

*Replies to Bob Brandom and Jim Kreines.*

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(Author's reply at "Author-Meets-Critics" session (on Paul Redding, *Analytic Philosophy and the Return of Hegelian Thought*) at the Annual Meeting of the American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division, Vancouver, April 10, 2009. Robert Brandom's "critic's" contribution is available as "Hegel and Analytic Philosophy" from his website <http://www.pitt.edu/~brandom/>.)

*1. Reply to Brandom:*

In my reply to Bob Brandom's generous comments on *Analytic Philosophy and the Return of Hegelian Thought*, I want to focus on the issue of the significance that the Fregean revolution in logic had for the project of Hegel's idealism. Russell's quick analysis of Hegel's error set the tone for the subsequent dismissal of Hegel as a serious historical interlocutor for analytic philosophers. According to Russell, the Aristotelian logic of subjects and monadic predicates that Hegel had accepted had brought with it a substance ontology that had led Hegel to think of the Absolute as the single ultimate subject of predication. Frege however, had provided the resources for giving systematic expression to the relations that Aristotelian logic could not schematise. Hegel's Aristotelian logic made him irrelevant to the genuinely modern, scientific, secular philosophy.

Against Russell, Brandom has brilliantly shown us a way to read Hegel such that we can see this dismissal as misguided. His inferentialist interpretation of the new logic turns the tables on Russell, and we can now see Russell as caught up in atomistic ontological assumptions that are actually at variance with the logic that he championed. From the inferentialist perspective we can see Hegel, despite the cumbersome formal logic of his time, hatching a conception of thought and its place in the world that fits with much work in contemporary analysis. Brandom transforms Hegel from pariah of contemporary analytic philosophy to its founding father. In *AP&RHT*, however, I have hesitated to follow Brandom this far, wanting to hold onto something of, and to a certain extent, defend, the Aristotelianism that had marked him, for Russell, as, at best, a remnant of a pre-scientific age.

Hegel's distinctive Aristotelian dimension is a casualty of Brandom's project of Fregeanizing Hegel, but without Hegel's Aristotelian side, I want to say, it is difficult to maintain some of Hegel's key distinctions, including that between reason and understanding—*Vernunft* and *Verstand*. Brandom thinks that Hegelian *Vernunft* can be Fregeanized as long as one understand the semantics of the propositional contents of judgments *inferentially*, as Frege himself suggests in the *Begriffsschrift*, and as long as one understands inference *materially*, in terms of the primacy of our normative reasoning practices. He thinks I falsely infer from Hegel's commitment to the primacy of material over formal inference to the inappropriateness of applying Frege's apparatus to Hegelian *Vernunft*. Frege *is* concerned with the relations of logical inconsistency and consequence but in fact, Brandom points out, the

inferentialist reading of Frege *presupposes* the priority of material inference over formal inference “since the point of introducing specifically *logical* vocabulary” is “to codify *antecedent* properties of inference that articulate the conceptual content of *non-logical* expressions”. The Fregean apparatus is neutral to the *Verstand–Vernunft* distinction: what is crucial is, rather, how one philosophically construes this formal apparatus—inferentially, with Brandom and early Frege, or representationally, with contemporary orthodox analytic philosophers and the later Frege.

Brandom’s reply retrospectively gives a much more definite shape to the concern that is expressed in a vague way in *AP&RHT*, but I don’t think goes to its heart, so I will try to rephrase it more clearly here. My basic concern is that burning off the distinctly Aristotelian dimensions of Hegel’s formal apparatus deprives us of understanding various distinctions and relations that are crucial for Hegel, distinctions and relations that I try to capture with the description of Hegel as a cognitive *contextualist*. The main one I focus on is the well-known distinction from the opening chapters of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* between “perception” and “the understanding” as “shapes [*Gestalten*] of consciousness”.<sup>1</sup> We can think of the “shapes” of consciousness distinguished here as concerned with the shapes of the (intentional) *objects* of those consciousnesses, and we can think of it as concerned with the “shape” that thought *takes* about those objects. (How to think of this Hegelian “equipoise” between mind and world is a lesson I have learnt from MCDowell.)

My claim is that the intentional objects of *perception* treated by Hegel in Chapter 2 are basically Aristotelian substances, with the distinct categorical structure of being instances of kinds modified by accidental properties selected from arrays of contraries. A perceptual object is thus a “this such” which exists in a certain way rather than another. A “this tomato”, for example, which is red rather than green. When one grasps this shape of consciousness from the side of the logic of the thought about such an object, this logic, I suggest, will be correspondingly an Aristotelian logic of *terms*, terms for the kind of object it is, and terms for the properties attributed to such objects. So far, then, Hegel looks exposed to Russell’s objections. Were one to think about everything in this way, including the world itself, one would end up with the absolute as the ultimate object of predication.

But if Russell had read beyond chapter 2, he would have realized that he had fired off his salvo far too early. This is because in chapter 3, “Force and the Understanding”, the “shape” of consciousness has now been transformed into something radically different to that found in Perception. As the title suggests, the “objects” of consciousness no longer have the shape of those Austinian “moderate-sized specimens of dry goods” that are the models for Aristotelian substances. A *force*, which is a paradigmatic “object” of the understanding, is not *perceived* in Hegel’s sense, it is posited as part of some explanation of events in the perceived world. Otherwise put, Hegel’s perception–understanding distinction lines up pretty well with what Sellars describes as the difference between the “manifest” and “scientific” views of the world, and the scientific view,<sup>2</sup> I suggest, will picture the unity

of the world in a different way to that of the “manifest view”. For the understanding, the world itself won’t be unified in the way a *perceived object* is unified, but rather the world will be thought of in the way that Wittgenstein describes the world in the opening passages of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, as a totality of logically connected facts.<sup>3</sup>

The ontology of such a “fact-world” will have a parallel in the logical shape of thought about that world. Here the “context” principle of Frege and the early Wittgenstein will be at home, such that a name will be thought to have a meaning only in the context of a judgment.<sup>4</sup> The “objects” of understanding, things like non-perceived forces, will then have a “shape” more like that which Frege thought of as belonging to the types of objects that are the correlates to the argument terms when one decomposes a proposition into a function and its arguments. This object will have a shape different to the shape of the perceptual object. It won’t, for example, be necessarily conceived as an instance of a kind. While for Frege the difference between an object and a concept, derived from the difference between an argument and a function, is fundamental, this difference is obscured in term logic by its identification of objects in terms of the conceptual kind to which they belong.

The transition from *perception to the understanding* in the *Phenomenology* shows the grounds for Brandom’s *Fregean inferentialist* reading of Hegel, and the thinness of Russell’s classic dismissal, but here I’m more concerned with the *fate* of perception and its corresponding term logic within Hegel’s system. Hegel typically invokes the notion of “*Aufhebung*” to characterize such moves in which a form of thought or shape of consciousness is transformed into another, and *Aufhebung* is supposedly meant to indicate not that the old form is simply replaced by the new but that rather that something of the old is *retained within* and *integrated into* the new. We lose this, I believe, if we read back the structures of the understanding into those of perception and think of perceptual contents as having a fundamentally propositional shape.

What’s at stake in the move from Aristotelian to Fregean apparatuses when thinking of *perceptual content* might be brought out in the two sentences that Brandom quotes from the *Begriffsschrift* and that he uses to exemplify Frege’s inferentialist approach to conceptual content. They are, “the Greeks defeated the Persians at Platea” and what we think of as its passive grammatical transform “the Persians were defeated by the Greeks at Platea”. Frege points out that when these two sentences are combined with some fixed set of other judgments, all and only those inferences drawn from the former can be drawn from the latter. Inferentially they have the same content, even if a “slight difference of sense is discernible”. From the perspective of some form of thought captured by a naïve term-logic of subjects and predicates, I suggest, there would be *more* than a slight discernible difference between these sentences as they would be grasped as being about *different subjects*, the former is about the Greeks, the latter about the Persians. Some linguists describe this difference in terms of the notion of topicality, a semantic dimension that is invisible from the Fregean point of view.<sup>5</sup> From an inferentially

interpreted Fregean perspective this difference in topicality between Frege's two statements should not matter. From an Hegelian one, I suggest it does.

If one tries to make sense of Hegel's claim for experience and thought to have different "shapes" by appealing to contexts, the question becomes: are there contexts in which a content's *Aristotelian* rather than *Fregean* shape is relevant? In *AP&RHT* in the chapters on practical reason that Brandom alludes to I use some of John McDowell's pre-*Mind and World* reflections on the perceptual capacities of Aristotle's idealisation of the *phronimos* to try to bring out something of the distinctness of the conceptual structure that Hegel attributes to perception and its objects.<sup>6</sup> (In *Mind and World*, itself, McDowell blurs the issues, I believe, in construing the content of perceptual experience as primarily propositional, like the content of judgment made on the basis of the experience.<sup>7</sup>)

For the earlier McDowell, Aristotle had sketched a type of perceptual capacity possessed by the virtuous person, the *phronimos*, that allows that person to discern the *practically salient features* of the situation in which he or she acts. For McDowell this bears on the way we are to think of the practical syllogisms with which such perceptual acts cohere. McDowell points out that we shouldn't think of perception as yielding some particular judgment that is to be subsumed under some major premiss or rule: what is delivered by the perceptual capacity is not an "awareness of the truth of the minor premise [of some practical syllogism] ... but its selection from among other features of a situation as minor premise: as what matters about the situation".<sup>8</sup> With the focus off the *truth* of the content of the minor premises, something of the significance of Aristotle's way of thinking about the role of the minor premise in this practical inference becomes clearer, I think.

In the book I have suggested that modern equivalents of such an approach to the perceptual judgment would be something like the judgments of Hutcheson's quasi-aesthetic *moral* sense, or in Kant's approach in the third *Critique*, aesthetic judgment itself. As Brandom points out, from an inferentialist perspective truth is to be understood as that which is preserved in inference, but bracketing the issue of *truth* here brings out the peculiarity of aesthetic judgment in Kant. For Kant, I suggest, the quasi-concept "beauty" predicated in an aesthetic judgment is not a concept at all in the inference-articulating sense of concept. The Kantian idea that there can be no rule for the concept of beauty is brought out by Schiller in his letters to Gottfried Körner, the "Kallias letters". Beauty is "freedom in appearance", and some perceived form "appears as free as soon as we are *neither able nor inclined* to search for its ground outside it.... It is thus a tenable principle that an object presents itself as free in appearance, if its form does not compel reflective understanding to seek out a ground for it. A form is therefore beautiful only if it explains itself ... without the help of a concept".<sup>9</sup> For Kant and Schiller, beauty is a concept in the limited Aristotelian sense that Brandom rejects—such concepts (for Kant, "ideas") function as classifiers rather than inferential-hinges. Qua a property grasped by a classifier, beauty doesn't "compel reflective understanding to seek out a ground for it", but it does allow different things understood as beautiful in a way that is indifferent to the *kinds* of

things they otherwise are, and thereby to be grasped in terms of structural analogies. Non-inferential concepts thus open up of a role for analogical reasoning in the realm of value judgments.

Under the influence of the aesthetic ideas of Kant and Schiller, the more “romantic” thinkers of Hegel’s generation sought in an aestheticised conception of reason a way of counteracting what they regarded as the nihilistic consequences of standard 18<sup>th</sup> C rationalism. What they sought out was a form of reasoning that did not treat the sensuous qualities of objects—the qualities they treated as the primary bearers of value—simply as Leibnizian “confused ideas” in need of clarification by the specification of their grounds. Hegel too attempted to build this requirement into reason, and his attempts to integrate an “Aristotelian” treatment of perceptual judgment together with the “reflective” nature of “the understanding” into a broader conception of reason reflects this need. Brandom brilliantly brings out the structure of Hegel’s rationalism, but in the historical Hegel, this rationalism was meant to be integrated with, not abstractly opposed to, a certain “romanticism” implicit in the thought of Schiller.

I will conclude with touching on the issue of the role of contradiction in Hegel. An advantage of keeping a contextually specific place for an Aristotelian categorical structure for thought about objects within Hegel is that it gives us a fairly straightforward account of the genesis of contradiction within thought as Hegel conceives it. Brandom traces the ubiquity of contradiction in Hegel to the inevitability of “finding oneself with materially incompatible commitments, commitments that are determinate negations of one another”, an inevitability that he sees as following from what he calls the “conceptual inexhaustibility of sensuous immediacy”: “No matter how many true perceptual judgments we might make”, Brandom says, “there will always remain further truths that remain as yet unexpressed”. But I don’t see why this feature of sensuous immediacy leads to the inevitability of the *contradictory* assertion of materially incompatible predicates, as Brandom insists: why doesn’t the conceptual inexhaustibility of sensuous immediacy just lead to a proliferation of *different*, logically *indifferent* vocabularies about experience, rather than contradictory ones? In contrast, the idea that reasoning finds itself drawn into using *logically heterogenous* forms that accompanies my contextualist approach to Hegel suggests an answer here. Contradictions will be generated basically for the reasons Russell gives in his well-known paradox. In the context of “perception” an object will be schematised by the structures of term logic, it will be a “this such”, an instance of a kind. In the context of “the understanding”, however, it will be thought of more as a correlate of a singular term. Sometimes we will be thinking of an object, say, in ways analogous to thinking of the set to which it belongs, at other times in ways analogous to thinking of it as the member of that set. The roots of the issue are already apparent in Kant’s distinction between two types of representation, singular intuitions and general concepts, and his warnings about the consequences of conflating the two when endeavouring to extend judgments beyond the bounds of appearance to “things in themselves”.<sup>10</sup> But Hegel was to reject this distinction, and in any case, even within the realm of “appearance” Kant was unknowingly conflating objects of

perception with objects of the understanding, and was thereby unable to avoid generating the contradictions he warned about. Hegel's response to this problem was to acknowledge the distinction between perception and understanding as *different* shapes of consciousness, and accept the consequence that when we reflected upon and justified our perceptual judgments by placing them in the "space of reasons", we were necessarily changing their categorical shape and being drawn into contradiction.

The Hegel that I want to put into dialogue with analytic philosophy is a more romantic version of the rationalist that Brandom reconstructs--he jealously holds onto features of Aristotelianism that Brandom is happy to relinquish, and attempts to integrate those features into a more comprehensive conception of reason. This Hegel is a *romantic* rationalist in contrast to Brandom's rationalist. Moreover, the type of analytic philosophy with which I try to put him into dialogue is more comprehensive than that captured by Brandom's "narrow criterion", with a place for romantics like McDowell besides rationalists like Brandom.

## 2. Reply to Kreines

Underlying Jim Kreines's generous comments about the book, is a criticism which, if it works, is very damning. Jim starts from a very helpful and perceptive sketch of my implicit metaphilosophical assumptions, and then attempts to show how I'm lead from them to a picture of Hegel which contradicts the point from which I had started. This looks something like an example of the Hegelian processual approach to truth which Bob beautifully sketched at the end of his paper, but it leaves me as a type of unwitting vehicle of Hegel's "ruse of reason", a type of philosophical version of the holy fool. Despite my attraction to Hegel's way of seeing things, this is a self-image I could live without, so I will try to address Jim's criticisms, at least to the extent that might leave me with some hope of avoiding that particular fate.

Kreines starts from what he calls the "fundamentality of meaning claim" which he sees as at the heart of my approach. If I understand him correctly, he attributes to me a conception of philosophy as type of second-order activity in which the meanings implicit in our first order claims are unpacked, but unpacked in such a way that avoids assigning priority to the *world* in the constitution of these meanings. There is objectivity to be had here, but not in the sense that this objectivity is to be thought of *representationally*, such that the form of our thoughts map some form that exists there in the world, independently of our thinking about it.

I think this captures what I have found suggestive for an approach to Hegel about the work of both Brandom and McDowell: Brandom's *inferentialist* approach to semantics attacks representationalism in one way, and McDowell's picture of the equipoise between mind and world does so in another. That I take *meaning* to be at the heart of the Hegelian project is expressed in the title of my earlier book, "Hegel's Hermeneutics", although my take on the *peculiarity* of Hegel's concern with meaning is probably better expressed by the title I had wanted for the book: "Hegel's *Copernican* Hermeneutics". Then, as now, I thought of Hegel's engagement with

meaning as developing out of Kant's "Copernican" turn. In the battlefield of contemporary Hegel interpretation this put me on the side of what used to be called the "non-metaphysical" Hegel represented most centrally by the work of Robert Pippin and Terry Pinkard. This reading of Hegel has, of course, always had its critics, who insist that it is nonsense to say that Hegel has no metaphysics, but what I had understood Pippin and Pinkard to be saying was that Hegel was not committed to the type of "dogmatic" metaphysics of which Kant had been critical. Rather, he was a "post-Kantian" in more than the chronological sense in that he had extended Kant's critique to residual elements of such "dogmatic" metaphysics in Kant himself. Of contemporary interpretations of Hegel, this broadly post-Kantian approach is, I think, the one most closely aligned with the understandings of Hegel that Brandom and McDowell each alluded to in their great books from 1994, Brandom's *Making It Explicit* and McDowell's *Mind and World*. In *AP&RHT* my plan was to try to bring the more Kant and Hegel focused approach of the "post-Kantian" Hegelians into closer connection with the type of analytic philosophy being worked out in those two books.

I'll try to articulate Jim's criticism by using Bob's imagery of my strategy in the book as one of tunneling from two directions—from a post-Kantian inspired reading of Kant and Hegel at the one end, and from the Sellars and Rorty inspired work of Brandom and McDowell at the other end. What would count as success here is pretty obvious. The two teams of tunnellers are to meet up in the middle, shake hands, slap each other on the back and smile for the cameras. But on Kreines's telling of the story of the book, both tunneling teams find themselves back on the surface in different places, and, what is worse, each within enemy territory. In the role of the teams' surveyor, I have brought the intrepid post-Kantian Hegelians to surface in the land of the "new traditionalists", who want to get something more *metaphysical* out of Hegel than what they see the post-Kantian approach as supplying. Clearly something has gone wrong, and the culprit is not hard to find: it is my embrace of the *Aristotelian* dimension of Hegel. Now to repay a compliment, if you are going to appear unannounced on another's home-turf, it's very nice to have someone as welcoming as Jim, who can see my Aristotelianization of Hegel as a type of conversion. But I didn't set out to be a convert or a defector, so what I need to do is to show Jim that the Aristotelian features of Hegel that we agree about are in fact compatible with the metaphilosophical assumptions from which I started. As for the other team of tunnelers, on Jim's telling of the story, the result is much the same, so it's easy to appreciate why Bob is not ready to embrace my account of the role of Aristotle in Hegel. If Jim is right, my faulty surveying has brought the Sellarsian anti-representationalists to the surface in the land of the metaphysical realists. So, to begin a response to Jim here is my "Hegel, Kant and Aristotle", *the preview*.

That at least one the *surface* Hegel adopts many features of Aristotle's philosophy is, I think, obvious. Two issues arise here. On the one hand, there is the issue that opposes me to Bob concerning whether Hegel's Aristotelianism is a discardible mere appearance, or whether it goes deeper, as I've tried to suggest. But Jim's criticism brings into focus another issue, and that is the degree to which Hegel's Aristotelianism commits him to a pre-Kantian metaphysics. Often when

thinking of Hegel's reception of both Aristotle and Kant, it is assumed that these two influences on are naturally antagonistic and that surely Aristotle is an exemplar of the "pre-copernican" philosophy of which Kant is so critical, but I think the situation is more complicated than this and that it begs a number of questions that are often ignored. I will raise just two.

The first concerns the *degree* to which Kant *himself* was working within a mode of philosophy heavily influenced by Aristotle. Everyone acknowledges Kant's Aristotelian assumptions about the nature of formal logic, but the popular image of Kant as "responding to Hume" that has, until relatively recently, dominated much Kant scholarship had tended to overlook other Aristotelian dimensions of Kant's approach to metaphysics. One particularly striking feature is his use of the form-content distinction that is central to his conception of his own type of idealism. Thus, for example, in a letter to J. S. Beck, from December 4, 1792, Kant appeals to this distinction in responding to the charge of being a follower of Berkeley. He here states what while he "speak[s] of ideality in reference to the form of representation ... they [followers of Berkeley] construe it as ideality with respect to the matter, i.e., ideality of the object and its existence itself".<sup>11</sup> The Aristotelian distinction between form and matter thus allows Kant to describe his philosophy as involving a *reversal* of Berkeley's "idealism". As a "material idealist", as an idealist *about* matter, Berkeley had reduced matter to ideas subjectively conceived, and so reduced matter to *mind*, but in contrast, Kant was an idealist about *form*, regarding both the spatio-temporal form and the conceptual form of objects as contributed by the knowing mind (as "mind-dependent") rather than as having independent *per se* existence.<sup>12</sup> It is just this idealism about *form* that will be useful for Hegel's cognitive contextualism. Were one a realist about form, one could ask which of the cognitive forms, for example, that of perception or that of the understanding, gets the world *right* by capturing *its* basic form. But this question is meaningless for the *idealist* conception of form.

The second question I raise concerns the broader context of Hegel's reception, and understanding, of Aristotle. While the cultural context in which Kant had assimilated Aristotelianism as a young man had been relative free of the influence of Platonism, this was not the case from the 1790s, a time that saw a revival of Platonist and Neoplatonist thought within certain German philosophical circles. The influence of neoplatonism on Hegel was later widely acknowledged in the nineteenth century—Feuerbach, for example, replaced the commonplace of Hegel as "the German Aristotle" with the claim that he was in fact, "the German Proclus".<sup>13</sup> As is explicit in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel understood the traditions of Platonic and Aristotelian thought as transmitted through late antique neoplatonism, and like the neoplatonists he thought of Aristotle as a type of Platonist, and he thought of the neoplatonists themselves as equally *neo-Aristotelians*. Moreover, like romantic thinkers of the late 1790s such as Friedrich Schlegel and Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis), he thought of Neoplatonists themselves as holding philosophical positions remarkably "transcendental" in the style of *Kant and Fichte*. In short, we shouldn't think of Hegel's version of Aristotle as looking all that much like *our* Aristotle. The Aristotle that he celebrates at the conclusion of the *Encyclopaedia*

of the *Philosophical Sciences*,<sup>14</sup> when he refers to God as *noesis noeseos noesis*—thought thinking itself—doesn't to me look all that much like the *natural kind realist* that Kreines concentrates on in comments on Hegel's Aristotelianism.

With these background ideas in place, I want to rejoin the question of thinking of Hegel as a post-Kantian, and take up Jim's criticism of my reading of Kant in which I attempt to extend Kant's epistemic critique of our capacity to *know* things in themselves in a semantic direction, the idea that Kreines describes "the same reasons Kant has for denying knowledge [of things in themselves] should lead him to deny meaning or conceivability".<sup>15</sup>

As I see it, Kant tends to employ two different ways of articulating his critique of metaphysics. In the first, he retains the meaning of "metaphysics" used by the dogmatic metaphysicians that he is criticizing. When he talks this way, he sounds as if he is elaborating a *skeptical epistemology* of metaphysical knowledge. There is something that we want, and which we are denied—a knowledge of things in themselves—and we are left with something that is second best—a knowledge of appearances, things known relative to our finite representational faculties. However, in the first *Critique*, we occasionally glimpse an approach that is in stark contrast with this "skeptical" pessimistic approach. For example, in the "Preface" to the first edition Kant says of metaphysics that it "is the only one of all the sciences that may promise that little but unified effort ... will complete it .... Nothing here can escape us, because what reason brings forth entirely out of itself cannot be hidden, but is brought to light by reason itself as soon as reason's common principle has been discovered".<sup>16</sup> This clearly reflects an approach to metaphysics that is anything *but* skeptical. Scientific metaphysics is possible and completable, and here nothing can escape reason because in metaphysics reason is concerned entirely with *its own products*.

The apparent contradiction between the claims that we are both denied and are capable of metaphysical knowledge testifies to the different senses of "metaphysics" being appealed to.<sup>17</sup> On the former reading, "metaphysics" means what philosophers had traditionally taken it to mean (and mostly still do): a knowledge of how the world ultimately and "really" is—to employ the words of Bernard Williams, a knowledge of the way the world is "anyway".<sup>18</sup> But the latter approach urges us to think of metaphysics in a different way. Metaphysics should be thought of as the science of *what* reason produces out of its own activity. From this point of view, traditional "pre-scientific" metaphysicians had an erroneous conception of their own activity. This attitude to metaphysics is reflected, for example, in Kant's claim to understand Plato, surely the paradigm of a metaphysician, *better than he understood himself*.<sup>19</sup> Thus Kant's prevaricates about the nature of metaphysics, and this prevarication, I believe, is central for correctly understanding the relation of Hegel to Kant. In short, Hegel pursues the strong interpretation of Kant's idealism, and criticizes those aspects of Kant that are tied to the *weak* interpretation.

I think this account of Hegel's relation to Kant helps us understand what a properly Hegelian response would be to Jim's attempts to hold onto Kant's thesis that

noumena can be thought but not known. Jim points to the fact that “Kant carefully allows that unschematized categories can be employed with a kind of meaning beyond the limits of our knowledge: ‘even after abstraction from every sensible condition’ the categories retain ‘a logical significance’ (A147/B186)”. ‘I can think what I like”, he quotes Kant as saying, “as long as I do not contradict myself” (CPuR, Bxxvi, note). First, with his idea of the ubiquity of contradiction, Hegel is *not* going to allow that I can “think what I like ... [and] not contradict myself”. For Hegel, thought can’t even travel from perception to natural science without getting caught up in contradictions. But further, I see Kant’s idea that I can think about but not know about possible “things in themselves” such as God or the soul—think about as long as I don’t contradict myself—as enframed within the weaker, sceptical, interpretation of his idealism and as plagued by the problems that beset that interpretation. After all, knowing that a possible thing in itself such as “God” is non-contradictory is, after all, to knowing *something* about that thing. Moreover, from the point of view of Hegel’s strong interpretation of idealism that is *not* sceptical about metaphysics, to think of such a purported “thing in itself” as necessarily subject to the law of non-contradiction looks suspiciously like holding the thing in itself to the conditions that paradigmatically apply to appearances, and is that not the conflation of thought that Kant was criticizing in pre-critical dogmatic metaphysics? From Hegel’s point of view, this “thinkable but not knowable strategy” is hopeless, but luckily it is not tied to the core theses of Kant’s idealism, only to a discardable appearance of it.

In short, I’m not convinced that Hegel’s commitment to certain Aristotelian features of thought implies that he ascribes to *pre-Kantian* metaphysics. I rather see it as bound up with his development of a properly *post-Kantian* metaphysics—Kant’s own “critical” metaphysics, divested of a residue of the old metaphysics that had clung to Kant’s own presentation of it.

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<sup>1</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

<sup>2</sup> Wilfrid Sellars, “Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man”, in *Science, Perception and Reality* (Atascadero: Ridgeview, 1963).

<sup>3</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. C. K. Ogden, intro. Bertrand Russell (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1922), §§ 1–1.13.

<sup>4</sup> Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, § 3.3. Frege had introduced this idea in *The Foundations of Arithmetic* as the second of three fundamental principles: “The meaning of a word must be asked for in the context of a proposition, not in isolation.” Michael Beaney (ed.), *The Frege Reader*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), p. 90.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, the work of Talmy Givon.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, the essays in *Mind, Value, and Reality*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998).

<sup>7</sup> “In a particular experience in which one is not misled, what one takes in is *that things are thus and so*. *That things are thus and so* is the content of the experience, and it can also be the content of a judgement: it becomes the content of a judgement if the subject decides to take the experience at face value.” John McDowell, *Mind and World*, second paperback edition with a new introduction (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 26. Sometimes, however, McDowell speaks in a more Aristotelian mode here, as when he says, for example, that “in experience one can take in *how things are*” *Ibid.*, p. 25. On my reading of Hegel, the former wording suggests the understanding, the latter perception. McDowell’s tendency to identify the content of perceptual experience with that of judgment made on the basis of experience might be thought of as behind what critics object to when they object to his “conceptualist” approach to experiential content.

<sup>8</sup> John McDowell, “Some Issues in Aristotle’s Moral Psychology” in *Mind, Value, and Reality*, p. 29.

<sup>9</sup> Friedrich Schiller, “Kallias or Concerning Beauty: Letters to Gottfried Körner”, in J. M. Bernstein (ed.), *Classic and Romantic German Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 155.

<sup>10</sup> For some time, sympathetic interpreters of Kant have seen his concept–intuition distinction as standing proxy within his *transcendental* logic for something like Frege’s argument–function analysis of the content of judgments. As Longuenesse points out, for example, with the concept–intuition distinction, Kant was able to clearly distinguish between the *subordination* of a subject concept to a predicate concept in a categorical judgment from that of the *subsumption* of an object under a concept in a judgment—a distinction that term logic largely effaces. He thus thinks of the *logical* structure of a universal affirmative categorical judgment (All As are B) as something like “everything that is subsumed (via the content of an intuition) under the subject concept A is thereby subsumed under the predicate concept B”. (It would seem that Russell’s “discovery” that the universal affirmative categorical judgment had the logical structure of a conditional was hardly as novel as he was in the habit of claiming.) With the thesis of the transcendental unity of apperception, Kant clearly had in mind the idea of the unification of a “fact-world” a little like Wittgenstein’s idea of facts connected in logical space. As Brandom rightly points out, Kant thought of *propositions* as the minimal semantic unit. Nevertheless, at the level of *formal* or “general” logic, Kant still held to the Aristotelian doctrine that judgments were formed by the synthesis of two concepts.

<sup>11</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Correspondence*, ed. and trans. A Zweig, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 445.

<sup>12</sup> Kant paraphrases Critical Idealism here as “the principle of the ideality of space and time” (*ibid.*) but the point could be equally made with respect to the *conceptual* form of objects.

<sup>13</sup> Ludwig Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future* trans. M. H. Vogel, intro. T. H. Wartenberg, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1986), p. 47. More recent *sympathetic* Hegel scholarship has tended to circumvent the question of Hegel’s assimilation of ideas and language from neoplatonic authors, I suspect, because of the taint of “*Schwärmerei*” or fanaticism, such as that surrounding millenarian religious cults influenced by mixes of ideas which contained a strong dose of neoplatonism.

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<sup>14</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind: Being part three of the 'Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences'* (1830), trans. William Wallace and A. V. Miller, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971, § 577.

<sup>15</sup> James Kreines, "Redding on Hegel and Analytic Philosophy", p. 7.

<sup>16</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), A xx.

<sup>17</sup> Sebastian Gardner points out this ambiguity of Kant's use of "metaphysics" and draws from it a distinction between "analytic" and "idealist" ways of interpreting the first *Critique* with similarities to the distinction alluded to here. Sebastian Gardner, *Kant and the Critique of Pure Reason*, (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 30–33.

<sup>18</sup> Lest it be thought that "what exists anyway" must exhaust the role of what a science *could* be about the exemplary notion of a "right" might be invoked. One might thus argue that while there is a fact of the matter as to whether I have, say, the exclusive right to drive *this* car (the one that I *own*), the existence of such rights is itself dependent upon the historically contingent fact that in our society we acknowledge rights of, say, private property. To put it another way, the *fact* that this car is mine is to be thought of as an "institutional fact" rather than a "brute fact".

<sup>19</sup> Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A314/B370.