3) His view then is that nature arises and is maintained always *through the activity of the infinite I*, and this is *his* path to the right to say, as Kant couldn't, 'yes, the finite I's passivity in the relation causing all the trouble negates the claim that *it* is active here, but since the activity through which nature arises is *not that of the finite I*, this relation is still natural, and categories, e.g. causation, may well be applied.'

¹¹¹ Engstrom, 2006: 19.

under a unity alien to its existence prior to that cognition, but attains to a cognition that is in “agreement with its object”.¹¹² Thus does Hegel’s philosophy “recompense nature for the mishandling that it suffered in Kant and Fichte’s systems.”¹¹³

The infinite I is the I that is *not* finite. Kant’s I is, or ought be, that through which all true distinguishing is possible. It thus *ought* to be infinite, not related to any other *prior* to its activity but only so related *through* its own activity. If the forms of combination (the categories) are thought, as properly they should be, as belonging to this infinite I, they cannot be said to belong to the subject *over* the object, for there *is no* object ‘over,’ i.e. *distinguished* from the subject *prior* to this I’s activity. They are not ‘mere thought forms’¹¹⁴ but, as belonging to an ‘I’ *prior* to the distinguishing of the subject from its object (from being), ought rather be called ‘thought-being forms’. If our category theory takes on this Hegelian perspective, which is made possible by abandoning the Kantian ‘point of view of man’ where this registers the standpoint of the finite I, then it will be possible to “equate the form of the world and the form of thought without representing reality as a shadow of something self-standingly subjective”.¹¹⁵ We should then be able to see the benefit, as Longuenesse couldn’t, of Hegel’s “paradoxical gesture of leaning on Kant’s “Copernican Revolution” in order to return to a philosophical project that seems to hark

¹¹² This is “the nominal definition of truth” which Kant grants and presupposes at A58/B82, only to forget it and define truth not as the *agreement* between two terms but as the *content* (merely one end of the agreement relation) by the end of the page (A58-9/B83). See Hegel, 1812/16: 593. For the ‘violence’ claim, see any of the texts where Hegel attacks Kant’s ‘instrument’ view of cognition, classically, 1807: §§73-4.

¹¹³ Hegel, 1801: 83.

¹¹⁴ ‘Mere forms of thought’ is a phrase often used by Kant, long before and also in the *Critique*, in the context of his critique of rationalism.

¹¹⁵ McDowell, “Conceptual Capacities in Perception”, in 2009a: 143.

back to that of that very rational metaphysics whose possibility Kant believed he had definitely eliminated.”¹¹⁶

Finally, consider Hegel’s ordering in the Encyclopedia: (A) Science of Logic, (B) Philosophy of Nature, (C) Philosophy of Spirit. This ordering reflects what I pointed to earlier (p.4) as the fact that Hegel’s philosophy can be understood as ‘the developed contradiction’ of Kant (the contradiction between the reflective and speculative syllogisms we’ve laid out). Hegel’s philosophy takes this basic structural form through his removing from Kant’s best thoughts, those in the Deduction explaining the possibility of *truth* (the speculative sequence), the interfering acquisition-priority through which Kant misguidedly acknowledges our finitude. Hegel relegates this later to the *natural* relation that is *posterior* to, and hence cleared away from, the “derivation of the *real*, if we want to call it derivation,”¹¹⁷ of *nature as it is in itself* from the ‘thought-being’ forms that constitute the essence both of nature and of finite I’s. The now hygienic sequence of thought reflected in the three stages of Hegel’s encyclopedia is: the categories make nature possible (science of logic → philosophy of nature), whilst *nature* in turn makes possible the finite I (philosophy of nature → philosophy of spirit). The finite I is now conceived as *thoroughly natural*; *all* of the finite I is conceived of as arising through nature; its natural being *exhausts* its being. Hegel thus achieves a more gratifying acknowledgement of our finitude than Kant: Kant places the finite I *prior* to nature, in that the cognitive faculty or unity of consciousness of the finite I’s transcendental (non-natural) self makes nature possible. Hegel, by contrast, places the finite I *posterior* to nature, in that for him - as, one hopes, for us - nature makes the finite I possible.

¹¹⁶ Longuenesse, 2007: 217.

¹¹⁷ Hegel, 1812/16: 591.

3.0 PROLEGOMENA TO THE ARGUMENT FOR THE EXISTENCE OF MAN: TOWARDS SATISFACTION OF THE CENTRAL CONDITION OF THE POSSIBILITY OF A HEGELIAN AGE OF (ANALYTIC?) PHILOSOPHY

3.1 ON THE POSSIBILITY OF A HEGELIAN AGE OF ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY

Bob Brandom has called for a Hegelian age of analytic philosophy,¹¹⁸ but there are reasons, one big reason in particular, to doubt its possibility. That big reason, the central, at least apparent *contradiction* between analytic and Hegelian Philosophy, is between the essential atheism of analytic philosophy on the one side, and Hegel's "ever-renewed insistence that he means to reinstate metaphysics as knowledge of God" on the other.¹¹⁹ We shall consider this major stumbling block in the course of this essay, but its dissolution, necessary so that a Hegelian age of analytic philosophy may come to be, will only be undertaken in a future work, the forthcoming *The Argument for the Existence of Man* (AFTEM), for which this paper constitutes the Prolegomena. Here, we'll examine and refute some candidate reasons for thinking that analytic and Hegelian philosophy can be brought into connection. In the process of doing so, and

¹¹⁸ See Brandom, 2000: 32-3.

¹¹⁹ Longuenesse, 2007: 190. Compare Schopenhauer's lyrical expression of the same, in the text from his *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason* that he quotes in his own anonymous Review of the Work: "That a miserable fellow like Hegel, whose entire philosophy is nothing but a monstrous amplification of the ontological proof, should dare to defend this proof against Kant's criticism of it, is an alliance of which the ontological proof itself, little as it knows of shame, might well feel ashamed." (From the "Appendix" to Schopenhauer, 1819: 268)

for the sake of being able to properly *distinguish* between the so-called Humean, Kantian, and Hegelian ages of analytic philosophy, we'll specify in the process the distinct essences of these three philosophical systems.

There are considerations to be found in favor of the possibility of a Hegelian age of analytic philosophy, and before proceeding to the deeper *problem* standing in the way of such a thing, with these we shall begin. From its origin in its opposition to both British Hegelianism and Heideggerian ontology on, analytic philosophy has been essentially “anti-metaphysical”, or more determinately “anti-ontological”. With these terms we refer primarily to analytic philosophy’s positing itself as *posterior* to natural science, by which I mean the following: *the truth about nature* is the business of the natural sciences. Philosophy may do many things, some of which will be drawing upon and even clarifying the results of the natural sciences, but to *challenge* natural science *about nature* is verboten.¹²⁰ *Natural science* is responsible for ontology.

¹²⁰ The sense here defined for “posterior” and with it “prior” will be in play throughout the essay. The move to the *Kantian* age of analytic philosophy, as we’ll see when examining Kant’s thesis that the unity necessary for the *subject’s* self-consciousness makes (scientific too) *experience*, or equivalently *nature*, possible, already negates this priority at least semi-essential to analytic philosophy. Now in arriving at “a philosophy that will recompense nature for the mishandling that it suffered in Kant’s and Fichte’s systems” (Hegel, 1801: 83), Hegel negates Kant’s anti-naturalism (the nature of which will be displayed along with his (Kant’s) conception of nature). In negating Kant’s negation of the priority of natural science to ontology as understood by analytic philosophy, Hegel’s philosophy *affirms again* what Kant denied, the coincidence of *nature* and *being*. Our question concerning the possibility of a Hegelian age of analytic philosophy then becomes: is the sense in which *Hegel* affirms nature to coincide with being compatible with analytic philosophy, or does it destroy its essence?

On our way to the contradiction announced in opening we’ll be suggesting that analytic philosophy might perhaps be *essentially* Humean. This will be the case if the priority of the natural sciences to philosophy concerning the truth about nature is constitutive of analytic philosophy’s essence, for an authentically (merely) Kantian age already properly negates, and an authentically Hegelian one would thoroughly destroy this priority. Our question then is whether an analytic philosophy of this *new* (Hegelian) naturalism, freed and thoroughly distinguished from the system of analytic philosophy articulated through the specified priority, is possible.

Brandom and his Hegel’s affirmation that we must ‘distinguish the alethic modal vocabularies from the deontic normative vocabularies’, however, is an affirmation of this priority of natural science to philosophy. Assuming Brandom’s Hegel endorses Brandom’s moves in the game of giving and asking for reasons, Brandom’s Hegel’s philosophy doesn’t thoroughly destroy but rather *solidifies* this priority relation, for when the (by our to-be-revealed lights) more authentically Kantian and Hegelian Sellars spoke *against* this (dare I say it) dogma, for example by *challenging* quantum physicists concerning the nature of time, Brandom judges him “crazy”, and not

Philosophy, therefore, is not. Let us call analytic philosophy's ceding the truth about nature to the natural sciences *analytic naturalism*, and the conception of nature it operates with *analytic nature*.¹²¹ It is, perhaps, the fourth dogma of empiricism. We shall meet alternatives to *this* brand of naturalism as we move along.

There is no clear line between philosophy and science. Where there are no fixed boundaries, only the timid never risk trespass. (Davidson, 2001a: 251)

This dogma that nature is what the natural sciences tell us it is is at least semi-essential to analytic philosophy. This is revealed by the fact that what we've just determined as "analytic naturalism" appears within analytic philosophy in the main merely as "naturalism". That the abbreviation is not merely verbal, but that, rather, its roots go deep, is revealed in the following circumstance: It is central to John McDowell's philosophy to attach the dogma in question. This philosophy, however, appears to many within analytic philosophy as little more than a proposition known already to be false. Thus, despite his everywhere affirming and explaining his commitment to naturalism, resistance to his philosophy is articulated around the thought that it constitutes a "supernaturalism". Now, the thought that *nature is all there is*, the unequivocal commitment to explain and comprehend *thought* as a *natural* phenomenon, and with these the inference from supernaturalism to falsity, we may leave in place. The inference from *analytic*

because of the details of the account, but precisely because it takes the form of a philosopher's challenge to natural science concerning ontology. It is a problem then for Brandom that "In philosophy," according to the Hegel to whom his account answers, "the actual and the temporal as such disappear" (Hegel, 1802: 66). In leaving this at-least-semi-essential-to-analytic-philosophy priority in place, in philosophizing *through* it rather than, as McDowell does, *against* it (see text below), Brandom's Hegel is determined as belonging to the *Humean* age of Analytic philosophy, the nature of which shall be explained soon.

¹²¹ This is the conception of nature the "bald naturalism" appearing in *Mind and World* works with.

naturalism to the falsity of McDowell's philosophy, however, is purely dogmatic.¹²² One wonders whether, when McDowell dares to affirm an ontological proposition *contra* the natural sciences - “**there are** colors” - Brandom doesn't secretly think *him* crazy too (see n.2 above).¹²³

If the priority relation affirmed by analytic naturalism *is* essential to analytic philosophy, is a Hegelian age possible for it? It might appear as if Hegel's thought is positively suited for this relation, for in one expression of an element of his thought that is, in truth, as we'll see, “of the first importance in appreciating his philosophical advance over Kant”¹²⁴ and Fichte, Hegel writes,

Not only must philosophy be in agreement with our empirical knowledge of Nature, but the *origin* and *formation* of the Philosophy of Nature presupposes and is conditioned by empirical physics.¹²⁵

Brandom, taking Sellars' attempt to move “analytic philosophy from its *humean* phase into a *kantian* one”¹²⁶ to be in the bag, goes in for this appearance, and in his own goal to “make

¹²² “In a Kantian spirit, we can refuse to accept that the structure of the realm of freedom can be naturalized in the sense of the first approach – that is, insist that Sellars's contrast is well taken – but disown a commitment to supernaturalism by holding that what the modern scientific revolution yielded was clarity about the realm of law, and that is not the same as clarity *about nature*” (McDowell, 2009b: 261).

¹²³ Cf. McDowell's comment against Davidson, which counts too against Brandom's ascription of the normative to the “deontological”, 2009a: 213: “I think making sense of people is a case of finding out how things are”.

¹²⁴ Brandom (talking about something else), “Mediating the Immediate” p.4 (ch.4 of *A Spirit of Trust*, forthcoming). We'll need to see what *Kant's* conception of nature is before the nature of Hegel's advance on it, through the moment of his thinking referred to here, can be explicated.

¹²⁵ Hegel, 1830: 6. In all quotes, *italics* indicates emphasis in the original, **emboldened** emphasis is my own. Hegel's words here speak especially to Fichte's claims in the *First Introduction* (Fichte, 1982: 27): Hegel's “not only” clause picks up Fichte's pronouncement, “A philosophy whose results do not agree with experience is surely false, for it has not fulfilled its promise to deduce the entirety of experience and to explain it on the basis of the necessary action of the intellect.” His saying ‘*not only* that but also *this*’ (“the Philosophy of Nature presupposes...”) represents his divergence from Fichte the meaning of which we're setting to investigate, so that we can determine whether or not Hegel's meaning here coheres with what is perhaps essential to analytic philosophy.

¹²⁶ Brandom, 2000: 32.

possible a further transition from a *kantian* to a *hegelian* approach to thought and action”¹²⁷ has no trouble explicating Quinean and Hegelian philosophy in the same breath.

Now Quinean naturalism is, of course, a radical endorsement of the priority of natural science to philosophy on the question of the being of nature; it is the *paradigmatic* analytic naturalism. To combine Hegel with an uncriticized Quine, however, is surely a “false synthetic union”.¹²⁸ How thoroughly *distinguished* Quinean naturalism is from a comprehension of nature’s being true to the thought of Kant and Hegel is made clear by McDowell in Part I of his “Afterword” to *Mind and World*.¹²⁹

To place this lesson, we shall now begin our presentation of the *essential differences* between the systems of Hume, Kant and Hegel. Beginning with the essential difference between Hume and Kant will allow us to recognize the sense in which analytic philosophy may well be *essentially* Humean. In using the terms ‘essentially’ and ‘essential differences’ here we mean to indicate the worry that analytic philosophy grounds itself in a conception of thinking that was positively and self-consciously affirmed by Hume, but that it was Kant’s self-conscious and unique philosophical purpose to completely overcome. McDowell’s criticism of Quine, we’ll show, authentically tracks Kant’s relation to Hume here, and unambiguously ‘relegates’ Quine to the Humean stage – should there be others – of analytic philosophy.¹³⁰ We shall buttress our worry about analytic philosophy being essentially Humean by showing how analytic Kants (Allison and (much less so, but still) Longuenesse) and analytic Hegels (Pippin, Brandom,

¹²⁷ Brandom, 2000: 32-3.

¹²⁸ Hegel, 1840: 280.

¹²⁹ McDowell, 1996: 129-35, some of which will be cited below.

¹³⁰ I place scare quotes on ‘relegate’ because this is of course in itself no slight to the committed Humean Quine: “on the doctrinal side, I do not see that we are farther along today than where Hume left us. The Humean predicament is the human predicament.” (Quine, 1960: 72; cf. 74, 76). .

Redding, et al. ‘non-metaphysical’ Hegels) all fail to break free from the Humean conception of what thinking is.

As we move on to the essential difference between Kant’s and Hegel’s systems, we’ll be entering (or proposing, at least), new territory for (modern) philosophy. Hegel saw, with Schelling’s help, that the new standpoint philosophy had achieved for itself demanded conceiving the corrected transcendental philosophy of Kant and Fichte as “one, and only one of the two integrating sciences of philosophy”.¹³¹ Correspondingly, I’ll be arguing that McDowell’s *releasing* (analytic?) philosophy from its near-essential-to-it conceding of what nature is to the disenchanting natural sciences *demand*s, for the preservation of this standpoint against its opponents (inc. Allison, Friedman, Pippin, Brandom... and perhaps analytic philosophy itself), a philosophical engagement with the natural sciences analogous to Hegel’s philosophy of nature.¹³² We’ll then be in possession of the authentic Hegelian thought behind the quote above that we imagined Brandom taking to suggest a coherence of Hegel’s thinking with analytic philosophy’s conception of its relation to natural science. Though such a suggestion will, of course, be thoroughly destroyed, in connection with the resolution of the “central contradiction” mentioned in opening, I’ll go on to suggest ways in which a beast such as a philosophy of nature might yet be amenable to analytic philosophy - though the owl, of course, flies only at dusk.

¹³¹ Hegel, 1801: 162.

¹³² Friedman has already suggested McDowell’s commitment to a Schellingian philosophy of nature. That this appears as a *reduction ad absurdum* against McDowell reveals what’s discernible anyway, Friedman’s unquestioning commitment to a Humean conception of nature.

3.2 HUME'S ATHEISTIC NATURALISM

The essence of Hume's powerful thinking that so deeply influenced Kant¹³³ begins with Hume's thought that the only law thought (reason) has to work with *a priori* is that through which it determines things conceivable or inconceivable, for with only *itself* to work with, thought can only determine what is possible *for it*, i.e. what is possible and impossible for it to conceive. The law through which thought through itself distinguishes what is conceivable from what is not is called, alternately, the law of contradiction, of agreement, or of identity. It's merely the law through which thought determines what is and isn't possible *for it*. If we can continue conceiving the subject of a proposition *as* that subject whilst denying of it the predicate, then both the proposed proposition and its contrary are *conceivable*. The proposition is then *synthetic* (for Hume a "matter of fact"¹³⁴), and this *its very syntheticity*, by Hume's quite plausible line of thought, indicates that any attempt to affirm such a proposition *a priori* (i.e. from what is possible for *thought*) must of necessity "be entirely arbitrary".¹³⁵ For each and every proposition determinable by the one and only simple law of thought itself as *synthetic*, then, the only possible rational ground for affirming such a connection over its contrary could be *experience*.

Let us imagine now that Hume thought for the whole set of Kant's categories what he thought for the concept of cause:¹³⁶ that it is impossible to think about ***the world***, that which by Hume's thinking is absolutely *other* than thought, without them;¹³⁷ that they are, as Kant calls

¹³³ See the *Prolegomena*, Kant, 1783: 257: "since the origin of metaphysics so far as we know its history, nothing has ever happened which could have been more decisive to its fate than the attack made upon it by David Hume."

¹³⁴ Hume, 1748: 15.

¹³⁵ Hume, 1748: 18.

¹³⁶ "All reasonings concerning matter of fact seem to be founded on the relation of *Cause and Effect*. By means of that relation alone we can go beyond the evidence of our memory and senses." (Hume, 1748: 16).

¹³⁷ Kant imagines a similar generalization at Kant, 1783: 310.

them, “subjective conditions of thinking”.¹³⁸ It’ll be important to keep in mind the fact that, for Hume, that which he affirms as the necessary conditions of the possibility of thought about *the world* – cause and, by our imagined extension, all the categories – *do not pertain to thought as such*. As we’ve explained, only the (variously named) law of *conceivability* pertains for Hume to thought *as such*. Although the concept of cause is absolutely necessary to move *beyond* that which is immediately sensed or remembered, i.e. is absolutely necessary to thinking *about the world*, each thing is *conceivable* independently of its causal relations, thus the connection thought *in it* is *not* a connection pertaining to thought as such.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ A89/B122; cf. A125.

¹³⁹ I’ve here stressed the importance of Hume’s claim that this is *not* a connection pertaining to thought for the sake of the contrast to be drawn between the essences of Humean, Kantian and Hegelian philosophy. Here’s a quick preview. Kant, we’ll see, redeems the objective validity of the *necessity* thought in the connections he agrees with Hume are synthetic, i.e. Kant explains why *the presented world* must *of necessity* be in agreement with these synthetic thought-connections necessary for thinking *of* the world. (We’ll see how.) This redeemed comprehension of why the world presented to us is in agreement with thought’s necessity – the redeemed *objective* validity of the *subjective* conditions of thinking – marks a significant break from the *absolute heterogeneity* crucial to Hume of that which pertains to *thought as such* and is thereby *analytic* (Hume’s “Relations of Ideas” (Hume, 1748: 15)) and that which pertains to *the world as such*.

This significant break, however, doesn’t complete itself in a view that sees the *a priori* synthetic unity of the form of thought and the form of the world effected by Kant in the Deduction as pertaining to thought as such and thereby essential to it. (See what Hegel says about the term “synthetic unity” at Hegel, 1802: 70-1.) Transcendental logic, the pure thinking *of objects*, requires for Kant something *other* than thought for the possibility of its affirming *a priori* its connections for all objects. The principles are thus *synthetic* a priori judgments for Kant, i.e. affirm connections that go *beyond* thought as such (are not analytic), because the *pure intuitions* through which alone these judgments are possible are *not thoughts*, not part of reason. Their *unity* is the unity of thought (B162-4), but the forms of intuition that ‘realize’ (B187) thought’s unity pertain to our *sensible* nature, and are *contingencies* thereof. As we progress to the essential difference between the Kantian and Hegelian systems, we’ll learn how and why Kant cannot allow his identity of the form of thought (category) with the *unity* of the form of intuition to become an identity of the category and *the form of intuition that itself receives a manifold*. Beck and Fichte affirmed the latter as necessary for making sense of Kant, for the *denial* of the latter claim coinciding with the former implies that the object *from which* the form of intuition receives its manifold is a *thing in itself*, an affirmation they knew to contradict the system. (See my “The Critique’s Contradiction as the Key to Post-Kantianism”.) Through an examination of Kant’s repudiation of Beck and Fichte and of Hegel’s endorsement of the latter’s “more consistent development” of transcendental idealism *against* Kant (Hegel, 1812/16: 27), we’ll make explicit the evolution of the above Kantian thought into Hegel’s claim that “what with him is transcendental logic”, i.e. a logic needing something other than thought to go beyond itself and being thereby *synthetic*, comes with Hegel to pertain to “*thought as such*” (Hegel, 1812/16: 62; cf. p.63). We’ll then be able to comprehend how Hegel is signaling the

This *externality* of the connection thought in the concept of cause to thought as such is the very thing that's expressed in saying that the connection thought through this concept is *synthetic*. When conjoined with his observation into the syntheticity of the propositions that require affirming should it be possible to learn from experience (see a few pages below), Hume's simple yet powerful observation of the paragraph above *lays to waste*, to both Hume and Kant's thinking, the very idea that we humans *even possess* such a thing as a faculty of *understanding* in the way in which the rationalists conceived it.¹⁴⁰ Such a faculty would be capable of arriving at the *truth*, the *agreement* of would-be cognitions with that which they claim to be *of* ("an object corresponding to and therefore also distinct from the cognition"¹⁴¹), and the rationalists are at one in affirming our ability to *know* through this faculty its ability to arrive *at* the truth. They all affirm, as Kant will again in response to Hume, that we can *know a priori* that the subjective conditions of thought have objective validity.

essential difference between the Hegelian and Kantian systems when he *counters* Kant's thought that his *a priori* judgments affirming the coincidence of the form of thought and the form of the world are *synthetic*:

"How are synthetic judgments *a priori* possible? This problem expresses nothing else but the Idea that subject and predicate of the synthetic judgment are **identical** in the *a priori* way. That is to say, these heterogeneous elements, the subject which is the particular and in the form of being, and the predicate which is the universal and in the form of thought, are at the same time **absolutely identical**." (Hegel, 1802: 69; cf. 72, 75-6, and 1812/16: 560: "through this identity of content [between cause and effect], this causality is an *analytic* proposition.")

In the paragraph before this quote Hegel writes, "*How are synthetic judgments a priori possible?* Kant reproaches Hume for thinking of this task of philosophy with far too little definiteness and universality. This is exactly what happened to Kant himself." By Hegel's lights, then, when Kant affirms that "the problem upon which all depends" and with which "metaphysics stands or falls" (Kant, 1783: 276) asks after a *synthetic* connection, one *not* intrinsic to "thought *as such*" (Hegel, 1812/16: 62-3), he displays his residually Humean understanding of thought. (cf. Hegel's association of Kant and Locke at Hegel, 1802: 68-9.) In comprehending Hegelian philosophy, then, i.e. its conception of what thinking is, we must comprehend how it distinguishes itself from *Hume and Kant together* by denying their claim that the form of thought's *a priori* identity with the form of the world doesn't pertain to thought as such.

¹⁴⁰ The essence of Kantianism, we'll see, is to *redeem* the thought that we possess an understanding: he thinks Hume's critique lays to waste *existent* (rationalist) explanations of the possibility of this.

¹⁴¹ CPR, A104.

Descartes' proof of the existence of a non-deceiving God in the Third Meditation precedes and grounds his proof that thought is in agreement with the world. This, Leibniz's philosophy, and the first proposition of Spinoza's *Ethics* all show that the rationalist or metaphysical tradition is at one in deriving our knowledge of our capacity for truth from that which they all affirm as necessarily preceding it: *knowledge of God*.¹⁴² Descartes' *Cogito* is akin to God's knowledge of *all* things in that in both cases the object known is not external to but rather identical with the subject knowing it. It's important for Descartes that my Idea of an intellect for whom *all* its objects are, like my knowledge of my own existence, *not external* to this intellect's knowing of them, *precedes* my understanding of myself as a being that, as finite, hopes to know things that *are* external to it. The following observation was important for Spinoza who, like Hegel (we'll be investigating how), places God at the *beginning* of his system.

And I must not think that... my perception of the infinite is arrived at not by means of a true idea but merely by negating the finite. On the contrary, I clearly understand that there is more reality in an infinite substance than in a finite one, and hence that my perception of the infinite, that is God, is **in some way prior to** my perception of the finite, that is myself. For how could I understand that I doubted or desired – that is, that I lacked something – and that I was not wholly perfect, unless there were in me some idea of a more perfect being which enabled me to recognize my own defects by comparison.¹⁴³

The rationalists' shared conception of the human understanding as a faculty cognizably capable of hitting upon the *truth* about nature, of knowing its would-be cognitions of nature to be in *agreement* with nature as it is outside of our thinking about it, is in all three cases grounded on the thought that the relation of man's thinking to nature, which here focuses on this concern with

¹⁴² See Descartes' "Synopsis" of the meditations: "the certainty even of geometrical demonstrations depends on the knowledge of God." (Descartes, 1641: 75)

¹⁴³ Descartes, 1641: 93-4. Cf. Spinoza, *Ethics*, II Prop 10, Schol: some are in error because "they believed that the divine nature, which they should have contemplated before all else (because it is prior both in knowledge and in nature) is last in the order of knowledge and in nature".

the agreement between the posits of our thought and the thing in itself, is *only explicable through* a prior account of man's relation to God. Now for Descartes and Leibniz, this God is a being *other* than nature, the *cause* of nature standing outside it, whilst for Spinoza this God *is* nature which, rather than causing something *other* than itself, is merely "cause of itself".¹⁴⁴ This difference, we'll see, will be crucial for grasping the essential difference between Kantian and Hegelian philosophies, and for articulating the possibility of an authentic Hegelian age of analytic philosophy: the crucial-to-Hegel sections of the *Critique of Judgment* (Kant, 1790a: §§69-78) reveal how important the idea of a God distinct from and causing nature is to *Kant*; it is here that we find the radically anti-naturalistic thrust of his "critique [of] knowledge to make room for faith" (Bxxx). Hegel critiques faith to make room for knowledge in *Faith and Knowledge* and after through a defense of Spinozistic naturalism against Kant's anti-naturalism. In the fact that Hegel's Spinozism *is* a naturalism lies the *possibility* of a Hegelian analytic philosophy. The very fact that Hegel defends Spinoza against Kant, whose critique of Hume he of course endorses, suggests what shall be expounded: how radically we must break from our conceding-nature-to-the-natural-sciences Humean naturalism to achieve a properly Hegelian naturalism.

Descartes' thinking about the relation of man's thinking to nature takes on a certain form owing to his thinking a God separated from nature as the author of both this nature and man's rational faculties (his intellect and will). It affects his supposedly "pure" philosophical researches by enticing him to continuing *assuming* (or dogmatically affirming, perhaps), even whilst radically doubting, the finite mind as a *substance* - something capable of activity through itself.

¹⁴⁴ Ethics, Book I, D1. See Hegel's discussion of this definition in Hegel, 1840: 258.

Descartes' radical doubt is asymmetrical, and thereby incomplete, in the following way. He doubts whether my representations of external objects are *in fact*, as I take them to be, caused by external objects: I think this because they appear independently of my will, but there *may be* (the reason for doubt) an unknown faculty within me producing these representations, similarly to the case of dreaming. Thus the fact is doubted, and as mentioned above only redeemed *through* the Idea of an infinite intellect for whom these same objects are *not*, as is the case with my intellect, external to it. Descartes *doesn't* doubt, however, whether my *freedom* to affirm or deny propositions isn't likewise mere appearance. While he *does* wonder whether there isn't a cause *inside* me producing my representations of *external* objects, he *doesn't* wonder whether there's a cause *outside* me producing my representations of *internal* objects: he doesn't doubt the reality of his "faculty of choice or freedom of the will", the freedom to choose (e.g. to follow reason or not), and to affirm or deny.¹⁴⁵

Just as God stands sovereign over and separate from his creation (nature), so Descartes assumes man's mind (intellect, will), authored by this same God, as something standing over and thereby *separated from* this nature. On behalf of seeking a more *naturalistic* conception of our mindedness, both Hume and Spinoza deny the actuality of that which Descartes, even when

¹⁴⁵ Like Descartes, Kant and Hegel affirm that the freedom to choose this or that is a low grade of freedom, and that we are freest in doing the one thing reason determines us to do. This ought not lead us, however (as Dennett is led by Luther's "I could do no other" in Dennett, 1984), to think that the freedom to be found in performing the unique action *reason* prescribes isn't impossible if we concede nature to be none other than the order of mechanically determining *causes*. We certainly shouldn't think that Kant and Hegel think freedom is possible if we make this concession, and thereby *deny* ourselves the ability to do otherwise. (See that Brandom (e.g. Brandom, 2009: ch.2.) and Pippin (Pippin, 2008: 38) do.) In Hegel's affirmation of the *coincidence* in nature of mechanical and teleological causes, there is indeed an overcoming of Fichte's opposition of transcendental idealism and scientific materialism (see next note). What is *not* contained therein – what there would have to be if Pippin and Brandom were right – is Hegel's complete rejection of Fichte's claim that determinism leads to the annihilation of the I / the normative. As we'll see below, however, the *Humean* annihilation of the I, so explicit also in Quine, has a positive moment and motivation which our philosophy will preserve. Hegel's philosophy, I claim in the next section, accommodates this positive sense for the annihilation of the I *better than Hume's philosophy itself*. This is all, of course, in the service of proving the possibility and necessity of a Hegelian age of a near-essentially Humean analytic philosophy.

doubting radically, doesn't bring into doubt: the *activity of the I*.¹⁴⁶ They both deny the distinction between *intellect*, that which produces beliefs, and *will*. They both deny that the finite mind is a substance.¹⁴⁷ They both affirm the mind in its thinking to be thoroughly determined *by nature*.

There is an important base of agreement here, in that both responses affirm, contra Descartes, the necessity of explicating thinking nature through its *community with*, rather than through its supposed distinction from, the order of nature. Despite these agreements, there is a radical difference between these naturalisms, and it is crucial to our project to take note of them. Hume opposed Descartes from the standpoint of an *atheistic* naturalism, whilst Spinoza does so

¹⁴⁶ Fichte writes, "the system of idealism begins by **presupposing** the *activity* of the representing subject; whereas dogmatism considers the behavior of this same subject to be *passive*" (Fichte, 1992: 93). In affirming the freedom or activity of the I as his *first principle*, i.e. something presupposed rather than explained, Fichte's philosophy is akin to Descartes: "*Descartes... put forward a similar proposition*" to the Wissenschaftslehre's "absolutely basic principle of all knowledge" (Fichte, 1982: 100). Starting from the thought that freedom is impossible if my representations are caused by objects outside of me (things in themselves), Fichte aims to *justify* freedom by *deducing from it* (justifying) our representations of things, justifying and explaining also the fact that we posit "a thing that would exist even if I did not entertain a representation of it" (Fichte, 1992: 87). The latter is "the opposite" (Fichte, 1992: 106) of what's affirmed from idealism's transcendental point of view (the non-independence of the represented object), though the two statements do not contradict each other due to the different standpoints from which they are made (the object's externality is a necessary posit from the *practical* point of view). Unlike Descartes' assumption of freedom, then, Fichte's whole philosophy is concerned with *opposing* the determinist philosophy that opposes their similar first principles. The determinist claims that sensible representations are only possibly explicable through the affirmation of affection by a thing in itself, and Fichte, taking this to make freedom impossible, undermines this undermining of freedom *indirectly*, by explaining the same thing (the necessity of our positing our sensible representations as in relation to an object existing independently of us) through freedom itself. (Thus by Fichte's lights Descartes' own sixth meditation undermines their shared assumption of an active (free) I.) As Hegel explains in the *Difference* essay and *Faith and Knowledge*, however, Fichte doesn't oppose dogmatism (= materialism, determinism) upon the method Hegel recommends at 1812/16: 580: "the *true* system cannot have the relation to it of being merely *opposed* to it... On the contrary, the true system as the higher, must contain the subordinate system within itself". (This picks up on Hegel's critique of Fichte in the *Difference* essay; see esp. 1801: 115, where one finds the clue to the Master / Slave dialectic in the *Phenomenology*.) Hegel is discussing his *Science of Logic* Book II absorbing of (the determinist) Spinoza here, and indeed, Schelling and Hegel's equiposing of transcendental idealism with the Spinoza-inspired philosophy of nature sublates Spinoza's critique of Descartes for German Idealism.

¹⁴⁷ Hume, 1748: 135. Curley, 1994: xix.

from the standpoint of a *theistic* naturalism.¹⁴⁸ This is important for how Hegel will defend Spinoza's conception of nature against Kant's. An appreciation of the radical difference between Hume's atheistic and Spinoza's theistic naturalism, then, will be essential to making explicit the essential differences between Humean, Kantian, and Hegelian philosophies – an explicitness not to be found, to my mind, in Brandom's so-called Hegelianism and its simple coherence with Quineanism.¹⁴⁹

Spinozism affirms and purports to explain the *necessity* of the world's existence, the *necessity* of it and all its parts existing exactly as they do, and thus (what follows will be particularly important points of contrast) the *necessity* of the human intellect both being as it is and thinking what it will think. As (with Hegel, perhaps) the rationalist *par excellence*, he attributes to *thought* (the intellect) the power of *knowing*, which for Spinoza is *comprehending* (through thought itself) *the necessity of*,¹⁵⁰ why there's anything, rather than nothing at all.¹⁵¹ What excited Schelling and Hegel so about Spinoza's positing of nature *itself* as also the infinite intellect is the way this puts rational or *knowing* thinking, thinking that grasps necessity, back into nature.¹⁵² Spinoza's great achievement, to their thinking, is his explaining the rationalist conception of thought's (the understanding's) ability to know things in themselves *naturalistically*.

¹⁴⁸ As Curley notes (Curley, 1994: xxi, n.8), "Spinoza deeply resented" the charge of atheism that of course, like Fichte, dogged his life (see Fichte's response in his Fichte, 2005: 69). Hegel defends Spinoza against Jacobi's charge of atheism at Hegel 1840: 280-2.

¹⁴⁹ We shall limit our concern with Spinoza to that which is required to make comprehensible the character of the Hegelian naturalism that arises through Hegel's use of Spinoza against Kant's anti-naturalism.

¹⁵⁰ 'Knowledge is knowledge of causes', says Spinoza, and as Kant (contra Hume) affirms, "The meaning of the concept of cause is, if a thing be posited, something else also must **necessarily** be posited" (A92/B122-3; Kant, 1783: 257 (discussing Hume)).

¹⁵¹ See Brandom, 1994: xxi. Curley points out (Curley, 1994: xix) that Spinoza "will have none of Descartes' claim that the coherence of God's preordination and human freedom surpasses the human understanding."

¹⁵² Spinoza, letter 32: "But as far as the human mind is concerned, I think it is a part of Nature too. For I maintain that there is also in Nature an infinite power of thinking."

In complete contrast to this, Hume's *atheistic* naturalism seeks to *destroy* this rationalist conception of thought (the understanding; the intellect) that Spinoza sought to preserve and explain naturalistically. Thus the *necessity* of thought's agreement with the world that achieves its peak in Spinoza and his German Idealist successors, is laid to utter destruction by Hume. It's to this destruction, Hume's argument for radical *skepticism*, to which we now turn.

Recall the observation above that thought's only law concerns only what's conceivable for it, the law of identity. Hume conjoins with this the further observation that the propositions that would ground our claim to know are synthetic. The connections between the particular causal judgments, 'my eating the bread is the cause of the nourishment of my body', 'the first billiard ball's motion is lawfully connected with the second's', and "the sun warms the stone",¹⁵³ are synthetic. But further, the thought of causation is *itself* synthetic. Crucial to both Kant's life-long struggle with Hume's thought and to Hegel's response to Hume-Kant¹⁵⁴ is the idea that grounds the thought that the concept 'cause' expresses a synthetic connection (one not pertaining to thought as such): that the cause and the effect are **different things**.

The mind can never possibly find the effect in the supposed cause, by the most accurate scrutiny and examination. For the effect is **totally different** from the cause, and consequently can never be discovered in it. ... In a word, then, every effect is a **distinct event** from its cause.
(Hume, 1748: 19)

¹⁵³ The first and second examples are from Hume, 1748: §4, the third from Kant, 1783: 41n.12, 44n.15.

¹⁵⁴ See n.22 above. A crucial quote guiding our understanding of Hegel's response to Kant-Hume on causality is Hegel, 1802: 90, where Hegel affirms as truth what Kant in Kant, 1790a: §§69-80, whilst affirming the necessity of his thinking it, denied the objective reality of. He "recognized that *in and for itself* it may be possible that the mechanism of nature, the relation of causality, is at one with nature's teleological technique. This is not to say that nature is determined by an Idea opposite to it, but rather that what from the mechanistic point of view appears as absolutely sundered, **one term as cause the other as effect** in an empirical nexus of necessity, absolutely coheres within an original primordial identity."

Since the only law *thought* can from itself affirm of things is that they not take predicates contradicting the very thought of those things, the *syntheticity* involved in thinking a thing as a cause or an effect of something *else* immediately implies for Hume that the thought of things as connected in this way could only arise from *experience*. The connection's syntheticity implies that, as far as thought is concerned, the denial of the connection is just as probable as its affirmation. In 1766, Kant fully accepted Hume's ascription of the origin of cause to experience.

It is impossible for reason ever to understand how something can be a cause, or have a force; such relations can only be derived from experience. For our rule of reason only governs the drawing of comparisons in respect of *identity* and *contradiction*. If something is a cause, then *something* is posited by something *else*; there is not, however, any connection between the **two** things here which is based on agreement. Similarly, if I refuse to regard that same something as a cause [i.e. if I go to conceive the *denial* of the thought of causation itself], no contradiction will ever arise, for there is no contradiction in supposing that, if something is posited, something else is cancelled. It follows from this that if the fundamental concepts of things as causes, of powers and of actions are not derived from experience, then they are wholly arbitrary, and they admit of neither proof nor refutation.

- "Dreams of a Spirit Seer," in Allison et al., 2002: 356 (2:370).

Though it doesn't pertain to thought *as such*, Hume does affirm, we saw above, that the concept of cause and effect is necessary for the possibility of thinking about *the world*, and we imagined him affirming this for all Kant's categories. If we concede (as even the critical Kant does, but Hegel doesn't) that these subjective conditions of thinking a world are connections *not* pertaining to thought as such (are synthetic), and we further concede (as the pre-critical, but not the critical Kant does) the inference *from* the syntheticity of these connections *to* their only possible origin being experience, then Hume is home free in his destruction of the very idea of a human understanding.

Hume affirms the necessity of my positing or expecting of this piece of bread that eating it will result in nourishment. If I expect this because I *understand* (know) that the eating of the

bread *will* be conjoined with this synthetically (non-derivable-from-thought) combined predicate I attach it to in my expectation, then it must be possible to supply a *reason* or *ground* for my thinking this. I must be able to give a ground or reason for the claim that my posit is *in agreement with* what will happen in the world (is true). This question concerning a *ground* or *reason*, the question *quid juris?*, is to be thoroughly distinguished – as it is not by Quine, among other moderns, as McDowell’s critique reveals¹⁵⁵ – from an explanation of the *fact* of my having this expectation that answers the question ‘*why* do I think this?’ *otherwise* than by ascribing it to my understanding. We’ll meet Hume’s understanding-free answer to *quid facti?* soon below, after we’ve sketched his understanding-destroying argument that no answer to *quid juris?* is possible.¹⁵⁶

If I really *know* the synthetic connection expressed in the posit that this bread eating *will* *cause* my nourishment, if this positing is really to be an *activity* of an *understanding* rather than, as Hume will contend, my mind’s being passively determined by non-rational natural forces to

¹⁵⁵ See McDowell, 1996: 133. Quine in the main “rejects questions about the warrant for world views altogether” (McDowell, 2009b: 131), i.e. self-consciously abandons *quid juris?*, though not with complete consistency, as his talk of facing “the tribunal of experience” reveals.

¹⁵⁶ Stroud asks how Kant’s transcendental idealist explanation of the possibility of a human understanding capable of truth through the claim that the phenomenal world “is somehow ‘constituted’ by the possibility of our thought and experience of it... differs, for example, from Hume’s view that we simply cannot avoid believing that every event has a cause, and cannot help acting for all the world as if it were true, but that it is not really true of the world as it is independently of us” (“Kantian Argument, Conceptual Capacities, and Invulnerability”, pp. 159-60; Quoted in McDowell, 2009b: 226). The difference will be made quite plain through our essential difference between Humean and Kantian philosophy. This modern failure to distinguish *quid facti?* from *quid juris?* is of a piece with the confusion over freedom noted above. Reason, should it exist, impels us theoretically towards one answer, just as it impels us towards one action practically: ‘there’s nothing else to *think*’ just as ‘I could do no other’. We can’t ascribe thought so led to an *understanding* or reason, however, if we don’t affirm the actual possibility of thinking otherwise, analogous to my claim for the practical case above. Hume understood this, which is why his affirmation of the *passivity* of belief, his claim that we *are* determined to think what we do by the circumstances, is part of his self-conscious destruction of *the very idea* of an understanding as thought by everyone before him. (Cf. the title of §9 of the *Enquiry*, “on the Reason of Animals”.) Against what Brandom thinks, I affirm (I believe on behalf of German Idealism) that one *can’t possibly* be responsible for what one thinks if it’s not (actually, physically, or metaphysically) possible to have thought or acted otherwise than as one does – if there aren’t branching histories.

expect such a thing, then I must have a *reason for thinking* that this synthetic connection will hold of this pending event.

On the conceded premises, however, no such ground is possible. The connection between bread and nourishment is synthetic, which means that no *a priori* reason, ground, or justification is possible. The would-be reason for my expectation would then be my past *experience* of this synthetic connection. The problem, however, is that I only have a *reason* for affirming the expectation (this bread here *will* nourish), and I only have a *reason* for projecting the synthetic connections experienced in the past into the future *in general*, if I have a *reason* for affirming that the future will resemble the past. With the premises conceded, Hume proves the *impossibility* of there *being* a reason for this proposition.

“These two propositions are far from being the same, *I have found that such an object has always been attended with such an effect*, and *I forsee, that other objects which are, in appearance, similar, will be attended with similar effects.*” The propositions are not identical, thus there is an *inference* from one to the other. What proposition or thought grounds this inference? Clearly, “the future will resemble the past”. Now: *Quid juris* this thought? With what *right* do I lay down this thought through which I posit the “*has always been*” synthetic connections as “*will be*” synthetic connections in the future? The thought the justification for which we’re here asking after grounds the very idea that I’m *learning* from experience, that I’m gaining *knowledge about the world* from it. But now, it is *conceivable* that the future will be entire anew; that all objects will tomorrow abandon all their (inc. causal) properties and enter into *new* synthetic connections.¹⁵⁷ This follows simply from their *being* synthetic (not derivable

¹⁵⁷ “Since it implies no contradiction, that the course of nature may change, and that an object, seemingly like those we have experienced, may be attended with different or contrary effects” (this, and the paragraph’s other two quotes, from Hume, 1748: 22).

from the law of conceivability; outside thought) connections. Thought or reason is thus of itself powerless to distinguish “the future will resemble the past” from its contrary, and thus cannot of itself affirm the *truth* of either proposition. *Reason*, then, *cannot justify* the claim *that would ground the rationality of*, that would justify the thought that *I am learning from*, that would legitimize the common sense idea that an *understanding* benefits from, experience. But if *reason* (thought from itself) cannot justify or ground the proposition that itself grounds the rationality of, the idea that I’m learning from experience - if indeed the connection is *synthetic* (outside thought’s insight into itself) - then *its only possible ground or reason* could be *experience*. The only possible ground of the proposition that itself grounds the empirical, then, is empirical.

That there **is no argument** of this kind must appear... [for] all our experimental [empirical] conclusions proceed upon the supposition, that the future will be conformable to the past. To endeavor, therefore, the proof of this last proposition by probable arguments, or arguments regarding existence, must be evidently going in a circle, and taking that for granted, which is the very point in question. (Hume, 1848: 22-3)

Hegel, the arch-rationalist, will preserve this radical anti-rationalism and synthesize it with its opposite through the following interpretation of the preceding argument: thought here has insight into the necessity of the fact that thought has absolutely no insight into that which is other than thought.¹⁵⁸

If the subjective conditions of the possibility of thinking *the world* are indeed, as Hume stresses and Kant concedes,¹⁵⁹ *external* to thought as such (Hume and Kant agree they’re

¹⁵⁸ Compare Fichte, 1994: 48 and 195; Hegel, 1807: §233: “Reason is the certainty of consciousness that it is all reality”, etc. We suggest how Hegel completes Hume’s project in the next section.

¹⁵⁹ And of course also stresses (see Kant, 1783: 257-61) and, we’ll see, forcefully adheres to: he sees the syntheticity of the connection slighted by Beck and Fichte, and thereby rejects them (see esp. the Dec 11 1797 letter to Tieffrunk (himself very Beckian-Fichtean: see Zweig, 1999: 531), Zweig, 1999: 536-9, especially 537. His affirmation of the *syntheticity* of the connections is, indeed, tied in with his denial of intellectual intuition.

synthetic connections), then by Hume's argument they are thereby *non-rational*. They *have no grounding* in reason or thought. Hume's naturalistic *purpose* in demonstrating the falsity of the claim these necessary conditions of thinking a world make to objective validity or truth¹⁶⁰ is the *annihilation* of the separation between our thinking processes and the natural world. The *thought* of this separation that he seeks to annihilate owes its origin, as we said above, to the thought of a non-natural nature-authoring God authoring the human mind as this special 'truth-and-freedom-from-the-causal-order capable' faculty. That the human understanding of the rationalists (the locus of thinking) is authored by *God* prevents comprehension of what Hume's atheism – like ours (see below) - demands: its authorship by nature. This mode of thinking Hume opposes is of course most explicit in Descartes. Hume's purpose in destroying the rationalist idea that *thought itself* authors or grounds the thoughts through which it must think a world is for the sake of affirming that *it is the natural world* which authors and, we'll see, *causes* (but importantly for Hume, *does not ground*) the forms of thought through which we must think the world. His purpose, affirmed again with gusto in our own time (though somewhat less coherently: see below) by Quine, is to affirm that *thought about the natural order is in no way outside this natural order*.¹⁶¹

The point of Hume's destruction of the rationalist conception of the understanding, of his destruction of the possibility of an answer to the *quid juris?* question asked of the necessary conditions of the possibility of thinking a world, can be put this way: there *is no normativity* to thought. It is a necessary condition of the possibility of thought *being* normative that one could *fail to conform* to the norms to which thinking according to these norms ought to conform. This

¹⁶⁰ See Engstrom, "Kant on Truth, Judgment, and Objective Validity" (unpublished manuscript) for the affirmation that Kant equates objective validity and truth.

¹⁶¹ It's important that Hume would have none of Quine's talk of "man's conceptual sovereignty", which it was to Hume's purpose to destroy.

stands opposed to Hume's view, whereby, instead of a thought being a *rational* response to a *rational* norm - an action "the I or he or it that thinks"¹⁶² could *fail* to perform - thought is something that just *happens* in nature through the same law of mechanical causality articulating the rest of its products.¹⁶³ If thought, knowing, intentionality, etc. are *normative*, then they are a function of the *activity* of the subject thinking, knowing, intending. Thus Hume's anti-skeptical opponents all affirm the *activity* of thinking: we saw above Descartes' unquestioned assumption of the *activity* of the mind (his assumption that the finite mind is a substance, a being capable of activity); likewise with Kant and, with much more explicit focus, Fichte, in explaining once again against Hume's critique the possibility of a human understanding, activity is again affirmed as the *essence* of (*as essential to*) thinking.¹⁶⁴ Hume's critique on the very idea of

¹⁶² CPR, A346, B404, and the title of a Sellars essay.

¹⁶³ See notes 29 and 42 above. Thus McDowell sees that Quine's "brutely causal linkages" (McDowell, 1996: 133) between experiences and the acceptance of statements can't count as a *rational* action on the part of the subject accepting the statements, for, *since* brutally causal, the subject *suffered* the acceptance of the belief, rather than actively assented to it. In accordance with his Humeanism (see Quine, 1969: 72, quoted above), my coming to believe x is for Quine something that just happens, in accordance with the mechanically causal chain of nature; normativity (the *freedom* of thought [thought]) thereby drops out. McDowell's criticism of Davidson's conception of the world's impact on the senses as "brutely causal" (McDowell, 2009b: 125, 134, 139) makes a different, though related point, which we'll examine below. Rorty too affirms that "the world may cause us to be justified in believing a sentence true" (Rorty, 1989: 5), and his endorsement of "the Mendelian, mechanistic, account of natural selection" for its "let[ting] us see the mind as something which just happened" (16) is another expression of his deterministic, normativity-or-activity-of-thought / freedom destroying logos we'll take issue with below. Brandom asks, "What else must be added to responsive classification to get to an **activity** recognizable as the application of concepts? ... a normative dimension is required, which can underwrite a distinction between correct and incorrect applications of concepts" (Brandom, 1004: 87; cf. McDowell, 1996: x-xi). Brandom, however, contra Hegel at Hegel, 1802: 90, lets nature be "the causal order of nonnormative facts" (Brandom, 1994: 626). Contra Brandom, we shall find Kant and (also following Fichte: see the quote in the note below) Hegel both affirming the "activity... required... [to] underwrite a distinction between correct and incorrect application of concepts" to be impossible and a notion without truth if nature is, as it is with Brandom, conceived as a realm of determining causes merely mechanical.

¹⁶⁴ A77/B103: "By synthesis in the most general sense, however, I understand the **action** of putting different representations together..."; as a *conclusion* at A120 the argument for which we'll see below: "There is **thus** an **active** faculty of the synthesis of this manifold in us..."; B129-30: "the *combination* of a manifold in general can never come to us through the senses... [but] is an **act** of the spontaneity of the power of representation, and, since one must call the latter understanding, in distinction from sensibility, all combination... is an **action of the understanding**, which we would designate with the general title *synthesis*...". We already quoted above the formulation of Fichte's making the *strength* of the affirmation of activity most plain, Fichte, 1992: 93: "the system

normativity, of an understanding, of thought, of a self or I, affirms against this the *passivity* of belief. In destroying the categories'¹⁶⁵ claim to objective validity, he *removes* them from their ascription to *thought as such* (the rationalist's standing-over-nature mind) and places them instead in *the world as such*. Thinking the world is hereby removed from the *active* understanding and *ascribed to our sensibility*, and is thereby a thoroughly passive affair.

The difference between *fiction* and *belief* lies in some **sentiment or feeling**, which is annexed to the latter, not to the former, and which depends not on the will, nor can be commanded at pleasure. It must be excited **by nature**, like all other sentiments; and **must arise from the particular situation**, in which the mind is placed at any particular juncture [i.e. thinking otherwise is impossible, thus the normativity the rationalists claim for thought is impossible]. Whenever any object is presented to the memory or senses, it **immediately**, by the force of custom [thus not mediated by (normative) thought, the condition of rationality, as the rationalist affirm] carries the imagination to conceive that object, which is usually conjoined to it; and this conception is attended with a feeling or sentiment, different from the loose reveries of the fancy. In this consists the whole nature of belief. For as there is no matter of fact which we believe so firmly, that we cannot conceive the contrary, there would be no difference between the conception assented to, and that which is rejected, were it not for **some sentiment**, which distinguishes the one from the other. (Hume, 1748: 31)

The last point here can be put thus: since the conditions of thinking a world are *synthetic*, their ascription to the understanding rather than sensibility is impossible.

of idealism begins by presupposing the *activity* of the representing subject; whereas dogmatism considers the behavior of the same subject to be *passive*." The breadth of the dogmatist target is in turn made plain when we learn that what constitutes idealism is the claim that all "representations that are accompanied by a feeling of necessity are products of the activity of the I" (Fichte, 1992: 97). Though he's critical of Fichte's talk of 'production' here (Hegel, 1802: 75, 92-3), Fichte's philosophy is according to Hegel, recall, the principle of Kant's Deduction "extracted in a purer, stricter form" (Hegel, 1801: 79).

¹⁶⁵ What we've been calling, "the subjective conditions of thinking a world".

3.3 HEGEL'S COMPLETION OF HUME'S PROJECT

Hume's purpose is a full-blooded affirmation of the *natural worldliness* of human thinking. His *annihilation* of the rationalist idea of the I as standing over nature is, however, incomplete. The worldliness or naturalness of human thought is not full-blooded enough, for there remains in Hume the separation between *thought as such* (the *a priori*, conceivability), and *the natural world* as such. Hume successfully corrects the rationalists by removing human *thought about the world* (cause, et. al.) from the separate-from-nature *thought as such* and placing it rather in *the natural world* as such,¹⁶⁶ but he retains the distinction between *thought as such* and the natural world. The German Idealism project of displaying the original unity of the *a priori* and the *a posteriori*, of transcendental and empirical consciousness, aims to undercut this distinction, and thus put *thought as such* back into the world.¹⁶⁷

Hegel will in an important sense complete the annihilation of the I's separation from nature Hume aimed for by removing the distinction between *thought as such* and *nature as such*.¹⁶⁸ Doing so is what he intends when he signals, as he furthers-through-critique Fichte's

¹⁶⁶ Thus making human mentality explicable upon the same principles (habituation) as a dog's salivating; a victory for *empirical* psychology, which is not the only conceivable logos of the psyche.

¹⁶⁷ Fichte, 1982: 26: "For a completed idealism the *a priori* and the *a posteriori* are not two different things, but are one and the same thing, simply looked at from two different sides, and they can be distinguished from each other only in terms of the different means one employs in order to arrive at each... Anyone who is of a different opinion does not know what he is talking about." Spinoza's error is said to be that "he separates *pure* and *empirical* consciousness... what right did he have to go beyond the pure consciousness given in empirical consciousness?" (Fichte, 1982: 100). Hegel's chapter on Fichte in the *Difference* essay presents a better way of achieving the aim of Fichte's philosophy, "to suspend the apparent opposition of transcendental and empirical consciousness" (Hegel, 1801: 120; cf. 121, 129, 157, 163). Cf. Hegel, 1802: 78, "As a result the *a priori* intellect becomes, at least in principle, *a posteriori* as well... Thus the formal concept of Reason is obtained; Reason has to be *a priori* and *a posteriori*", p.80, "this Idea of an intellect that is *a posteriori* or intuitive", etc..

¹⁶⁸ The *clear distinguishing* of Humean from Hegelian naturalism is, of course, our overarching concern, and we speak to it in a preliminary way in the 'second choice' below. Hegel will reveal the nature from which our separation is annihilated to be quite different from how Hume (and Quine) conceived it. It will be – the concept needed to bring analytic philosophy peace (compare McDowell, 2009b: 131-3) - a thoroughly normative nature.

project, that “philosophy is to suspend pure consciousness as concept”,¹⁶⁹ for what is *suspended* here is the residually rationalist thought appearing in Kant and Fichte that “pure consciousness” pertains or belongs to a human subject *originally opposed* to nature itself.¹⁷⁰ The reason why he affirms the impossibility of philosophy sans the philosophy of nature¹⁷¹ is that he *affirms* with Hume the thorough annihilation of the thought of the I’s original separation from nature, yet affirms *also* (*against* Hume) the freedom or normativity of thought. To affirm the latter un-Humean moment whilst preserving the Humean annihilation demands expanding or re-conceiving – it’s an important part of the claim that this is a *necessary* reconceiving – our concept of nature. With his dual affirmation of our full-blooded freedom of thought *and* our thorough naturalness he sees the clear consequence that philosophy’s topic, *normative thought as such*, is *impossible* without some comprehension of *how nature herself makes the freedom from herself which is thinking possible*.¹⁷²

Kant’s Deduction restores the possibility of *truth* (equivalently: a human understanding) contra Hume’s destruction of the same. Hegel’s ‘thought’, like Kant’s but unlike Hume’s, is impossible without truth (agreement of cognition with its object).¹⁷³ With the completion of the project of destroying the rationalist (Cartesian-Leibnizian) idea that our truth-and-activity

Though clearly distinguished from Humean naturalism, we show here its compatibility with the noble Humean impulse, and completion thereof.

¹⁶⁹ Hegel, 1801: 120. After distinguishing Kantianism from Humeanism, we’ll be examining in more detail Hegel’s relation to Fichte in our distinguishing Hegelianism from Kantianism. The opening moves of Hegel’s “Exposition of Fichte’s System” in Hegel, 1801 (119-154), to which this text belongs, will there be of concern, so we’ll redeem this “is what Hegel intends” claim then.

¹⁷⁰ Hegel’s sublation of rationalism, much more radical than his sublation of Hume, will appear soon.

¹⁷¹ See, for example, Hegel, 1801: 128-30, 139, 151, 155-6f.

¹⁷² In our phrasing “freedom from herself” lies the key to our preservation or sublation of ‘BP Hegel’ – the Hegel of Brandom and Pippin who affirms that nature has nothing to do with thinking, normativity, human nature (Brandom, 2000: 35; Pippin, 2008: 65).

¹⁷³ Hegel, 1812/16: 593: “When Kant... comes to discuss the old and famous question: *what is truth?* he first of all *presents* to the reader as a triviality the **explanation** of the term as the agreement of cognition with its object – a definition of great, indeed of supreme value.”

capable minds are given by a non-identical-with-Nature God rather than *arising through* nature, however – a project according to which, we’ll see, Kant’s anti-naturalism in an important sense takes a *backward* step *vis-à-vis* Hume¹⁷⁴ – it becomes incumbent upon philosophy to explain how true thinking or knowing, and how the *freedom* conditional for (better: constitutive of) thought, can arise naturalistically. It’s (also) on behalf of a Hume-like destruction of rationalism, then, that Hegel writes, with the first words of “The Philosophy of Spirit” fresh upon the heels of the just-completed “Philosophy of Nature”, “Spirit has **for us** nature as its presupposition, of which it is the truth”.¹⁷⁵ “For us”, but not for the authored-by-a-non-natural-God rationalists. The origin of truth-possessing human mindedness (spirit) is *thoroughly natural*.

Recall now that philosophy is, for Hegel, a “System of Science”.¹⁷⁶ The PS “is nothing other than the deduction” of “the Concept of pure science” which the SL presupposes,¹⁷⁷ and the *Encyclopedia* sets the *paradigm* for philosophical science by placing or ordering all the particular sciences.¹⁷⁸ The goal for philosophy-and-science together is to understand who we

¹⁷⁴ Kant preserves – or begins the project of preserving (we are of the mind that Hegel ‘completed’ something that Kant did indeed leave in need of completion) – truth, thought and freedom against Hume (a much greater forward step), and preserves Humean humanism against the rationalists’ grounding of knowledge through God’s authoring our faculty of thought. Our discussion will reveal how he does neither adequately, however, and how Hegel’s argument for the existence of man simultaneously solves these equations. By Kant’s anti-naturalism and Hegel’s naturalistic retort to it, we refer to Kant’s arguments against Spinoza in Kant, 1790b, especially §§72-3, responded to at Hegel, 1802: especially 90-1.

¹⁷⁵ Hegel, 1817/27: §299, p. 200. We’ll see how unlike Hume Hegel’s Hume-like destruction of rationalism is in the ‘second choice’ below.

¹⁷⁶ The working title of the *Phenomenology* was “System of Science: Part One, Science of the Experience of Consciousness”, and the mature philosophy as a whole sought to articulate precisely a System of Science.

¹⁷⁷ Hegel, 1812/16: 49.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Rorty, 1989: 4: our discipline’s self-understanding “owes its existence to attempts by the German idealists to put the sciences in their place”. There is (some) truth too in his further description, which we’ll make secular and plain: “Hegel wanted to think of natural science as a description of spirit not yet fully conscious of its own spiritual nature” (ibid).

thinking or, as Brandom says, “normative creatures” are and where we came from: to arrive at “a correct understanding of the place of mind in nature”.¹⁷⁹

Now the key to grasping the thorough naturalness of the normative knowing of nature is the following: instead of beginning, as even Kant and Fichte do, with a conception of the *object* of knowledge as nature merely *known*, begin instead with a conception of Nature that’s *inclusive of its being known by human beings*.¹⁸⁰ The natural sciences as a whole are to be rethought *through* this new standpoint: its target isn’t, as it has thus far been, nature *independent* of its knowers, but Nature *inclusive* of its knowers. Now, if we really are, as we purport to be, *atheists*, we’ll concede that Nature is the *true* object (the Object) for science, and that nature is the false object. If the concession be made, and Nature be taken up by natural science as its Object, then it becomes incumbent upon each natural science to place itself within the project of trying to explain how this Nature a part of which it’s concerned with *makes the normative* (freedom-involving) *thinking and knowing of itself possible*.¹⁸¹

Such a conception of Nature is what Hegel recommends when he writes,

¹⁷⁹ Sellars, 1967: ix. Cf. Davidson’s talk of the “picture of mind and its place in nature” in “The Myth of the Subjective”, in Davidson, 2001b: 161.

¹⁸⁰ We capitalize ‘Nature’ here to indicate the sublation of Spinoza’s. Letter 32 again: “But as far as the human mind is concerned, I think it is a part of **Nature** too. For I maintain that there is also in Nature an infinite power of thinking.” See here Hegel’s response at Hegel, 1801: 92-3 (see too n.55) to the line in Haller’s poem “Human Virtues”: “To Nature’s heart there penetrates no mere created mind.” Hegel equates empiricism with the attitude towards Nature here expressed: “Taking its stand upon the proverb that no created spirit penetrates to Nature’s inwardness, empiricism gives up hope of creating spirit and the inwardness itself, and **bringing its dead to life as Nature**.” The proverb appears again at Hegel, 1802: 176, as Hegel criticizes Fichte’s “utterly vulgar view of nature” revealed by the I of his *Vocation of Man*’s being “horried, filled with loathing and sadness, at the thought that he is one with the universe, that eternal nature acts in him”.

For clarity, we capitalize ‘Object’ and ‘Nature’ in what follows to indicate the new inclusive-of-the-knowers Object / Nature we recommend natural science take up, and with ‘object’ and ‘nature’ designate its present ‘independent of the subject’ subject matter. This explanation must be kept in mind whenever you come across a capitalized ‘Nature’, though not every occurrence of ‘nature’ has been written explicitly with the contrast in mind.

¹⁸¹ I’ll suggest, as an example of a possible application in the sciences of such clarity onto the Object of science, that the wearied debate amongst cosmologists concerning “the Anthropic Principle” could be aided thereby.

How are synthetic judgments *a priori* possible? This problem expresses nothing else but the Idea that subject and predicate of the synthetic judgment are identical in the *a priori* way. That is to say, these heterogeneous elements, the subject which is the particular and in the form of being, and the predicate which is the universal and in the form of thought, are at the same time **absolutely identical**.¹⁸²

Kant's "*a priori*" anticipation by thought of nature's form, the possibility of which Hegel, in calling it "the authentic Idea of Reason"¹⁸³ of course endorses, appears in Kant as "pure concept", the opposition of which to *empirical* consciousness Hegel with Fichte seeks to suspend. (Hegel's central *critique* of Kant and Fichte, we'll see, takes them to task for thinking the relation between pure consciousness and nature as a *causal* one.¹⁸⁴) The claim of Hegel's to a *better way* to achieve Fichte's sought after suspension or identity *is* his recommendation to **start** with a knowers-of-it-inclusive conception of Nature, rather than with the independent-of-its-knowers nature, as specified above. This is an important element of what he means when he writes in the *Difference* essay, contra Fichte (p.121),

The identity of pure and empirical consciousness is not an abstraction from their original opposition. On the contrary, their opposition is an abstraction from their original identity.¹⁸⁵

This reconceived starting point motivates Hegel's critique of Kant on the analytic / synthetic distinction. In affirming the syntheticity of the connections through which alone a world is possibly thought, Kant shares with Hume the *starting point* that affirms the separation between *thought as such* and nature: the subject is originally distinguished from the object.

¹⁸² Hegel, 1802: 69; Hume, as noted, is mentioned earlier this page. We later find the same thought expressed in the Preface to the *Phenomenology*, §17.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ See Hegel, 1802: 75, 92-3, 167-8, 171, 176, ; DS 115, 129, 132. We'll revisit the thoughts presented here and examine this critique of Hegel's when making clear the essential distinction between Hegelianism and Kantianism.

¹⁸⁵ Compare Fichte's thought at Fichte, 1982: 60-1 but also 33, 35, 42, 60-1, 135, 268, and Fichte, 1988: 322f..

Hegel completes Hume's annihilation of the separation of the I or thinking from nature as such, and this finds expression in his saying that *the thought of nature as such* in Kant's *a priori* anticipation of it *is absolutely identical with* that which it is – or should be – of: Nature as such.¹⁸⁶ The point Hegel takes from Kant's "problem upon which all depends" and with which "metaphysics stands or falls"¹⁸⁷ is that *our true thinking and knowing* of nature, the truth of which Kant redeems in his solution thereof, is a true thinking and knowing of nature *that belongs*, not to a "thought as such" *separate* from nature, the object of knowledge, but rather *to nature as such*. Our starting point for philosophy should be one that affirms our true thinking and knowing of nature as *part* of nature herself, or: nature is to be posited as Nature.

The identification is possible simply by seeing nature as such as what it is in truth: Nature as such. Clarity on the point allows affirmation of the truism that Nature is thinking itself. Just as Hume corrected the rationalists by moving thought about the world from thought as such (the separated-from-nature subject) to the world as such, Hegel completes this Humean project by removing *thought as such*, this residual separation of the subject from nature that persists in Hume,¹⁸⁸ *from* this residually separated subject and *placing it again in the world or Nature as such*.

¹⁸⁶ As the explication continues, the sense of the "of" here will change, *from* the idea that it's the finite I thinking *of* a nature it stands over (the annihilation's target), *to* the idea that the thinking of nature is "of nature" in that it is *nature itself* that is, through us, as it were, *doing the thinking*. We'll work to make this sound less mystical than the 'I'm separate from nature' thinking that judges it mystical. Again with Spinoza we "maintain that there is also in Nature an infinite power of thinking" (Letter 29); cf. Ethics, IIP11Cor: "When we say that the human mind perceives this or that, we are saying nothing but that God [Nature] ... has this or that idea; ... Here, no doubt, my readers will come to a halt, and think of many things which will give them pause. For this reason I ask them to continue on with me slowly, step and step, and to make no judgment on these matters until they have through them all." Cf. Hegel, 1840: 272. We'll soon see how differently than Spinoza Hegel thinks these propositions.

¹⁸⁷ Kant, 1783: 276.

¹⁸⁸ It more than 'persists' in Kant. As we shall see in moving from the essence of the Kantian to that of the Hegelian philosophy, Kant positively seeks to *reaffirm* our separation from nature: the radically *anti-naturalist* streak in Kant we've hinted at, targeted in Hegel's talk of "the mishandling that [nature] suffered in Kant's and Fichte's systems"

Hegel's reminder on the true concept of Nature finds expression in the SL's beginning with *quality* over quantity.¹⁸⁹ The conception of nature as purely quantitative represents an *abstraction* from the thinking subject's embeddedness in Nature. This abstraction appears to get us closer to the truth when we posit nature as nature, but when we see that nature is Nature, we see that *this abstraction itself* is a Natural event, and ought not to be separated from the object we study.¹⁹⁰ Thus does reflection become a moment of the True.

3.4 HUMEANISM ODER HEGEL?

Analytic philosophy is essentially Humean in this respect: it is inalienably atheistic. We affirm with Rorty that our atheism demands a naturalistic comprehension of what thinking is. It is *given* by our atheism that the rationalist conception of man's thinking as Given by a non-natural God, *this* conception of man's place in the world as separate from and standing over nature, is in all its residual philosophical incarnations to be expunged.¹⁹¹ Now Hegel's critique of Kant on syntheticity, we suggested above, completes Hume's atheism-inspired desire to annihilate the finite human subject's separation from nature, so that even *thought as such* doesn't serve to distinguish the human subject from nature.

(Hegel, 1801: 83; cf. 177; Hegel, 1802: 93, 95) and to be corrected by "Reason recasting itself into nature" (1801: 83), i.e. – he means here more than this, but this too – by Reason (mankind's thinking and knowing) being affirmed again as *part* of Nature, and belonging thereto.

¹⁸⁹ See 1812/16: 79.

¹⁹⁰ Hegel is inspired here, I suggest, by Goethe's critique of Newton in the former's *Theory of Colors*. The Science of Logic and the Philosophy of Nature contain their own extensive criticisms of Newton.

¹⁹¹ We shall soon find Rorty's conception of nature to be a quite horrible incarnation of that which he sought to destroy, the idea of a God-given world standing over man, and in the way of his freedom.

With this completion, however, we are faced with a choice. Humeanism and the Hegelianism I'm sketching are different naturalistic choices to be taken upon the shared acceptance of the death of God, and the shared impulse deriving from this to destroy the philosophical remnants of theistic rationalism and account for the phenomenon of human thinking naturalistically. The *difference* between these two choices we seek to make quite plain. In this section we'll begin our attempt "to bring 'analytic philosophy' to self-consciousness"¹⁹² of the fact that that it has in the main unconsciously chosen the Humean path that annihilates thought (the normative conception of thought; equivalently, reason), along with the (shared by both choices) annihilation of the human subject's separation from nature. This choice, I'll seek to show, is unconsciously taken even by those who explicitly affirm themselves to be taking a Kantian (e.g. Davidson, Allison, Longuenesse) or a Hegelian path affirming the normativity of thought (Brandom and Pippin; Rorty will be present too).

In the "Second Introduction to the *Wissenschaftslehre*", a document crucial to Hegel, Fichte expresses his claim that he alone has, and all the so-called Kantians have not, understood Kant, through the claim that, "unlike Kant and the *Wissenschaftslehre*, [they] do not presuppose that the I is prior to the manifold of representation".¹⁹³ Their *failure* to affirm this priority is of a piece with their positing the *origin* of knowledge in an affection by an object outside consciousness (a thing in itself). They thereby posit *the world*, i.e. the world of mechanically

¹⁹² Rorty, 1981: 172, though our inspiration here is McDowell: see 1996: xiii: "consider a stage at which reflection is subject to such a pair of pressures [the demands for normativity, and hence freedom, and for naturalness, and hence law-governed natural determination], but not self-consciously enough for it to be clear that what they generate is an antinomy. With an inexplicit awareness of the tension...", and xvi: "Suppose we are inexplicitly aware that our thinking is subject to both these forces; that makes it intelligible that we should find thought's being about the empirical world philosophically problematic." Cf. McDowell, 2009b: 130's talk of the "person [who] is thereby *en route*, as it were, to a frame of mind in which it is a mystery how thought bears on the world at all".

¹⁹³ Fichte, 1982: 73; Fichte, 1994: 88 (I, 503). Beck is excepted at p.53. Cf. Fichte, 1982: 42, 49-50, 96, 117-8, 125, 147.

operating causes, to be in place *prior* to the rational activity human subjects through their thinking participate in. Besides alienating our thinking from nature, this thought renders impossible, he argues, that very activity, and hence annihilates all human activity and thought.¹⁹⁴ This consequence can only be avoided, he claims, by affirming the activity of the human understanding to be prior to and make possible the *very presentation of nature to the senses*, and he affirms this to be the lesson of Kant's *Analytic*.¹⁹⁵

This Fichtean priority claim constitutes a reading of Kant's Transcendental Deduction. Its import for now is the following: all the modern authors mentioned two paragraphs above affirm the presentation of nature as occurring *prior* to the activity of thought. **This itself is to remain Humean, and to fail to rise to Kantianism.** Sometimes more, sometimes less explicitly, they all posit *nature* (the object) as an order of merely mechanically determining causes, and posit the activity of thinking *subsequently* to this prior positing. In all positing the would-be activity of thinking as *posterior* to their positing of a thereby thought- and (thereby) freedom-free nature, they one and all stand opposed to the Kantian-Fichtean *priority* of "the I, or he, or it that thinks" to the presentation of nature, or alternatively to the presentation of nature's order of mechanically determining causes. They also thereby stand opposed to Hegel who, as we've seen, affirms as actual truth the idea

¹⁹⁴ Fichte's conversion to Transcendental Idealism came with his conversion from determinism through his reading Kant's second Critique. (See Fichte, 1988: 323.)

¹⁹⁵ The *priority* gestured at here is the thought the possibility of which Hume "could not explain" (B127), the so-called Kantians couldn't fathom, our Hume-tied analytic Kants Allison and Longuenesse, we'll show, have failed to rise themselves to, and that *even Kant* couldn't consistently adhere to, as Hegel (but not Fichte) comes to appreciate and understand the reasons for: according to Hegel Kant *contradicts* this "prior" with a "posterior" deriving from a thing in itself: see Fichte, 1982: 74-8; Hegel, 1807: §238; Hegel, 1812/16: 62, 593, etc.. (It is of course Fichte's and Beck's *denial* of the thing in itself that distinguishes their interpretations. Hegel calls this "Transcendental idealism in its more consistent development" (Hegel, 1812/16: 47).)

that the mechanism of nature, the relation of causality, is at one with nature's teleological technique. This is not to say that nature is determined by an Idea opposite to it, but rather that what from the mechanistic point of view appears as absolutely sundered, one term as cause and the other as effect in an empirical nexus of necessity, absolutely coheres within an original primordial identity. (Hegel, 1802: 90)

In a moment, then, we'll display how analytic philosophy has, despite its rhetoric of a "Kantian" and a "Hegelian" age,¹⁹⁶ and despite the odd genuine surge in that direction (e.g. Davidson), failed to extract itself from the powerful *logos* of Hume's thinking that issues as its verdict the annihilation of the concept of thought. First, however, a word is in order about what has forced the hand of the analytic thinker into this Humean rather than the Hegelian fork on the atheistic road.

¹⁹⁶ The phrases were originally used by Rorty (Sellars, 19947 Preface), by our lights a committed Humean, and adopted by Brandom (Brandom, 2000: 32-3).

3.5 “A MISCONCEPTION OF THE INTELLECTUAL OBLIGATIONS OF *NATURALISM*”,¹⁹⁷ OR...?

McDowell opens the final ¶10 of his remarkable “Scheme-Content Dualism and Empiricism” thus,

I suggested that with the modern achievement of clarity about a distinctive sort of understanding – now available to be cited as the defining aim of a distinctive intellectual endeavor, the natural sciences – there comes an appreciation of how special, by comparison, is the sort of understanding that involves placing things in rational relations to one another. The sense of specialness is expressed in a genre of philosophical questions that we can sum up, exploiting the connection between reason and freedom, like this: **how is freedom related to the natural world?** This wording points to familiar questions about action and responsibility as paradigms of the sort of thing I mean. But the problems posed by the tendency towards a dualism of scheme and content belong in this genre of philosophy too. **Underlying the dualism of scheme and content is a dualism of freedom – the freedom of reason – and nature.**

(McDowell, 2009b: 131-2)

“Now “dualism”, as a term of philosophical criticism”, he’d earlier explained, “implies more than mere duality. In a *dualism*... the two putative determinants of significance are initially separated so far from each other that it becomes a problem how they can come together in the interaction that is supposed to yield significance.”¹⁹⁸ In ways reminiscent of Hegel’s criticism of

¹⁹⁷ McDowell, 2009b: 133.

¹⁹⁸ McDowell, 2009b: 116. Compare Brandom, 1994: 614f. What follows on this page alone (McDowell, 2009b: 116; see also pp.125-6, 128, 131-3) distinguishes McDowell from the just mentioned slew of analytic authors in that he does appreciate and affirm not only the Kant-Fichte priority, but the Hegelian equipoise of the thought, for his thought here could be summarized, ‘*thought* (the conceptual) in inconceivable *qua* thought (the conceptual) otherwise than through its **original union** with the content of thought.’ This is (and this is a good thing) Absolute Idealism in common sense’s clothing: see how his “It is not a routine idea... and it is not obvious why” (116) express the Absolute Idealist starting point. The term “equipoise” is McDowell’s, and the thought behind it guides his reading of Hegel. See McDowell, 2009a: 71-2, 75, 94, 102, 150-3, 161. The clearest expression of the thought in play is to be found, perhaps, in “Conceptual Capacities in Perception”, see especially McDowell, 2009b: 143.

Fichte,¹⁹⁹ McDowell's purpose, we'll see, is to show that Davidson has assumed or commenced his philosophizing from the assumption of the absolute *distinction* between thought or freedom, "organized by a 'constitutive ideal of rationality'"²⁰⁰ on the one side, and nature on the other, and has in doing so contradicted "a condition for it to be intelligible that thoughts are otherwise than empty".²⁰¹ Thus the deeper "dualism of freedom... and nature" renders Davidson's account of thinking impossible too.

We can express McDowell's point that Davidson himself is subject to the dualism of thought / reason / freedom and nature thus: Davidson still traffics in an essentially Humean

¹⁹⁹ Hegel, 1801: 119-21, 129.

²⁰⁰ McDowell, 2009b: 132. Davidson's conception of thought *is* (whereas its predecessor, Quine's, is definitely not) our normative conception of thought impossible without genuine freedom. Though our notion of thought is *affirmed* with Davidson's coherentism, the conceiving of its *possibility* is still precluded by the assumed original distinction and attendant Humeanism (as we explain in a moment, following McDowell), and thoroughly destroyed by the same, as we explain in the next section. Now what we simply call "thought" appears in McDowell's paper sometimes as "world views" (see his gloss on the term at p. 124, "...a world view (or theories, or beliefs)", though also merely as "thought", as for example when he urges against Davidson "the idea that thought can be intelligibly non-empty only by virtue of answerability to experience" (128). It is crucial to comprehending McDowell's Hegelian correction of Davidson's "quasi-Kantian picture" (132), and to seeing how he thereby redeems the (thoroughly transformed) Quinean / empiricist thought that *the world itself* through its impacting our senses *grounds* all *thinking* about it, however, to notice his affirming the following difference as he sets up his alternate account of the scheme-content (thought / object of thought) distinction: Davidson equates world view with scheme, thereby placing both on the side of the subject *posterior* to the interaction with the world whereby content for thought is attained. As McDowell points out (119-20, cf. 123), this leads him into a misreading of Quine: it impels him to miss the possible motivation for empiricism McDowell seeks to redeem. (This misreading will be important in the next section.) For McDowell, *world view* (our 'thought') is not *posterior* to the interaction between subjective and objective. Rather, "World view or theory would be the result of the supposed interaction between the two sides of the dualism" (119); "we have something with a "built-in ontology and theory of the world" **only after** content has made its contribution" (120); "If the other party to the dualism is already a world view, **before** it comes into relation with sensory intake, then it cannot owe its being a world view (at all) to an interaction with sensory intake" (126). Here, we have the origin of thought not, as with Hume, in nature, but in the *origin* of nature; we explain this difference in the next section. (It marks McDowell's affirmation of the Kant-Fichte priority mentioned above.) Expressed in these texts is the conviction that *thought* (world view), to be *answerable to world*, "something that is surely required if the activity is to be recognizable as thinking as all" (McDowell, 2009b: 243), must find its *origin* in the world's impressing itself upon the subject. Yet "Davidson is immune to any anxiety about how it is possible that there are world views [thoughts] at all" (126; not in a good way, McDowell explains). Davidson assumes thought as Given. I'll be suggesting below that McDowell's world view is what I've been calling "Nature": McDowell's "world view" is *the world's* view.

²⁰¹ McDowell, 2009b: 125.

conception of *nature* whose logos leads to the annihilation of thought. Davidson conceives *the natural world*, including “the naturalness of... an impact on the senses”²⁰² as an order of causes *merely mechanical*. The force of “merely mechanical” here is this: the causal nexus between naturally related entities, including thereby the causal nexus between external objects and our senses, is conceived to be thoroughly *without reason or purpose* - less explicitly, “outside the sphere of concepts / the space of reasons”, an order of “synthetic” (non-thoughtlike, i.e. non-*purposeful*, non- or irrational) connections. Davidson is essentially at one with Rorty in positing nature as an order of “blind, contingent, mechanical forces”.²⁰³

Since Davidson assumes that the natural world *must* be like this (bereft of rationality), he infers *from* his true insight against Quine that only an item already in the space of reasons can ground another, *to* his coherentism / rejection of empiricism, his pronouncement that “nothing can be a reason for holding a belief except another belief”.²⁰⁴ His assumption of a reason- or thought-free nature prevents him from considering the possibility McDowell has been urging since *Mind and World*, the thought that this *natural* event of an object impressing itself upon me might also be a *rational* happening, i.e. an occurrence in the order wherein items constitute *reasons* for other items.

Now it’s been a cardinal goal of McDowell’s philosophy “to bring “analytic philosophy” to self-consciousness”²⁰⁵ concerning the *contradiction* between, in our terms, (1) its commitment

²⁰² McDowell, 2009b: 128.

²⁰³ Rorty, 1989: 17. Cf. McDowell, 2009b: 258 & n.3, 263, n.10. The important senses in which Davidson is very much *not* at one with Rorty, and the sense in which he does, contra Quine’s explicit Humeanism, effect a genuine surge towards Kantianism, shall appear below.

²⁰⁴ “A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge”, p. 141.

²⁰⁵ Rorty, 1989: 172. See McDowell, 1996: xiii: “consider a stage at which reflection is subject to such a pair of pressures [the demands for normativity, and hence freedom, and for naturalness, and hence law-governed natural determination], but not self-consciously enough for it to be clear that what they generate is an antinomy. With an inexplicit awareness of the tension...”, and xvi: “Suppose we are inexplicitly aware that our thinking is subject to

to taking the Humean annihilation-of-thought fork upon the annihilation of the separation of the I from nature given by our atheism, and (2) its desire to preserve the normativity (inc. thereby the activity) of thought. In opposition to the anti-representationalist “romanticism” of Rorty and Brandom that affirms that “there isn’t a relation of responsibility of human beings to anything non-human”²⁰⁶ on the one side, and to Davidson’s coherentism rejecting a grounding relation of sense experience to belief on the other, he has under the banner of “a minimal empiricism”²⁰⁷ / “a conception of experience as taking in the world”²⁰⁸ sought to extricate us from this Humean logos of annihilation in which these other philosophers, with their analytic conception of nature, have been ensnared,²⁰⁹ by redeeming the idea that *the origin* of thinking is to be once again found *in the world*, i.e. to find again thought’s origination in “the way the world puts its mark on

both these forces; that makes it intelligible that we should find thought’s being about the empirical world philosophically problematic.” Cf. McDowell, 2009b: 130’s talk of the “person [who] is thereby *en route*, as it were, to a frame of mind in which it is a mystery how thought bears on the world at all”.

²⁰⁶ Rorty to Davidson in conversation (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6DtYC9N8RM>, at 61 minutes.) The scare-quotes are to indicate that I find little “romantic” in Rorty’s conception of “this so-called man and his humanity” (Hegel, 1802: 65), and I’m quite confident the romantics would feel the same way. The McDowellian-Hegelian concept of the human being as the mode of Nature “special” (as McDowell urges, with Davidson and Sellars, as against Rorty, at McDowell, 2009a: 207f., cf. our opening quote from McDowell, 2009b: 132 above) in its being the only mode thereof that *thinks* and *knows* Nature and nature, will be thoroughly consistent with the true reading of Rorty’s words (as McDowell suggests of his “naturalized platonism” at 1996: 92), for this will come with the Hegelian (and true romantic) understanding of “human”, not Rorty’s Humean-Darwinian conception which, we’ll see, very much traffics in thought’s annihilation. It will turn out that a proper appreciation of *what it is to be human* – a proper appreciation of what *thinking* is – will very much demand responsibility to the world itself – exactly what Rorty seeks to deny. We’ll make note here of the fact that Davidson *resists* Rorty’s above-quoted words articulating his so-called romantic pragmatist conception of human nature with the words, “it seems to me that we ought also accept some kind of obligation... to the environment”.

²⁰⁷ McDowell, 1996: xi.

²⁰⁸ McDowell, 2009b: 243.

²⁰⁹ See McDowell, 2009b: 130’s discussion of “the conception of nature whose finished product, in this context, is the idea that experiences are ‘intuitions without concepts’”, i.e. that thought is not rationally connected to the world, rendering it un- “intelligible that thoughts are otherwise than empty” (p.125; cf. 121, 124, 126, 128-33), i.e. that the comprehensibility of thought “goes missing” (126), i.e., that thought is annihilated. “Thought’s hold on the world is coming into question” (130). Cf. McDowell, 2009b: 259: “With the new [analytic] conception of nature, the knowing subject threatens to withdraw from the natural world.” The thought expressed in quotation marks on the first full paragraph of p.128, the temptation to which it is McDowell’s purpose to save us from, expresses a commitment shared by Brandom, Davidson, and Rorty.

us”.²¹⁰ This suggested minimal “transcendental empiricism”²¹¹ is designed to avoid the failures he’s revealed his predecessors’ and contemporaries’ views to come to when the question is put to them concerning “the capacity of our mental activity [our thinking in general] to be about reality at all”.²¹²

Davidson writes of “Quine’s naturalized epistemology” that “it is based on the empiricist premise that what we mean and what we think is conceptually (and not merely causally) founded on the testimony of the senses”.²¹³ The only motivation he can fathom for having my belief being *conceptually* (rationally) grounded on my impression is the desire for the justification of thoughts we *already* possess. His appreciation of the *sui generis* nature of the space of reasons, however, rightly impels him to affirm that only something *thoughtlike*, something rational, could ground (give a *reason* for) the believing mind to believe something. Instead of affirming upon this insight the option McDowell urges of positing this natural mechanically causal transaction involving our sensibility as also a *rational* relation, however, Davidson rejects the idea that the natural-causal relation involving my sensibility is *epistemologically* significant at all. As is familiar, he posits this mechanically causal transaction that is my sense experience as *causing* my belief,²¹⁴ but rejects the idea that it *grounds* my belief: “the thesis that the deliverances of the senses are **epistemologically** significant”,²¹⁵ i.e. enjoy a place in the order of *grounding*, is discarded as “the last vestige of empiricism.”²¹⁶

²¹⁰ McDowell, 2009b: 124.

²¹¹ See, e.g. “Sellars’ Transcendental Empiricism”.

²¹² McDowell, 2009b: 243.

²¹³ “Afterthoughts”, p.136, quoted at McDowell, 2009b: 120.

²¹⁴ See e.g. “Mental Events”, p.247, “a ship approaching must have caused him to come to believe”, cf. p. 254; “A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge”, p.157.

²¹⁵ McDowell, 2009b: 118.

²¹⁶ McDowell, 2009b: 118.

Scheme-content dualisms seek to ground thought on something outside of thought, something non-thoughtlike. Quine's empiricism is subject to the dualism because it conceives sense experiences as non-thoughtlike: his experiences are not, like McDowell's, appearances, but "intuitions without concepts".²¹⁷ The only motivation Davidson can see for Quine's desire to ground thought on sense experience is to *justify* beliefs already possessed. As McDowell points out, however, this doesn't fit Quine's thinking (123; more on this in the next section). Quine's is, in the main, a "naturalism that cheerfully casts experiences as 'intuitions without concepts', and rejects questions about the warrant for world views altogether, in favor of questions about their causation."²¹⁸ Quine's sense experiences, since posited as outside the rational relations constituting his conceptual scheme (his thinking), are thereby rendered *mute*, i.e. it is "incoherent"²¹⁹ to posit them, qua "intuitions without concepts", as *justifying* given beliefs.²²⁰ Davidson's "curiously muted objection"²²¹ (his charge that Quine's picture, rather than being *incoherent*, merely "leaves him open to sceptical attack"),²²² along with the failure of fit of Davidson's posited 'anti-skeptical' motivation for Quine's empiricism and its character as

²¹⁷ See McDowell, 2009b: 115, 121, 125 (quoted below). "The conception of nature that I have depicted as underlying the idea that the world's impacts on us are "intuitions without concepts"" (130) is of course the analytic naturalism that is McDowell's and my target. To say that occurrences within this nature, including my natural sensible self's being impacted upon by external objects, are "without concepts" is to affirm this nature to be non- or *irrational*, to posit its connectings as non-thoughtlike or "synthetic". It's the sources of this positing of nature that we're exploring.

²¹⁸ McDowell, 2009b: 131.

²¹⁹ McDowell, 2009b: 117, 120, 123, 125, 127.

²²⁰ In the next paragraph we'll see McDowell *redeem* the nobler empiricist impulse behind Quine's thinking: the thought that thinking (belief) is only possible *at all* as what it must be to be thought or belief, answerable to the world, through its commerce with it in sense experience. But McDowell still affirms of course that its incoherent to think that *that* impulse could be satisfied through blind intuitions. It's through this that we affirm McDowell's 'Quine-Hegel' synthesis to possess what we found Brandom's lacking: the moment of principle-destroying criticism.

²²¹ McDowell, 2009b: 121, 122.

²²² "Afterthoughts", p.136, quoted at McDowell, 2009b: 120. "The materials for the claim of incoherence", McDowell points out on p.121, "come directly from Davidson himself."

cheerfully eschewing questions of justification, signals the fact that Davidson has *misidentified* the noetic pressure impelling the most famous case of it (Quine) into the scheme-content dualism.

It is not, as Davidson suggests, a desire to ground beliefs already possessed that impels Quine to the dualism, but “an interest in the conditions of its being intelligible that we have a world view (or theories, or beliefs) at all.”²²³ Now McDowell does, of course, affirm the Sellarsian thought that only something within the space of reasons (something thoughtlike) is able to ground or justify a thought or belief, but he rejects the Davidsonian incarnation of this thought, “nothing can be a reason for holding a belief except another belief”, by *redeeming the virtue* of the just-quoted real “interest” motivating Quine’s empiricism, the motivation for which Davidson misses. Beliefs may justify other beliefs, but how are beliefs (thoughts) *about the world possible at all?* “It does not help to say that impacts from the world cause beliefs... These beliefs would be just more elements of world views. The question we have allowed to arise is how there can be anything of that kind, **if not because** some things of that kind are answerable to a tribunal constituted by experience”.²²⁴ Davidson has *assumed* our possession of a world view or stock of beliefs, and in denying the rationality of the world’s impact on our senses has *precluded* the possibility of tracing these beliefs about the world back to the world itself (“if not because”). He has affirmed subjectivity (the possession of thoughts, beliefs, world views) to be in place *prior* to its union with the object; he has assumed the subjective (thought, belief) to be *originally opposed* to the objective (nature). This makes answerability to the object, to the world itself, impossible. McDowell’s correction of Davidson is like Hegel’s correction of Kant and Fichte: both affirm the subjective’s (thought’s, belief’s) origin to be found in its original *union*

²²³ McDowell, 2009b: 124. Compare 125-6, 128.

²²⁴ McDowell, 2009b: 125. The text immediately preceding this appears in the next standalone quote below.

with the objective: thought's origin (actual, i.e. normative thought's, unlike Quine's) is to again be found in *our sensible nature's transaction with the rest of nature's being*, i.e. in nature's impact on our (within nature) senses. This view, which posits as its opponent the view that nature is merely an order of "blind, contingent, mechanical forces",²²⁵ is, we can see, the first serious step of analytic philosophy towards winning for itself the Hegelian notion of nature (Nature) expressed at FK, p.90, and quoted above. McDowell writes,

It is a Kantian idea that responsiveness to reason is a kind of freedom... But if...responsiveness to reason does not extend as far as answerability to impacts the world makes on us, then it becomes a live question how, in exercising such a freedom, we could be adopting commitments as to how things are in the world. If "man's conceptual sovereignty" has no limits set by the facts themselves, it becomes unrecognizable as what it is meant to be, the power to make up our minds *about how things are*. And it is open to question whether we enable ourselves to see "man's conceptual sovereignty" as constrained in the right way if – like Davidson when he rejects empiricism – we say that **impacts from the world exert a causal influence** on how the sovereign power is exercised, but **deny that they set rational constraints**. If we say that, we preclude ourselves from pointing to rational answerability to the world's impact on our senses as the way in which employments of concepts are ultimately **rationally** answerable to the world itself, and then it becomes mysterious how these exploitations of freedom can be otherwise than empty.²²⁶

This familiar rehash has been for the sake of examining McDowell's own diagnosis of the source of the dualism "deeper"²²⁷ than the one Davidson finds behind "what is unsatisfactory about modern philosophy".²²⁸ This deeper dualism, the "dualism of freedom – the freedom of reason – and nature" has, we've seen, ensnared and shipwrecked Davidson's account of thinking

²²⁵ Rorty, 1989: 17. See especially the quote from McDowell, 2009b: 139 in the note below.

²²⁶ McDowell, 2009b: 124-5. Compare 134: "With this conception, we can hold that operations of our sensibility exert a **rational** influence on our formation of belief", p.139: "My objection to Davidson's picture is not that it takes the impact of sensibility on our thinking, and thereby the impact of the world on our thinking, to be causal, but that it takes the impact to be *brutely* causal – causal **to the exception of being rational**. That a relation's being rational can cohere with its being causal – that not all causal relatedness is brutally causal – is of course a doctrine of Davidson's own ["Action's Reasons, Causes"]". Brandom expresses the opposite view at Brandom, 1994: 626.

²²⁷ McDowell, 2009b: 124, 133.

²²⁸ McDowell, 2009b: 129, 133.

too. By correctly diagnosing the error in *his* thinking, one of the clearest around, McDowell suggests, we'll arrive at a deeper appreciation of the problems controlling analytic philosophy's thinking in general.

Davidson has the insight against Quine that only a *rational* or thought-like item could possibly ground a belief. But *why*, McDowell asks, doesn't he consider the possibility that the impression on my senses might itself be *rational* (conceptual) as well as causal – that experience might yet be in the space of reasons? Why is he impelled to give up the thought that the *grounding* of thought about the world is to be found in the world itself?

In his search after the origin of the scheme-content dualism, the diagnostic question Davidson asks is “why is it tempting to suppose that the deliverances of the senses would have to constitute a tribunal for our world views to face?”²²⁹ McDowell answers in a way that affirms *this* ‘temptation’ to be well motivated: because “empiricism, in the non-pallid sense,²³⁰ captures a condition for it be intelligible that thoughts are otherwise than empty.”²³¹ With the “deeper” anxiety discovered to be, not ‘how are beliefs justified?’ but rather “How are world views possible?”²³² i.e., not how is thought *justified*, but how is thought even *possible*, the diagnostic question becomes “why is it difficult to see how the deliverances of the senses could constitute a tribunal for world views to face? Why is it tempting to suppose that the world's impacts on us would have to be “intuitions without concepts”?”²³³

²²⁹ McDowell, 2009b: 127.

²³⁰ This harks back to the text from “Meaning Truth and Evidence” quoted on p.118. Davidson wrote there of empiricism, “I take it to involve not only the pallid claim that all knowledge of the world comes through the senses, but also the [non-pallid] conviction that this fact is of prime epistemological significance.” Davidson rejects and McDowell reaffirms the latter.

²³¹ McDowell, 2009b: 125.

²³² McDowell, 2009b: 132.

²³³ McDowell, 2009b: 127.

McDowell's answer, as will again be familiar and as is presented in our opening quote from ¶10, is that "with the intellectual development that we can sum up as the rise of modern science"²³⁴ came the pressure to infer that anything posited as "natural" thereby falls under the province of "the natural sciences... an understanding of phenomena as interrelated perhaps causally, but certainly (this becomes a tempting gloss on what it is to see phenomena as causally interrelated) within a framework of laws of nature".²³⁵ McDowell affirms the duality – we don't (yet) say dualism– of things or items falling under the natural scientific province of natural law, and things falling within the space of reasons. According to his diagnosis, we *falsely* infer, '*if* natural, *then* falling under natural law', from which follows the inference McDowell endorses, '*if* falling under natural law, *then* not in the space of freedom (/reasons / concepts / thoughts)'. Since our being sensibly affected by external objects is an occurrence in nature, we think, '*since* sense experience is a natural event, it falls under the realm of natural law, and thereby (by the duality McDowell endorses) *not* in the space of reasons.' Thereby are we led, cognizant of the *sui generis* nature of the space of reasons, to affirm "nothing can be a reason for holding a belief except another belief", expunge sense experience's seemingly necessary role in grounding our thinking the world, and remain forever subjects separated from our object (nature).²³⁶ But

we do not need to accept that when we see something as a happening in nature – as the world's making its mark on a sentient creature would indeed be – we are *eo ipso* placing it in the sort of frame that is characteristic of the natural sciences... We need not accept... that phenomena are conceived in terms of their place in nature only when they are conceived in terms of their place in the framework of natural law.²³⁷

²³⁴ McDowell, 2009b: 127.

²³⁵ McDowell, 2009b: p.127. Compare the exchange with Friedman, McDowell, 2009b: 138-9.

²³⁶ Compare especially §§8, 10 of "Scheme Content Dualism and Empiricism," especially the thought in quotation marks on p.128 to which, we suggested above, Rorty, Brandom and Davidson are all committed. (Quine's exemption will be explained in the next section.)

²³⁷ McDowell, 2009b: 129.

According to McDowell, then, dissolving analytic philosophy's master anxiety demands taking aim at "the conception of nature that I have depicted as underlying the idea that the world's impacts on us are 'intuitions without concepts'",²³⁸ at the conception of nature that compels us to say that "reason is set over against the senses",²³⁹ for this is a "conception of nature whose **finished product**, in this context, is the idea that experiences are 'intuitions without concepts'": it a conception of nature whereby the possibility of finding thought's grounding in the world is precluded. We must take aim at analytic or Humean naturalism to prevent the annihilation of thought and redeem its possibility. McDowell closes his paper thus:

The question 'How are world views possible?' is a form of the question 'How is freedom possible?' But here Davidson's way... does not help... [he] does not undermine the thought that the world's impacts on us are 'intuitions without concepts.' **This is a thought Davidson accepts.** And it is a thought that, I have claimed, leaves the freedom of 'conceptual sovereignty' a mystery. ... if we are to defuse the anxiety while respecting this quite different attraction for empiricism [its unique ability— sans appeal to God's authorship of my faculties - to answer the question, 'how is *thought about the world* possible at all?'], something Davidson does not give us reason not to want to do, we need to find a way to resist the idea that the impacts of the world on our senses are 'intuitions without concepts'. And for that reason we need **a more radical counter to the underlying dualism of reason and nature** than the one Davidson supplies. On this view, the sources of what is unsatisfactory about modern philosophy include something that lies deeper than the interiorizing conception of subjectivity pointed to by Davidson. **A more fundamental source is a misconception of the intellectual obligations of naturalism**, to which Davidson himself – in his willingness to accept that the deliverances of the senses are 'intuitions without concepts' – seems to be subject.²⁴⁰

But the *real source*, I suggest, is deeper still. The more fundamental source is a misconception of the intellectual obligations, not of *naturalism*, but of **atheism**.

²³⁸ McDowell, 2009b: 130.

²³⁹ McDowell, 2009b: 116. Compare 128, immediately after the quote mentioned in the above note: "This suggests how a familiar feature of modern thinking might explain the idea that the sensory stands opposed to the conceptual, as it does for Davidson as well as in the dualism of scheme and content."

²⁴⁰ McDowell, 2009b: 132-3. These are the paper's closing words.

The religious world view affirms a non-natural God to have made the world. Nature is posited as *authored* by a rational mind, and is thereby thought of as having been *made rational*. This mode of life and thought finds philosophical expression in the Cartesian idea that the God who authored my intellect *also made nature*, ensuring that the thoughts I cannot help but affirm according to the former (my clear and distinct ideas) are known – through the proof of God’s existence – to *be in agreement with* (to correspond to) this hereby-posited-as-rational nature.²⁴¹

Now the next shape taken by the dialectical world-spirit was the Humean incarnation of naturalism grounded on Hume’s atheistic opposition to the religious world view. *Because this naturalism took shape in opposition to rationalism* - in opposition, that is, to a form of life and thought whose positing of a transcendent God was intimately interwoven with its positing of nature as *rational* or thought-like – the nature that appears in this naturalism is posited as *irrational*.

Hume’s role in the argument for the existence of man is to destroy God and affirm nature by winning human thinking *from* the thought of it as being God-Given and *for* the comprehension of it as arising through nature. We’ve seen how he does this: Hume affirms *with* Descartes (say)²⁴² that *I cannot but* think the world otherwise than through the causal relation. For Descartes, the *truth* of this thought necessary for thinking the world is *grounded* in the third Meditation’s proof of the existence of God: Descartes infers ‘ God created us → our necessary thought is true’. For the sake of affirming the naturalness of man’s thinking and with this destroying the *self-deluded* conception man has of his own thinking as expressed in its highest

²⁴¹ For the present version of our story, we must ignore the sense in which Descartes himself is a religious revolutionary. We trace the argument for the existence of man *from* the Cartesian coordinate, though its origin is indeed more distant.

²⁴² In the *Meditations* Descartes *assumes* causation, e.g. God must be the cause of my idea of God; external objects must cause my representations of them. (Hume denies both; on the latter see Hume, 1739: 2n1; 1748: 10n.9.) He at least *would* say, I claim, what I here put in his mouth.

form in Descartes' meditations, Hume launches his skeptical attack: 'our necessary thought does not possess truth → God did not create us'.²⁴³

Now, what form does this atheism-inspired skeptical attack on truth take? Hume points out: what is *thought* in the thought of the causal relation, 'something, A, posits something *else*, B' *cannot be grounded on thought*: it is *synthetic*, for its contrary is conceivable. *Since* synthetic, its ground must be *experience*.

Now this is the fork at which Kant – and McDowell with him - diverges from Hume. Hume needs to destroy *truth* for our thought to destroy God and thereby affirm man's naturalness. With his skeptical argument that we've rehearsed, therefore, he destroys the idea that *thought* has insight into the synthetic connections *nature presents us with*. The verdict of his destruction of *quid juris?* for cause and (we imagined) the other categories through which nature is presented to us can be put thus: *we know with certainty* that the forms of being through which nature presents itself to us (e.g. causal connection) are (not only synthetic) but positively non- or *irrational*. He takes himself to have demonstrated (and 1766 Kant agrees) that thought (reason) has insight into the necessity of the fact that thought has no insight into the *why* of (the reason for) the forms of nature's presentation (e.g. as causally connected). **Intuitions are known to be – necessarily, is the claim - without concepts.**

Kant, however, in the argument we *will* rehearse, will redeem the thought-like nature of the *unity* of the *forms* through which nature presents itself to us (the unity of space and time, posited as identical with the categories),²⁴⁴ will thereby redeem thought's insight into *why* nature presents itself to us according to the forms through which we must think it, and will thereby

²⁴³ This suggests a *sublatable* (preservable) angle on our claim that the Rorty-Brandom attack on the correspondence theory of truth belongs to the Humean stage of analytic philosophy.

²⁴⁴ See esp. B162-4 & n, B160n, §24, etc..

redeem against Hume's critique the understanding's claim to truth. His argument for the objective validity of the subjective conditions of the possibility of thinking a world will entitle him, like McDowell, to "equate the form of the world and the form of thought".²⁴⁵ Reason would then again have insight into the *form* of the connections nature presents us with. Otherwise put: nature would again be posited as rational. The *sensible presentation* of nature to us – intuitions – could again be with concepts.

But now, is *Kant* on board with the atheism essential to analytic philosophy? There is indeed in Kant's redemption of truth for the human understanding a crucial redemption for the place of man's thinking in nature, and we'll explore thoroughly his role in the argument for the existence of man elsewhere. That said, we must answer: *not at all*. As Kant, 1790a: §§69-80 and other texts reveal, Kant's limitation of knowledge to the transcendently ideal, his denial of our knowledge of the thing in itself, which he does posit as existing, is indeed quite importantly a "critique [of] knowledge to make room for faith" (Bxxx).²⁴⁶ And are things any better for the atheistic analytic philosopher when he finds in Hegel's texts his "ever-renewed insistence that he means to reinstate metaphysics as knowledge of God"?²⁴⁷ This is the question the forthcoming *Argument for the Existence of Man* will be concerned with answering. We mention it now to indicate the pressure on the analytic philosopher to remain Humean.

The path that Hume takes at this fork with Kant is the path that analytic philosophy has taken, and the reason for its resistance to McDowell's call to abandon the conception of sense experience as yielding "intuitions without concepts", is the same as

²⁴⁵ McDowell, 2009a: 143.

²⁴⁶ Compare Hegel's "Introduction" to 1802: 56, 62, 65.

²⁴⁷ Longuenesse, 2007: 190.

Hume's reason for taking the skeptical prong of this fork: it thinks that, if nature is posited as rational, God is redeemed.

Consider, for example, Rorty's reaffirmation of bald naturalism in his brief response to *Mind and World* in his 1998 "McDowell, Davidson, and Spontaneity".²⁴⁸ There's no explicit talk of God here, to be sure, but the anti-theological impulse behind Rorty's opposition to the correspondence theory of truth is of course quite explicit. Rorty writes,

As McDowell reads him, Davidson thinks 'that we cannot understand the idea of spontaneity naturalistically.' (p.72) As I read him, Davidson thinks that we can understand *everything* naturalistically, and has no use whatever for a notion like 'the spontaneity of the understanding'.
(Rorty, 1998: 389)

Why does Rorty, who seeks to deflate the importance of scientific understanding in our culture, remain steadfast in his affirmation that human thinking falls under scientific natural law? What grounds his resistance to McDowell's urging that "we do not need to accept that when we see something as a happening in nature... we are *eo ipso* placing it in the sort of frame that is characteristic of the natural sciences"?²⁴⁹ What sacred truth does he feel is *threatened* by McDowell's reaffirmation against analytic philosophy's Humeanism of the Kantian thought "spontaneity is what is not governed by [natural] laws"?²⁵⁰ Why is he impelled to characterize this as "a hangover of an early, pre-Darwinian epoch in the history of philosophy – the epoch of Kant"?²⁵¹ The easier answer cites his connecting Kantianism with a theological hangover, but there's a deeper reason for Rorty's recoil against the fundamental thought of McDowell's philosophy.

²⁴⁸ The final paragraph urges us to "adopt a naturalism which is perhaps balder than Davidson's" (393).

²⁴⁹ McDowell, 2009b: 129.

²⁵⁰ Rorty, 1998: 393.

²⁵¹ Rorty, 1998: 393-4. Compare 390.

McDowell places *the origin of thinking*, the *origin of rationality itself*, back into *nature*. Rorty, however, thinks that with the death of God, rationality (language, truth) is won for *man*.²⁵² Saying that truth and thought originate in *nature* is precisely the correspondence theory hangover of theology Rorty sees in the way of his romantic humanism. If *nature* is posited, as it was with the God-loving rationalists, as once again rational – if our sensible transaction with the world is posited as *anything other than* merely mechanically causal, as *anything other than* intuitions without concepts – then, Rorty’s thought runs, *man loses ground to God*; the hoped for romantic notion of man is lost with this redemption of “an early, pre-Darwinian epoch in the history of philosophy”. ‘What,’ he thinks, ‘is an affirmation of the *rationality of nature*, if not a humanism-retarding theology-redeeming re-affirmation of **faith**? With McDowell,’ we can imagine Rorty worrying on his deathbed,

“Philosophy has made itself the handmaiden of faith once more.”²⁵³

With McDowell’s discovery of the higher Davidson-ensnaring dualism of freedom and nature, “the diagnostic question that the dualism raises is this: why is it difficult to see how the deliverances of the senses could constitute a tribunal for our world views to face? **Why is it tempting to suppose that the world’s impacts on us would have to be “intuitions without**

²⁵² At Rorty, 1989: 5, Rorty writes, “Truth cannot be out there – cannot exist independently of the human mind – because sentences cannot so exist, or be out there. The world is out there, but descriptions of the world are not. Only descriptions of the world can be true or false. The world on its own – unaided by the describing activities of human beings – cannot.” Against this Humean thought, Kant’s Deduction redeems truth for this world by noticing that “the world on its own”, “the world out there”, *also* doesn’t exist independently of the human mind: it is *appearance*, and the forms of sensible being articulating *it* yield our logical forms of truth.

²⁵³ Hegel, 1802: 56, talking about Kant (and Fichte and Jacobi).

concepts?”²⁵⁴ McDowell answers, ‘because of our commitment to science’. But what’s behind our commitment to science? What does science *stand opposed* to? *Religion*, which derived from its God a rational nature. What does McDowell urge upon us? *A rational nature*. How can we remain *committed* to the scientific world view, take leave of that through which its victory was won (nature’s being posited, contra religion, as *irrational*, as with Hume and the Humean Darwin), and affirm in its stead the very thesis of our opponents that **it pertains to our very essence to oppose?**

How can we remain *atheists*, and yet follow McDowell into his new, rational nature?

The answer to *this* question is to be found here: in Hegel’s argument for the existence of man.

3.6 ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY AND THE HUMEAN LOGOS OF ANNIHILATION

In Hegel’s 1802: 69 affirmation of the *identity* of Kant’s *a priori* anticipation of nature and being itself, in this claim to the *analyticity* of what Kant affirmed to be synthetic, we suggested, Hegel completes the logos of Hume’s noble rationalism-destroying atheistic annihilation of man’s separation from nature. Since it arises through his completion of Kant’s redemption against Hume of the notions of *truth* and *activity* for the human understanding, however, Hegel’s annihilation of this separation doesn’t, à la Hume, *destroy* the essence of man (his thinking) for

²⁵⁴ McDowell, 2009b: 127.

nature, but rather *redeems* this essence, man's thinking, *for Nature*. Whilst preserving Hume's commitment to atheism,²⁵⁵ Hegel redeems man's normative thinking as *a moment* of Nature: *implicit* in Nature's original being is its *thought* or understanding of itself, and this *implicit* thinking or understanding of itself is *made explicit* in man's philosophical and scientific knowledge *of Nature*. The *norms* to which thinking answers are, we find Kant teaching Hegel, *implicit in Nature's very possibility*, and when human thinking 'answers to the world', this ground of Nature finds itself. (This is an analysis of the proposition: truth is possible.) The essence of man is this: Nature's knowing of itself.

We promised an account of how analytic philosophy has, in the main unconsciously, chosen the Humean prong of the atheistic fork that annihilates man's separation from nature – the prong that annihilates thinking itself along with the separation. Before beginning on the details, here's a breathless summary of how the dialectic of the (actual) Humean, Kantian, and Hegelian ages of philosophy gets replayed by analytic philosophy itself:

Hume annihilated the separation of man's thinking from nature, but annihilated thinking in affirming this naturalism. Kant redeemed thinking, but as his commitment to the outside-nature thing in itself shows (inc. the *thinking mind* in itself), only managed to do so by beginning from the absolute opposition of thinking and the world, thus thinking remains *separate* from the world, and naturalism (the thought that thought is natural) is negated.²⁵⁶ Hegel negates the

²⁵⁵ A future AFTEM will thoroughly examine the coherence of this claim – that Hegel is an atheist – with the texts.

²⁵⁶ See e.g. B157-8: "In the transcendental synthesis... in the synthetic original unity of apperception, I am conscious of myself not as I appear to myself, nor *as I am* in myself, but only *that I am*. This *representation* is a *thinking*, not an *intuiting*... I therefore have *no cognition* of myself *as I am*, but only as I *appear* to myself." Here is Kant's resistance to Hegel's idea that man's thinking is *Nature's* thinking, for he here affirms that thinking is *outside of nature*. Kant thinks this necessary for freedom (inc. of thought) to be possible.

negation, preserving both the original Humean negation and Kant's negation of it. How? By affirming Nature: all acts of *thinking* are Natural (preserves Hume), yet they are acts (preserves Kant). How is the synthesis possible? In one way only: **the substance thinking in the free acts of man's thinking – is Nature.**²⁵⁷ In man's thinking Nature finds her freedom (her knowledge of herself, her *self-consciousness*).

Quine annihilates man's separation from nature, but annihilates thinking in affirming his naturalism. Davidson, through the "constitutive ideal of rationality", redeems thinking, but as shown by his commitment to the idea that we possess beliefs independently of their grounding in sense experience with the world, he only manages to do so by beginning from the absolute opposition of thinking and the world. Since knowledge is precluded from being *grounded* in the world, thinking remains absolutely *separate* from the world, is thus not *of* the world, and naturalism goes missing.²⁵⁸ McDowell negates the negation, preserving both the original Quinean negation and Davidson's negation of it. How? By redeeming *empiricism* against Davidson's critique, thinking's origin is *once again worldly*, and naturalism is preserved. Davidson's *negation* of Quine was based on the *sui generis* nature of the space of reasons. McDowell preserves this by positing the preserving-of-Quine grounding-of-thought sense experience *itself* within the space of reasons. The transaction with my body in **nature** is posited here for the first time in analytic philosophy as **rational** (conceptual).²⁵⁹ *Thinking* - its origin, anyway – is put once again *into nature*. With regard to Hegel's 1802: 69 / 1807: §17 expressed

²⁵⁷ Hegel, 1807: Preface, §17: "Everything turns on grasping and expressing the True, not only as *Substance*, but equally as *Subject*. At the same time, it is to be observed that substantiality embraces the universal, or the *immediacy of knowledge* itself, as well as that which is *being* or *immediacy for knowledge*."

²⁵⁸ See the previous section.

²⁵⁹ See McDowell, 2009b: 116, top of 117, bottom of 121.

procedure of positing nature as Nature, “it is evident, of course, that the two procedures are the same”.²⁶⁰ Of McDowell, Hegel writes,

He has raised the necessary supreme Idea of a **sensuous intellect** [a conceptual sense experience] to reality.²⁶¹

Less breathlessly, now. We begin with Quine. We applaud the impulse to annihilate man’s separation from nature (“the world”) behind Quine’s naturalized epistemology. “We can investigate the world, **and man as a part of it**”.²⁶² Now Quine is, we noted, a committed Humean.²⁶³ Hume, we’ve explained, was *thoroughly self-conscious* about the fact that his logos annihilates the normative notion of thought. According to this notion, thought is free. Thought, ‘rational responsiveness’ or what have you cannot be conceived as normative if the possibility of failing to conform to its norms is not accounted for. “Philosophy must give the separation into the subject and object its due”.²⁶⁴ Hume would be *at peace*, I suggest, with the characterizing of his philosophy as *annihilating thought*, especially if we affirm, as we do here, its essence to be normative. ‘Yes, it’s my point that we *don’t have* thought in that sense’, he’d say. ‘Our thinking is as much nature’s plaything as particles, planets and billiard balls’.

²⁶⁰ Hegel, 1807: §84.

²⁶¹ Hegel, 1801: 163 (Hegel is speaking of Kant, and says, “Nor has he raised...”). Hegel of course means much more by this remark than what I suggest, and I mean not at all to slight the differences, but to forge another point of connection between the moderns and the German Idealists (plentiful already, of course, but not plentiful enough), such that those differences may come into view, and dialogue between those differences may ensue. Most crucially, of course, I seek to reveal the relevance of (esp.) Hegel’s philosophical thinking concerning God (what Hegel is actually discussing here) to our modern predicament.

²⁶² Quine, 1960: 5.

²⁶³ “I do not see that we are farther along today than where Hume left us. The Humean predicament is the human predicament.” (Quine, 1969: 72).

²⁶⁴ Hegel, 1801: 156. Hegel’s comment is directed against Fichte, though we’ll be deploying his actual meaning against this Humean-Quinean prong when we explicate the second (Hegelian) prong below.

Now Quine's philosophy likewise annihilates thought, though in his case only partially self-consciously, and partially not so. His critique of analyticity suggests that the connection that was to be secured for *thought* as standing over the world cannot be so secured – that the world can refute it as well as any held synthetic belief. This is so because man's thinking is a *moment* of the world itself.²⁶⁵ Likewise is his self-consciousness of his commitment to the Humean logos of annihilation explicit in the fact that his is, in the main, "a naturalism that cheerfully casts experience as "intuitions without concepts", and rejects questions about the warrant for world views altogether, in favor of questions about their causation",²⁶⁶ for here the *passivity* of belief, so crucial to Hume's destruction of the rationalist idea of the finite thinking mind as an *active* substance, the destruction of which in turn serves to destroy the notion of normative thought, seems to be positively reaffirmed once more.

This self-consciousness, however, is far from total. When we sketched Hume's logos above, we noted that, although he succeeds against the rationalists in removing thought about the world as such (cause, et al.) *from* thought as such, where they place it, *to* the natural world as

²⁶⁵ If this thought we've put in Quine's mouth is true to his thinking it buttresses McDowell's claim that Davidson has Quine exactly wrong when he claims that Quine is driven to scheme-content dualism by "a concept of the mind with its private states and objects" ("The Myth of the Subjective", p.163), or when he thinks Quine too is prompted by the thought that it's "necessary to insulate the ultimate sources of evidence from the outside world" (p.161). See McDowell, 2009b: 122-3. As we explain in the next paragraph, however, Quine's duality of the conceptual and the sensible world serves precisely to bequeath a picture, contra his intentions, whereby our thinking *is* isolated from the world. Davidson (as McDowell well knows) has a right to claim that his *doing away* with an outer boundary to the conceptual precisely serves, contra this unintended interiorizing Quine's view suffers, to put thought back in contact with the world. McDowell remains right that Davidson is wrong in thinking that Quine is *motivated* by a desire to "insulate the ultimate sources of evidence" and by "a concept of the mind with its private states and objects" – "to "interiorize" or "subjectivize"", as McDowell puts it at McDowell, 2009b: 122 – but Davidson may be responding to the fact that the unintended *consequence* of Quine's thinking is such a view. As McDowell himself points out in MW, "Quine's play with (in effect) spontaneity and receptivity impossibly tries to have it both ways" (137); Davidson's mistake is just to take the *consequence* way for the *motivation* way. This in no way affects the truth of McDowell's pushing past Davidson in the quest for the fundamental *motivation* for the scheme-content dualism – a pushing past that, along with McDowell's redemption of the motivation found for empiricism, we endorsed in the section above.

²⁶⁶ McDowell, 2009b: 131.

such, this annihilation of the separation between the subject and the object is incomplete, for *a priori* conceivability remains cordoned off from nature. (Hegel's 1802: 69 positing of Kant's synthetic *a priori* truths as the identity of thought and being, we said, completes the quashing.) Now Quine's critique of analyticity may in certain ways further the annihilation of the distinction, but that *he too*, like Hume, fails to properly put thinking as such back in nature, is most glaringly evident in his *distinguishing* our conceptual sovereignty from that received through sense-experience – in his failing to reduce / naturalize the conceptual so much that my sensible commerce with objects could also be seen as conceptual, and his trafficking instead in a scheme-content dualism. Against his aim to put our thinking *back into* nature, his positing conceptual thought as *subsequent* to our natural transactions with the world serves rather precisely to *isolate* our thinking from the world. The “freedom” supposedly pertaining to “man's conceptual sovereignty” is, since *the conceptual* is *what the natural is not*, a freedom floating free of nature. Such posited sovereignty also stands opposed to Hume's pronouncement that only “some sentiment”,²⁶⁷ something *sensible*, could impel us to belief. Hume's prong here is, and Quine's is not, consistent with their shared Absolute. Quine's talk of man's conceptual sovereignty is an impossible attempt to affirm the *activity* of thinking when the possibility of this has been long foreclosed by the nature of the positing of “the world” which has “man as a part”. This positing which, it should be pointed out, is a positing *of man's* (would-be, at least) *understanding*, doesn't posit man as a *proper* moment of this world. This world is posited as *object*, not subject-object. And the consequence of this positing, which ensnares Rorty,

²⁶⁷ Hume, 1748: 31.

Davidson,²⁶⁸ Brandom, Pippin, and Allison, can be nothing other the annihilation of the subjective, of all possibly true (normative) thinking. *Hume* knew this, and he delighted in the fact that his positing the Absolute as mere object (nature) thoroughly annihilated the ground upon which God and his wretched creature ‘the rational animal’ did walk. He smiled with glee as he drew the consequence that nothing recognizable as (normative) thought emerged from his system. ‘There’s just nature, kids, and it ain’t normative’. Quine’s inconsistent Humeanism in this last regard is displayed in his talk of “the tribunal of experience”. As McDowell has ably demonstrated, experiences conceived as a non-conceptual “stimulation of... sensory receptors”,²⁶⁹ are *mute*, and a tribunal not.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸ It ensnares Davidson, though there are significant advances to be found in his positing of an absolute subject alongside an absolute object. He makes a *partial* (“Actions, Reasons, and Causes”), but not a *sufficient* (McDowell’s *Mind and World* and “Scheme Content Dualism and Empiricism” critique) break from mechanism.

²⁶⁹ Quine, 1969: 75.

²⁷⁰ Quine’s “conception of experience makes no room for experience to stand in rational relations to beliefs”; “The only connection he countenances between experience and the acceptance of statements is a brutally causal linkage that subjects are conditioned into”; “if experience plays only a causal role in the formation of a world-view, not a justificatory role, then it does not serve as evidence at all”. First two quotes from McDowell, 1996: 133, the last from p.134. See also “Scheme Content Dualism and Empiricism”.

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