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PIPPEN'S READING OF HEGEL'S IDEALISM

By

Julian Francisco Carvajal

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## ABSTRACT

### PIPPEN'S READING OF HEGEL'S IDEALISM

By

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The thesis of this paper is that Hegel's philosophy should be read in light of the two basic Kantian themes of the a priori unity of the apperceptive self and of the self-reflexiveness of knowledge and experience. I argue further that such an interpretation of Hegel precludes a reading of him as both a pre-critical philosophy thinker as regards the theory of knowledge and as a pre-critical metaphysical monist. My reading of Hegel is based on the construal of his philosophy put forward by Robert Pippin in his book Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness.

I argue that the major problem which such a reading of Hegel creates is a construal of his philosophy as subjective idealism.

# I

## INTRODUCTION

The thesis of my paper is that Hegel's philosophy should be read in the light of the two basic Kantian themes of the a priori unity of the apperceptive self, and of the self-reflexiveness of knowledge and experience. I will argue, further, that such an interpretation of Hegel precludes a reading of him as both a pre-critical philosophy thinker as regards the theory of knowledge and as a pre-critical metaphysical monist. I will argue, that is, that once we read Hegel in light of the two basic Kantian themes outlined above, then the view that for Hegel cognition consists in the passive reception of sense data must be rejected.

First in order to establish my thesis I will focus on giving a critical assessment of an influential reading of Hegel. The interpretation of Hegel I propose to follow is by Robert Pippin and is contained in his book Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness. The main thesis of Pippin's book and which constitutes the theme to be discussed in my paper is (as already stated) that Hegel's philosophy must be interpreted in light of the unity of apperception and the reflexivity of knowledge. Second what I also aim to do in addition to establishing the thesis outlined above regarding Hegel's epistemology is to show how Pippin's reading of Hegel (in light of the latter's indebtedness to Kant) succeeds in presenting a

a convincing account of his overcoming of Kant's skepticism and subjectivism concerning our knowledge of external objects as well as a convincing refutation of the traditional reading of Hegel as a pre-critical metaphysician. That is I propose to show that Pippin is successful in demonstrating how Hegel overcomes Kant's skepticism concerning the ultimate nature of the object of knowledge (the external object of sense). That is to say I want to show that Pippin is right in arguing that for Hegel we can and do in fact know the object insofar as the self-conscious subject by means of philosophical concepts (whose nature I will expound in the section dealing with the Doctrine Of The Concept) determines or constructs it (as well as objectivity in general). I want to argue that Pippin succeeds in showing that for Hegel as well as for Kant our concepts make possible our knowledge of the external world. Given this premise the possibility raised by skepticism (e.g., in Kant) of a kind or level of reality completely different and independent of that provided by Hegel's concepts is refuted.

In regard to the traditional view of Hegel as a pre-critical metaphysician I want to show the following: given that Pippin presents Hegel as appropriating the Kantian view that the apperceptive subject determines the object of knowledge insofar as Hegel accepts Kant's view concerning the synthetic activity and reflexive nature of the self, it follows that any interpretation of Hegel as espousing

the view that external reality or objectivity is produced by a universal, transcendent or cosmic spirit must be rejected. In short I will propose to show that Pippin is able to present a convincing refutation of the traditional reading of Hegel as a pre-critical metaphysical monist in which external reality as well as our knowledge (and experience) of it are the distinctive product of a spiritual substance (spirit or mind).

In conclusion I want to show that Pippin's construal of Hegel in light of Kant has significant consequences. First, given that for Hegel the subject constructs the object by means of concepts, Kant's skepticism is refuted--i.e. the object is determined to be what it is by its concept. Consequently subjectivism is also overcome for (in Hegel) what we know is the thing as it is in itself not as it merely appears to us--rather, for Hegel Kant's distinction between objects as appearance and as thing in itself has no meaning. Second, if external reality is determined to be what it is by concepts, then it becomes impossible to regard Hegel as advocating a metaphysical monism, rather it is the concepts employed by the apperceptive subject which determine or construct the external object. In this connection, then, I will attempt to show that those critics of Hegel who fault him with having posited a grand scheme in which external reality is the outcome of a cosmic spirit are mistaken provided we take into account Pippin's Kantian reading of Hegel.



The relevance of Pippin then lies in his having shown how Hegel overcomes Kant's skepticism and subjectivism and in having shown that Hegel is not a pre-critical metaphysician. I will also show that to grant validity to Pippin's reading leads to problematic consequences, specifically it leads us to regard Hegel as the very opposite of what he thought himself to be--viz., a subjective idealist. This is a consequence which, I believe, any idealism which is true to activity--that is in which the subject constructs what is to be for it the object of knowledge, as is the case for both Kant and Hegel--brings upon itself. Though I do not claim to provide an answer to this problem I do want to at least indicate that it exists as a legitimate concern in assessing the nature of Hegel's philosophy.

In order to show the validity of my claims I propose in Sections II and III of my paper to present and assess Pippin's interpretation of Hegel. I do this because Pippin has come up with a strong and coherent argument in favor of a Kantian reading of Hegel.

In Section II I will trace Pippin's construal of Hegel's thought. I will present the key Kantian concepts of the self-consciousness of the subject and the reflexivity of knowledge and the way these themes are reworked by Hegel into the foundations of his own basic principles, namely the doctrine of the concept and identity theory. As we shall see both the doctrine of the concept and

and identity theory are intimately bound up with each other--perhaps it is more accurate to say that the latter is the consequence of the former.

Section II, then, will consist of two sub-sections. Sub-section A: themes in Kant that are relevant to Hegel's project. These themes are: (1) the transcendental unity of apperception, and reflexivity of consciousness and knowledge, and (2) the pure categories of the understanding.

Sub-section B will consist of Hegel's reworking of the Kantian themes into his own principles. In this sub-section, therefore, I will discuss the meaning of: (1) transcendental unity of apperception, (2) the doctrine of the concept and its relation to identity theory (here I will include a discussion of how this theory overcomes the Cartesian dualism of the subjective and the objective, the subject and the external world), and (3) Hegel's interpretation of the concept-intuition relation.

In Section III I will present my evaluation of Pippin's reading of Hegel. This evaluation consists of two parts:

1. In response to the question whether Pippin's interpretation has succeeded in presenting a convincing argument in favor of reading Hegel in light of Kant, I will argue that having seen how Hegel appropriates the apperception theme as well as how the self-consciousness and the reflexivity theme are reworked by the philosopher into the basis of his own fundamental doctrine of the concept and

identity theory, it becomes clear that Pippin has presented a strong case for reading Hegel in light of Kant.

2. If we grant validity to Pippin's reading, then in the first place any interpretation of Hegel as a follower of some kind of pre-critical epistemology becomes untenable, in the second place we see what is the nature of Hegel's rejection of Kant's skepticism and subjectivism, and finally we are led to reject a construal of Hegel as a pre-critical metaphysician.

In Section IV I will raise the problem which arises from Pippin's reading of Hegel. Having given a preceding discussion (in Section II, Parts A and B) of Hegel's appropriation of apperceptiveness and the reflexivity of knowledge themes and of the way they are reworked by him into his own system, I will argue that Pippin has come upon the subjective idealist implications in Hegel's thought.

The general issue I will raise here, though I do not pretend to have solved it only to state that it exists as a genuine problem for Hegel scholarship, is the following: Granted Pippin's emphasis on the Kantian presuppositions in Hegel, does an idealism that is true to activity--i.e., an idealism in which both the external world and the categories with which we grasp it, what for us counts as knowledge of the object, are the distinctive product of a unified self-conscious ego--lead to a subjective idealist position.

## II

### PIPPIN'S INTERPRETATIONS OF HEGEL'S THOUGHT

The philosophic relevance of Pippin's project, generally speaking, is the strong case he makes for the active role of the intellect in cognition in both Kant and Hegel. I have already mentioned this feature of Hegel's thought in the introduction to my paper. Indeed, the chief merit of Pippin is having sought to demonstrate how Hegel appropriated Kant's conception of mind or consciousness as an essentially active faculty containing a self-generated spontaneous element--this element is self-consciousness. In my view Pippin is right when he argues that for Hegel as well as for Kant, experience or our empirical knowledge of the external world can never be the passive reception of sense data, but that it implies a creative element which is the a priori product of mind. This element which for Kant constitutes the spontaneous (or self-generated) condition of thought is the unity of self-consciousness and the self-reflexive (or apperceptive) nature of experience.

In this connection, that reading of Hegel as a pre-critical thinker fails to account satisfactorily for his appropriation of the apperception theme. This reading cannot give a systematic and convincing account of Hegel's principle that in all relations to objects there is a relation to the self, that, in other words, in every cognitive relation of the subject to the object of knowledge

(found in the external world) there is a relation to the self. Clearly, in my view, it is only by presupposing Kant's account of the self-caused, original (i.e. a priori) element in thought is it possible to grasp fully Hegel's philosophy.

Given that Kant treats his concept of the self in close connection with the reflexivity of knowledge and experience, more precisely, the fact that his distinctive conception of experience and knowledge as being at least implicitly reflexive or self-conscious issues from his conception of the self as being precisely the activity of unifying our representations (awarenesses of external objects) in a self-consciousness, it follows that I will discuss both themes together as they relate to each other. In other words, for Kant, the self or the subject is characterized by the activity of unifying its representations of external objects and then bringing them under its own characteristic self-consciousness.

It is also true for Kant that the basic condition for the consciousness of our selves is the consciousness of objects. For Kant self-consciousness is the form of all consciousness. It is the case for Kant that it is only in knowing an object that we become conscious of our selves: For instance it is only in knowing this table, the fact the texture is hard, that it has a blue color, and so on, that we become aware of our selves as that activity of

relating all the various sensations to a subject. It is through knowing a certain external object (through its various empirical qualities) that we know our self as that to which this knowledge can be referred; and so in cognizing the table I at the same time became aware of the fact that there is an entity--viz. I--that is at least potentially capable of becoming aware that it is engaged in knowing. For Kant, in knowing a table, I am able to know that it is me, the subject, who is engaged in knowing.

To restate a point I made earlier: In view of the close connection which Kant draws between the characteristic apperceptive nature of the self and the reflexivity of knowledge and experience--the fact that we become aware of being self-conscious subjects insofar as we can relate our cognition of external objects to ourselves--I will proceed to discuss the transcendental unity of consciousness and the reflexivity of consciousness and knowledge conjointly.

I proceed, then, to discuss Kant's view on the apperceptive nature of the self (or ego). In Kant the unity of the self (or of consciousness) is the basic condition of the possibility to know objects--that is to say, what Kant terms the a priori unity of the self is the prerequisite of the possibility to intuit and represent or conceive external objects of sense. Pippin made the same point by citing the famous passage from the first edition of the Critique of Pure Reason where Kant says the following:

There can be in us no modes of knowledge, no connection of unity of one mode of knowledge with another, without that unity of consciousness that precedes all data of intuition, and by relation to which representation of objects is alone possible. This pure, original, unchangeable consciousness I shall name transcendental apperception. (A107)

The meaning of this passage is clear: In here Kant is asserting that all intelligible experience and knowledge of external objects is possible only by presupposing the a priori unity of consciousness; further, this unified consciousness he names transcendental self-consciousness.

Pippin will return again and again to his assertion that for Kant self-consciousness is a condition of experience. What this assertion of Pippin's means is that for Kant it is the case that one must be able to become aware (or apperceive) of the rules one is applying in unifying the mind's representations (which representations constitute the subject's knowledge of sensuous objects). Pippin cites the passage of the Critique of Pure Reason at A108 where Kant argues that the possibility of a unified consciousness--what I interpret to refer to the unified, self-conscious subject, the I--presupposes the ability to apperceive the function of the mind in unifying its representations (awarenesses) of objects. Kant says:

For this unity of consciousness would be impossible if the mind in knowledge of the manifold could not become conscious of the identity of function whereby it synthetically combines it in one knowledge. (A108)

For Kant it is true that I cannot be in a certain mental state unless I am able to become conscious of being in

it. This consciousness is expressed by my applying a concept to my mental state--e.g., "I am sad," "I am willing X," or "I am desiring Y," etc. Therefore, for Kant it is true that in all cognitive relations in which a subject seeks to know an (external) object, the knower is either directly aware, or at least has the capacity to become aware, of what he is doing, and thus is able to formulate the judgement, "I am perceiving a book on the table."

For Kant, then, experience is at least implicitly reflexive: The subject has the ability to refer to itself its representations of external objects. Indeed, in doing this the subject becomes aware of itself as a distinct entity.

Pippin will present the claim that given the self-reflexive capacity of the self, the I can determine what is to be for it external reality, in a sense the ego has the capacity to create the world we live in because it is not limited, or tied down, to what is immediately before the senses. Pippin asserts this claim on the basis of the ego's capacity to spontaneously refer to itself its awarenesses, or representations, to itself. Further Pippin argues that Hegel takes over from Kant this view of the essential nature of the subject as a self-conscious entity. As my own argumentation unfolds throughout this paper I will attempt to show that Pippin succeeds in his project. For the moment, I will make mention of the fact (though as yet this will remain an unproven claim) that the relevance of



Hegel for contemporary debates in epistemology centers in his appropriation of Kant's apperception theme. That is to say given Hegel's claim that in all relations to objects there is a relation to the self--a claim that, as I am arguing, must be understood within the Kantian context of the apperceptiveness of experience and knowledge, i.e., all of our awarenesses or representations of objects as being spontaneously referred to the self--consciousness, the intellect, is not bound to, or circumscribed by, experience (the information of the senses). That is to say for Hegel as for Kant the I or self plays a decisive function in shaping what counts for us as experience of objects. However, I will not develop this point in Hegel here but will wait until the discussion of Hegel's appropriation of Kant's transcendental unity of apperception.

For Kant it is true that an object of experience is such only through its being subjected to the conditions that make it intelligible. That is to say the thing is an object of knowledge only because, or in virtue of the fact that, it is subject to the conditions of the transcendental unity of apperception--i.e., the conditions of the self.

Pippin argues that in Kant (as we have seen already) the unity of the self is the basic condition of the possibility to cognize objects--for Kant it is only by presupposing a unified ego that spontaneously refers its representations to itself that knowledge is possible or,

in other words, it is by presupposing a unified apperceptive self that, in Kant's language, human beings are able to both intuit and represent external objects of sense. Further, Pippin rightly points out that for Kant (as we have already seen) the ability to attribute mental states to oneself and the ability to become conscious of the rules whereby I unite several representations into one unified experience--e.g., of "this apple," "that tree," "that painting," etc.--is a necessary condition of the possibility of experience.

Pippin cites the passage at B133 of the Critique of Pure Reason where Kant explicitly argues that self-consciousness is the condition solely by which a subject's awarenesses can be said to belong to him. Pippin makes it quite clear that in any consciousness of objects I am potentially able to apperceive this, my awareness of the object. He claims that for Kant in any act of desiring, remembering, volition, or perceiving, I am at least implicitly conscious of my actual state.

But let us see what Kant says in the passage quoted by Pippin:

As my representations (even if I am not conscious of them as such) they must conform to the condition under which alone they can stand together in one universal self-consciousness, because otherwise they would not all without exception belong to me. (B133)

In the above passage Kant is arguing that the subject must be aware of his representations or awarenesses as belonging to him; or that in order for the representations

to belong to the subject they must be able to be referred to him. In short, Pippin is right in arguing that in any consciousness of objects I am potentially able to apperceive my awareness.

I leave now the discussion of apperceptiveness in Kant. I shall return to it in my discussion of Pippin's account of Hegel's appropriation and reworking of this Kantian theme. As mentioned briefly earlier Hegel incorporates Kant's view concerning the reflexivity of knowledge and experience into the foundations of his own thought. In part Hegel's appropriation of Kant's account of apperception is embodied in Hegel's view that in all relation to objects there is a relation to the self. I also mentioned that this statement should be taken to mean that for Hegel all knowledge and experience are reflexive or that the subject spontaneously refers to himself his knowledge of the external object. I will attempt to show in the section dealing with Hegel's reworking of the transcendental unity of apperception and in other parts that this view of his precludes any reading of Hegel as espousing some sort of pre-critical philosophy theory of knowledge. Also, I hope to have made clear the connection between Kant's account of the self or I with his account of the reflexivity of knowledge and experience. The connection is this: All our knowledge and experience of external objects must conform to the basic condition of the I which is self-consciousness. As I mentioned earlier for Kant the object of experience is such only through being

subject to the conditions of the transcendental unity of the self (or of self-consciousness). In sum, as remarked earlier, the fact that the subject spontaneously refers to itself his experience and knowledge of the external world and thus making this knowledge self-reflexive justifies treating both themes jointly.

I turn now to a discussion of Kant's pure concepts of the understanding (the categories). I do this because this is another Kantian theme which exercised a significant influence on Hegel.

#### The Pure Categories Of The Understanding

I will now proceed to a brief I discussion of Pippin's treatment of the nature and function of the categories in Kant. As mentioned above such a discussion is relevant given that much of what Kant had to say on this subject is incorporated by Hegel into his own thought. Further, I believe Pippin presents us with an accurate description of Kant's position on this issue. Therefore I will quote Pippin in those places where I believe he has adequately summarized Kant's position.

The general idea behind Kant's justification of the validity of the categories is that without them we could have no intelligible experience or knowledge of the external world. Kant describes the categories as being transcendently ideal and empirically real. By this he means that even though the categories are the a priori product

of the mind which constitute the conditions of the possibility of knowledge of objects (hence they are transcendently ideal) they nevertheless apply universally to our experience of objects, that is to say empirical knowledge is possible only by their means--they shape our knowledge of the external world--hence they are empirically real.

Let us see how Pippin treats this issue. He indicates that for Kant the categories are the a priori rules which constitute the conditions of the possibility of experience (I mentioned earlier that this is what Kant had in mind when he defined them as transcendently ideal). Pippin continues to argue that the categories determine the general content, or are the grounds, in which the mind unifies the sensible manifold--i.e., the totality of intuitions which constitute our consciousness, representation, of an object. Pippin goes on to claim that the conditions which allow for the empirical knowledge of objects--viz., the fact that human beings are so constituted that they can apprehend external objects through eye sight, hearing, touch, smell, etc.--in general make possible that a given thing be known empirically. This is the substance of Kant's Highest Principle of Synthetic Judgement. (See: Hegel's Idealism: p. 27).

Continuing with the theme of the categories and Pippin's account of it, he points out that for Kant a necessary condition of the capacity to represent, have an

empirical awareness of, an object is unification according to a rule. This rule (which it turns out are the categories), Pippin continues, must satisfy the conditions which make possible the a priori, or transcendental, unity of self-consciousness.

The categories are rules which determine a priori what can be for us an object of empirical cognition. It follows that if these rules determine a priori what can be for us the object of knowledge then they must be pure or non-empirical. This is at least Kant's position. Pippin gives an adequate description of the nature of the categories as rules which allow for the unification of our representations into a coherent knowledge of external objects:

These pure rules are the "categories" (referred to generically and without much specification in the Deduction), and so this argument establishes that the categories (or some pure concepts) are necessary conditions for the possibility of experience. In that sense they can be said to be objectively valid, that is, in the sense that there could not be objects encountered in experience that did not conform to the categories. If the categories did not predetermine what could be an object, there could be no experience.  
(Hegel's Idealism: p. 27)

The above passage accurately describes the nature and the source of the validity of the categories: Through the product of the mind (as I mentioned earlier) and in that respect subjective their validity and claim to objectivity rests on the fact that without them we could have no intelligible experience of the external world.

I want to say a few more things on the categories and the way they are conceived by Kant. I do this in order to bring out even further the decisive function these elements play in constituting objectivity. The categories discriminate among the vast wealth of sensuous beings found in the physical world as to what can or cannot be for us an object of knowledge. Let us see how this is so: If, for instance, I say "This is an oak tree" my assertion implies that the manifold of sensible intuitions (i.e., images, odors, textures, sounds, etc.) which constitute in part my knowledge of this physical object has been ordered according to certain rules of place, substance, place, causality, relation, etc.

Pippin tells us that the categories are ideal insofar as they apply exclusively to our knowledge of the world. Experience itself, he continues, is shown to be ideal in the degree that it is possible only by their means, that is the categories are the conditions of the possibility of experience. This is a point I made earlier in the discussion of Kant's categories (however see: Hegel's Idealism: p. 34).

I have given this short account of Kant's pure categories because of the similarities in the approach Hegel takes with his own doctrine of the Concept. The similarity between Kant's pure categories of the understanding and Hegel's doctrine of the concept lies in this particular: In both cases it is either the category (in Kant) or the

concept (in Hegel) which determines the nature of objectivity. In light of Pippin's argument in favor of Hegel's appropriation of the key Kantian themes it might perhaps be more accurate to say that Kant's discussion of the role of the categories set the stage for Hegel's own conception of objectivity as determined by the concept.

We saw in my discussion of the Kantian theme of the transcendental unity of apperception and the reflexivity of knowledge and experience that the unity of the apperceptive self is the precondition of the knowledge of objects. I cited a passage from Kant in which he clearly states that empirical knowledge of objects is possible only by presupposing a self-conscious subject which unifies its representations and brings them under its apperceptive unity--i.e., a self-conscious subject that spontaneously refers its representations of objects to itself. We saw, also, that for Kant the possibility of a unified self-conscious subject presupposes the ability to become conscious of, or apperceive, the function of the mind in unifying its representations of objects. For purposes of illustrating this point I cited a passage of the Critique Of Pure Reason (viz. A108) where Kant specifically argues that the unity of consciousness (hence as I understand it, the possibility of the existence of the self-conscious subject) presupposes the ability of the mind to apperceive its function of synthesizing its knowledge.



It follows from the above that for Kant experience is implicitly reflexive, since all our knowledge of external objects must be subject to the conditions of a unified, apperceptive, self. Further, this reflexivity of knowledge is implicit since for Kant it is not the case that in each and every cognitive relation of subject to the object of knowledge, and in each mental state (e.g., willing, desiring, imagining, etc.) the subject is explicitly aware of what he is engaged in. It is only the case for Kant that we have the capacity to become aware of what we are engaged in at the moment. At B132 Kant talks about the fact that "it must be possible" for the "I think" to accompany all our representations. I interpret this to mean that we have the capacity to apperceive our cognition of the external world and of our inner states. Pippin adequately describes the characteristic human apperceptive capacity and its implicit nature:

Being able to ascribe states to myself and to become conscious of the principles of unification by means of which I effect a unitary experience is not simply a distinct reflective ability I happen to possess. It is a condition of experience because, according to Kant, experience itself is 'implicitly' reflexive. (Hegel's Idealism: p.21)

In the discussion of the pure categories of the understanding we saw that the categories are ideal insofar as they are circumscribed to what can be only an object of possible experience. That is to say, they apply exclusively to our knowledge of the world, and not, e.g., to the

knowledge which a dog, a horse, or some other non-human being has of it. We also saw that the categories are the conditions which make possible experience.

Pippin argues that the similarity between the account Kant gives of the pure categories of the understanding and Hegel's account of his doctrine of the concept lies in the fact that in both cases it is the concept or the category which determines the nature of the object. In Hegel, this view appears in the form of the claim that objects are in truth their concept. However, I shall wait till I come to an exposition of Hegel in order to clarify what exactly is meant by this statement.

I turn now to giving an account of Hegel's appropriation and reworking of the Kantian themes of the self-conscious subject and of the categories. I do this in order to make clear how Pippin sets up a strong argument in favor of reading Hegel's philosophy precisely in light of the self-consciousness theme. In addition, I will discuss specifically Hegelian themes, namely, the doctrine of the concept and identity theory, and his account of the concept-intuition relation. Once again, my aim is to show that Pippin has presented a strong case for reading these important Hegelian themes in the context of the apperceptive subject and the reflexivity of knowledge and experience.

The Transcendental Unity of Apperception In Hegel

In here I want to discuss briefly Hegel's appropriation of this key doctrine in Kant. In order to show the significant influence which this Kantian doctrine exercised over Hegel I will give the main arguments which Pippin puts forward in order to bring out the connection between both thinkers in this regard.

It is true that the significant influence which Kant exercised over Hegel consisted in the latter's appropriation of the self-conscious nature of experience.

Pippin argues that the whole of Hegel's philosophy, his theory of the concept and identity theory are (in his words) a "direct variation" on the basic Kantian theme of the transcendental unity of apperception. (See: Hegel's Idealism: p.6). It follows that if Pippin is right about his claim then it is the case that we must reject any reading of Hegel as a pre-critical philosophy thinker.

Pippin quotes a passage from the Berlin Phenomenology in which Hegel makes clear what his attitude is to the Kantian issue of self-consciousness. Having seen the passage I hope it will become clear that Hegel like Kant believes that self-consciousness is the principal precondition for knowledge of the external world (i.e., empirical knowledge). Hegel, in the passage quoted by Pippin says:

There can be no consciousness without self-consciousness. I know something, and that about

which I know something I have in the certainty of myself otherwise I would know nothing of it; the object is my object, it is other and at the same mine, and in this latter respect I am self-relating. (BPhg, 55: Hegel's Idealism: p.35)

I take this dense passage to mean that for Hegel the certainty we have about the existence of an object lies in our spontaneously referring our cognition of it (i.e., the perception of it) to our selves. In this spontaneous referral of our empirical knowledge of the object to our self the thing becomes ours. It follows, as Hegel himself states at the beginning of the quote, that all consciousness is self-consciousness. His claim about being self-relating, again, as I understand it should be taken to mean that in knowing an external object the subject spontaneously refers to himself his knowledge of the object--he is endowed with the capacity to say "at present I am engaged in knowing X"--and thereby enters into a relation with himself (or as Hegel puts it becomes self-relating).

From the above discussion it follows that Pippin is right in claiming that Hegel coincides with Kant that all consciousness presupposes self-consciousness. Indeed Hegel as we have seen says as much. It is within this context of consciousness implying self-consciousness that Hegel's claim that in all relations to objects consciousness (what I take to be the subject) enters into a relation with itself that must be understood.

Pippin argues that apperception for Hegel makes possible the experience of objects. I believe Pippin is

justified in drawing this conclusion. Let us see why: His conclusion can be inferred from the above quote insofar as in there Hegel states that my certainty about the existence of the object and my knowledge of it in general issues directly from my referring to myself this information. As I understand Hegel he appears to mean that only insofar as I can refer the knowledge of the external object to myself (or apperceive this knowledge) is it possible to know it. Hence for Hegel consciousness implies self-consciousness.

So it would appear that Pippin is justified in claiming that for Hegel consciousness implies self-consciousness. It is within this general context, then, established by both Pippin and by my own discussion of Hegel (as found in the passages I have cited) that we should understand Hegel's claim that in all relations to objects there is a relation to the self.

I should like to introduce a brief discussion here of the distinctive conception of the subject-object relation in both Kant and Hegel. My reason for doing this is to show that once we see how even in this regard Hegel was influenced by Kant we shall be better able to understand Hegel's claim (which I shall discuss in more detail in the section on the doctrine of the concept) that objects are in truth their concepts. I begin by giving a brief description of the subject-object relation as conceived by Kant. In Kant the object, rather what counts for us as the

external object of knowledge, has been subject to the unifying activity of the transcendental (or original) unity of apperception. What we take to be the object is the product of the synthetic activity of the self-conscious ego (which imposes upon the information of the senses the pure forms of sensible intuition and the pure categories of the understanding). Given that this is the case for Kant, it follows that what counts for us as the object is the product of the subject. Hence an identity is established between the subject and the object (insofar as the latter is the product of mind). Further it follows, then, that the external object is an object of experience (or empirical knowledge) only insofar as it is subject to the conditions which make it intelligible of which the fundamental one is the a priori unity of the self (or of self-consciousness). Hegel was influenced by Kant's conception of the subject-object relation. This influence in part is seen in his claim that objects are in truth their concepts.

We have seen that in Kant the object of knowledge is determined as such by the unity of self-consciousness, in other words, the subject determines what is to count for us as the object of knowledge. Pippin tells us that Hegel developed Kant's idea of the unity of self-consciousness as the grounds of the idealization of the objects of experience: Granted Kant's formulation, objects of experience in Hegel become mine or the product of my thought.

I consider Hegel's view to be implied in the passage we quoted from the Berlin Phenomenology: For in there Hegel makes clear (as I see it) that in referring my awareness (or knowledge) of the object to myself the thing becomes in a certain sense mine or the product of my thought. This is precisely what Pippin claims at page 85 of Hegel's Idealism where he says that Hegel adopts Kant's employment of the unity of apperception as the grounds of the idealization of the objects of experience.

This discussion of Hegel's development of Kant's conception of the object of knowledge as shaped by the apperceptive subject, or of the unity of self-consciousness as the grounds of the idealization of the object of experience, sets the stage for my discussion of Hegel's doctrine of the concept and of identity theory. I shall attempt to show that Kant's conception of the external object as something that is produced by the synthetic activity of the apperceptive ego and by the pure concepts and forms of intuition which this ego imposes on the object exercised a significant influence on Hegel's elaboration of his doctrine of the concept. In Hegel, too, the object of experience is determined to be what it is by the action of rigorous philosophical concepts, concepts which issue from the self-conscious unified subject. That is to say these Hegelian concepts (much like Kant's pure categories and the forms of sensible intuition) determine what is to count for us as knowledge of external reality or objectivity.

### Doctrine Of The Concept And Identity Theory

In the preface to the second edition of the Critique Of Pure Reason Kant explicitly argues in favor of the idealization of the objects of experience. At B XVI Kant determines upon the need for objects to conform to our knowledge of them if there is to be any extension of knowledge in metaphysics. This is what has been called Kant's introduction of a Copernican revolution into philosophy: Kant reasoned that if all efforts to establish scientific certainty or knowledge on the assumption that thought must conform to objects had failed, then it was time to try whether it was not the case rather that objects should conform to thought.

It is my belief that this Kantian formulation contains the germ of Hegel's doctrine of the concept. This doctrine, in general terms, states that it is the principle of all life and that it determines the object of knowledge. We shall see as the argument unfolds that Pippin's construal of this doctrine leads to an overcoming of skepticism, subjectivism and to the rejection of the view that Hegel was a pre-Kantian metaphysician. That is Pippin will show that Hegel leaves Kant behind precisely on Kantian premises.

Pippin tells us that Hegel accepts the constitutive function of the subject in experience (Hegel's Idealism: p.6). I interpret this claim of Pippin to mean that for Hegel it is our rigorous philosophical concepts which determine reality, which establish what is to count for us as



knowledge of the object. As can be seen this is a clearly Kantian approach. I shall try to show how Hegel conceives the concept's determination of external reality.

In the first place I will show that Hegel links his conception of the concept with Kant's theme of the apperceptive subject. This discussion is necessary in order to understand Pippin's claim cited above that Hegel takes over from Kant the constitutive function of the subject in experience. Having shown that for Hegel his doctrine of the concept is related to Kant's distinctive view of the subject, I will then proceed to define what is the nature of Hegel's doctrine of the concept. In showing the nature of the concept I will attempt to show how this doctrine relates to Hegel's identity theory.

So let us see how Hegel envisions the relation of his doctrine of the concept to the apperceptive subject. Pippin argues that the core of Hegel's debt to Kant lies in the way the former treats the latter's theme of self-consciousness. I will use Pippin to make clear Hegel's indebtedness to Kant.

Pippin quotes a passage from Hegel's *Science of Logic* in which Hegel clearly identifies the I with the Concept. Let us see what Hegel says in this passage:

It is one of the profoundest and truest insights to be found in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that the unity which constitutes the nature of the Notion the concept is recognized as the original synthetic unity of apperception, as the unity of the I think, or of self-consciousness (SL, 584: Hegel's Idealism: p.18).

In the above passage Hegel makes quite clear that the unity of the concept (or as he himself calls it the notion) is the unity of the self, or of the original unity of self-consciousness. From the above quote it should be clear that Pippin has solid grounds for reading this key Hegelian doctrine in light of the Kantian theme of apperception. This relation of the concept to the self-conscious subject (as shown in the passage from Hegel) will be important to be borne in mind in assessing Pippin's claim that Hegel accepts Kant's constitutive function of the subject in experience. I believe Pippin's claim should be understood like this: If the unity of the concept is the unity of the apperceptive subject, and if the concept shapes our knowledge of the object (external reality) then it follows that the subject is the agency which shapes our empirical knowledge. If this is the case then knowledge and experience are not the product of a cosmic substance or spirit.

I shall discuss now the nature of the concept. In the first place, it is true for Hegel that the doctrine of the concept is the basis of his philosophy. Hegel argues that it is only by means of rigorous concepts that we truly know objects and (what for the philosopher constitutes) the whole process of reality. Indeed, at the beginning of the last section of the Encyclopedia Logic (viz. the Doctrine of the Concept) Hegel refers to the concept as that which is the principle of all life. I take this claim to mean in part that the external object when grasped as it is in

truth (as Hegel says) is seen to go over into its concept. That is to say the concept captures the whole being or nature of the object. The concept of each external object is what determines it to be what it is: a finite object within a system of interrelated finite objects which exhibit rationality and purposiveness. Hegel gives to this interrelated rational-purposive system the name of reality.

As I understand it from the above discussion the following conclusion follows: Given that Hegel identifies the nature of the concept (its unity) with the nature (or unity) of the self and further that for Hegel the concept captures the nature of external objects, it follows that Pippin is justified in claiming that for the philosopher the I or ego plays an active role in determining the nature of objectivity. Clearly, then, a reading of Hegel both as a pre-critical philosophy thinker and as a pre-critical metaphysician must be abandoned, for reality or objectivity is determined to be what it is by the subject by means of Hegelian concepts.

I proceed now to a further discussion of the concept. I do this in order to (as stated earlier) show how the doctrine of the concept relates to identity theory. After this discussion I will give a brief account of the main stages of Hegel's Encyclopedia Logic. The purpose of this discussion will be to show that Pippin is justified in asserting that Hegel appropriated Kant's view of the constitutive function of the subject in experience.

In Chapter II of Hegel's Idealism Pippin claims that Kant's argumentation intended to deduce the objective validity of the pure concepts of the understanding became the basis of Hegel's identity theory, or of what Hegel calls the "identity within difference of subject and object." We recall that for Kant the objectivity of the categories rested on the fact that only by their means was it possible to have an intelligible experience of the object; the external thing can be the object of knowledge only as subject to the categories. Hegel takes over this approach insofar as it is only by means of the system of rigorous philosophical concepts (the sum total of which form his doctrine of the concept) that we grasp objects as they are in truth.

The concept for Hegel is further defined as the systematic strict conceptualization of an object, a conceptualization which understands it dialectically, that is as inwardly contradictory, in flux, and which sees it (as mentioned earlier) in its truth as a part of an interconnected, rational-purposive whole--what Hegel terms reality.

Let us see what exactly is meant by the identity within difference of subject and object, the principal claim of identity theory. Pippin quotes a passage from Hegel (which we have discussed earlier) in which the latter identifies the I with the concept. Second, for Hegel, as we have seen, the concept of an external object

grasps the full nature of the thing. If we grant these two Hegelian claims, it follows that there is an identity or unity of the I with the external world of sense. That is to say, for Hegel, it is the case that insofar as the apperceptive subject by means of (his distinctive brand of) concepts shapes or determines what is to count for him as the object of knowledge, there is established a certain identity between subject and object. This identity, clearly, cannot be taken literally since the physical object is in regard to its physical nature quite different from the concepts with which it is rendered intelligible.

Pippin argues in reference to this point that if objects are determined to be what they are by the concept, ultimately are found to be (in Hegel's language) in truth their concept; second, if the concept is the I (insofar as latter is the ground of the former) it follows that there is this unity within difference of subject and object.

I proceed now to a discussion of the main stages of the Encyclopedia Logic. I do this in order to clarify further the nature of the doctrine of the concept, its determination of external reality (or the external object), and, therefore the overcoming of the Cartesian dualism by means of identity theory (of the identity within difference of subject and object). Indeed, in seeing how for Hegel the concept determines the nature of the external object, we see, also, how his philosophy overcomes the thought-physical world, subject-object, dualism. Also, we

shall see that the concept has two dimensions: (1) a restricted application (the one we have seen up to now in which Hegel regards it as capturing the true nature of an object, (2) a wide application (which I also touched upon briefly) in which the concept refers to the conceptualization of the whole of reality as interrelated, rational-purposive process. Lastly, I hope that my discussion of the Logic will enable us to understand that Pippin is justified in arguing that Hegel's concept determines the nature of empirical knowledge, hence of what we take to be external reality.

The Encyclopedia Logic is divided into three basic stages, what Hegel terms moments, which correspond generally to the process through which the subject cognizes the world.

1. The first moment is that of being. This stage treats of the starting point of the process of cognition. It regards objects from the perspective of their immediate sensory existence, as mere immediate entities constituted by different sensible qualities--e.g., shape, weight, texture, color, etc. As the discussion proceeds (in the Logic) it becomes clear that the mere physical existence of objects is insufficient in order to truly comprehend their being. Hegel concludes that the failure of the consideration of the stage of being to make intelligible the external world leads necessarily to a consideration of

the moment of essence--the inwardness of external objects as expressed by thought.

2. In the stage of essence the mind grasps things not as mere immediate existences but as endowed with an underlying basis or ground. At this level the mind becomes aware that the physical world considered in itself is not self-supporting, that its basis lies beyond immediacy, i.e., beyond the physical world itself. Further Hegel divides essence into essence and appearance or the grounds and the empirical aspect of objects. But it turns out that there is an intimate connection between both. Essence is not something entirely independent and cut off from external sensory existence (appearance). Rather, for Hegel, essence or inwardness is what it is only by expressing itself as external being. According to Hegel essence is what it is only ". . . in moving out into the domain of appearance" (Encyclopedia Logic:#112:Addition). So for Hegel the external object belongs to a interrelated rational whole and as such embodies essence (which necessarily manifests itself in the physical world). Hegel writes:

It is the very nature of the world of immediate objects to be only appearance and since we do know that world as appearance, we thereby at the same time become cognizant of its essence. The essence does not remain behind or beyond appearance but manifests itself as essence precisely by reducing the world to mere appearance. (Encyclopedia Logic: #131:Addition).

3. The last moment is that of the concept. Here, according to Hegel, the subject grasps reality as an interrelated, rational process. It implies also achieving an insight into the nature of the physical world. This insight is that the physical world manifests reason or essence, that is to say that in knowing external objects as appearances one is aware that their physical existence is not self-supporting but has its basis in an essence which must express itself in the object of sense.

What does Pippin conclude from Hegel's position contained in the Logic? Pippin concludes that our empirical knowledge of the physical world and objectivity itself is shaped by the knowing subject. Pippin proposes that the object of knowledge is determined by the concept, its cognition is dependent upon the categories, ultimately by the conceptual scheme we have for conceiving it and the rest of the external world determinately. In this regard I consider the Encyclopedia Logic to contain the elements of our conceptual scheme with which we know truly the nature of reality, and I believe Pippin has something like this in mind also. It follows for Pippin that if the concept has its ground in the unity of the self then it is the self-conscious subject in Hegel which determines the nature of the external world or of objectivity not a transcendent spiritual substance. Further, Pippin interprets Hegel's talk ( in the Encyclopedia Logic) of the notional (conceptual) foundation of reality to refer to



the conceptual elements or conditions that (in Pippin's language) are necessary for the existence of a determinate object of cognition prior to its being identified in observation (Hegel's Idealism: p.176).

### Concept Intuition In Hegel

I believe a brief discussion of this point is useful in understanding Pippin's claim about the importance that Hegel's appropriation of Kant's view of the subject has for the former's theory of knowledge (as in effect precluding an interpretation of Hegel as a pre-critical philosophy thinker).

On page 9 of Hegel's Idealism Pippin tells us that Hegel's idealism "begins" with the denial of Kant's strict distinction between concept and intuition. Pippin continues by arguing that Hegel rejects the possibility of such a distinction of Kantian grounds: That is to say, given the spontaneously reflexive or apperceptive nature of thought, it is impossible to establish (as Kant had) a strict separation between concept and empirical awareness. Pippin tells us that for Hegel in each and every empirical awareness or sensation there is an implicit knowledge that it is the I (or subject) who, e.g., is seeing "this red color," or smelling "that sweet odor," etc.

I believe Pippin is right in making this claim. He cites a passage from the Berlin Phenomenology (quoted on page 22 of my paper) in which Hegel makes it quite clear

that our certainty about the existence of the external object, and in general our knowledge of it, issues from our spontaneously referring our awareness of the object to our self. That is to say Pippin is right in claiming that for Hegel consciousness implies self-consciousness.

### III

#### EVALUATION OF PIPPIN

Now I turn briefly to an evaluation of Pippin and of his success in establishing his claims. In the first place I want to see whether he has been consistent in establishing his goal.

Given, as we have seen throughout this paper, that Hegel accepts Kant's constitutive function of the subject in experience; and that for Hegel the unity of the concept is the unity of the self-conscious subject; further Hegel's assertion that in all relation to objects the subject enters into a relation with itself means that all knowledge and experience are reflexive it follows that Pippin succeeds in interpreting Hegel as appropriating Kant. In general it is my belief that Pippin succeeds in arguing that Hegel should be read in light of the Kantian themes of the a priori unity of apperception and the reflexivity of knowledge and experience. From this it follows that Pippin is equally successful in establishing that Hegel overcomes Kant's skepticism and in refuting a construal of Hegel as a pre-critical metaphysical monist. In general, then, Pippin manages successfully to argue for a Kantian reading of Hegel.

As far as Pippin's consistency with Hegel's thought is concerned I believe the following: I regard Pippin as justified in his claims. Pippin quotes a passage from the

Berlin Phenomenology (which I give in my paper) in which Hegel makes it clear that for him self-consciousness is the chief pre-condition for the knowledge of objects and of the external world. That is to say Pippin's interpretation of Hegel in light of Kant's apperception theme is consistent with Hegel's own writings. Further Pippin cites a passage from the Science Of Logic (also given in my paper) in which Hegel clearly identifies the unity of the concept as originating in the unity of the self. So, once again, Pippin is justified in claiming that there is an identity between the self and the concept. This means that Pippin is justified in arguing that Hegel accepts Kant's constitutive function of the subject in experience. In addition, it follows from my discussion of the main stages of the Encyclopedia Logic that Pippin has solid grounds for maintaining that our empirical knowledge of the physical world and objectivity itself are shaped by the knowing subject. Once again Pippin's claim is consistent with Hegel's thought.

Finally, I want to argue that Pippin succeeds also in upholding and establishing Hegel's own claims. Pippin is successful in showing that Hegel rejects Kant's skepticism and subjectivism regarding the (external) object of knowledge and external reality. Pippin's success is evident especially if we consider what I have said about Hegel's doctrine of the concept. For Hegel only through rigorous philosophical concepts (whose precise nature I have

already expounded) do we know objects and the whole process of reality as they are in truth. It is the fact that Hegel's concepts comprehend the full nature of an object that is implied in Hegel's language that an external object is seen to go over into its concept. Further the concept of each external object is what determines it to be what it is (as already indicated), a finite thing within a system of finite interrelated objects which exhibit rationality and purposiveness. Given that this is Hegel's position, I believe Pippin is justified in arguing that Hegel's distinctive doctrine of the concept represents an overcoming of Kant's skepticism and subjectivism. Skepticism is overcome insofar as we do know the full nature of the external object. Subjectivism is equally rejected since what we know is not merely the thing as it appears to us (as in Kant), rather what we know is its full nature, i.e., an object whose nature is given by a concept (which displays the unity of the apperceptive subject) and which is part of a rational interrelated system. Further, on the basis of a Kantian reading of Hegel--i.e., as appropriating the constitutive function of the subject in knowledge--Pippin shows Hegel's own rejection of pre-critical (i.e., Pre-Kantian) metaphysics--e.g., the metaphysics of the rationalists. Pippin's construal of Hegel's theory of reality is as follows: The object of knowledge and external reality are not the outcome of the activity of a cosmic spirit (or transcendent substance) rather they are the

distinctive product of the self-conscious subject. That is Pippin's reading (as I have attempted to expound it) demonstrates that for Hegel reality and the external object of knowledge are not independent of the subject but are instead constructed or created by him through the concepts he employs to know the world.

So it appears that Pippin has succeeded, first, in being consistent with his stated aim; second I have attempted to show the consistence of his claims with Hegel's own position, third that this consistence of Pippin's claims with those of Hegel allow us to see what is the nature of Hegel's rejection of Kantian skepticism and subjectivism concerning knowledge of objects. Finally the consistency of Pippin with Hegel leads to a rejection of the claim that Hegel should be regarded as a metaphysical monist.

#### IV

#### CONCLUSION

I proceed to give a brief restatement of the major issues discussed in my paper. The aim of this recapitulation is to achieve a general understanding of the reasons for what I take to be the problematic consequences that follow from Pippin's reading of Hegel. In the discussion of Kant (given in Section II, Sub-section A) several claims were presented: First, for Kant, all consciousness presupposes self-consciousness. The basic condition for the knowledge of ourselves is knowledge of objects--i.e., in knowing an object of sense we have the capacity to know that it is the I or the subject who is engaged in knowing. Second, we saw that the unity of the self is the basic condition of the possibility to know objects. That is to say the transcendental unity of apperception is the basic presupposition of the possibility to have knowledge of external objects. Third, an object of experience is such only through being subject to the conditions which make it intelligible--these conditions are those of the transcendental unity of the self. Finally we saw that the pure categories of the understanding also make possible the intelligible experience, knowledge, of the external world. We saw that their whole claim to objectivity rests in this particular (i.e., without them we could now know an object of sense).

I turn now to summarize the claims made about Hegel. According to Pippin Hegel's philosophy, his doctrine of the concept and identity theory are a variation of Kant's transcendental unity of apperception. Therefore let us see how things stand in connection with Hegel's reworking of Kant's conception of the self: Pippin quotes a passage from Hegel in which the latter claims that all consciousness presupposes self-consciousness. According to Pippin apperception for Hegel makes possible empirical knowledge of all objects. I tried to show that this claim advanced by Pippin must be understood to mean that for Hegel the subject's certainty about the existence of the object and his knowledge of it issues directly from his spontaneously referring to himself (or apperceiving) this information.

In the section treating of Hegel's doctrine of the concept and identity theory I argued that Hegel accepts Kant's constitutive function of the subject in knowledge and experience. Given this claim I conclude that for Hegel it is our philosophical concepts which determine reality, which establish what is to count for us as knowledge of the external object. I also endeavored to show that there is a connection between the doctrine of the concept and the apperceptive subject, this connection is the following: The unity of the concept (with which we comprehend an object) is the unity of the self, of the original unity of self-consciousness. That it is our concepts which determine the nature of the external object and of reality is



implied by Hegel's language found in the last section of the Encyclopedia Logic where he says that objects when correctly understood are seen to go over into their concepts. I showed, also, that identity theory holds that given that the subject by means of concepts determines the object of knowledge a certain identity is established between subject and object. In the section dealing with Hegel's treatment of the concept-intuition relation we saw that Hegel rejected this distinction on Kantian grounds: That is to say given the spontaneously apperceptive nature of thought, it is impossible to establish a clear separation between concept and empirical awareness.

Now I want to present some general conclusions concerning Pippin's reading of Hegel. Having seen in Section II, Part B, how Hegel appropriates Kant's view regarding the subject as being a unified spontaneously apperceptive entity for whom knowledge is the product of its spontaneously unifying its representations of objects and of its referring (again spontaneously) these representations (awarenesses of objects) to itself. That is having seen that knowledge is not the passive, direct apprehension of some independently existing external reality (or the passive and immediate reception of sense data) but, rather, the subject's construction of what it considers to be the external object of knowledge, it follows, first that Hegel overcomes Kant's skepticism and subjectivism regarding knowledge of objects, second that Pippin has good grounds

for asserting that Hegel should not be interpreted as a pre-critical metaphysical monist; thirdly, and this is the problematic aspect raised by Pippin's reading, Hegel can be read as a subjective idealist. In other words, Pippin succeeds in presenting a view of Hegel as espousing an active idealism, in which both the external world of sense and the categories with which we grasp it are the distinctive product of a unified self-conscious ego. If this is the case, and Pippin presents a strong argument in favor of this conclusion, I believe it follows that Hegel's position can legitimately be interpreted as leading to subjective idealism (although Hegel, of course, always rejected this form of idealism).

I will not enter here into the debate whether this is actually the case or not. I will however point out that given Pippin's reading of Hegel in light of the apperception and reflexivity of knowledge and experience themes an interpretation of Hegel as a subjective idealist becomes a legitimate possibility.

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