Subjectivity and the Social World

Subjectivity and the Social World: A Collection of Essays around issues relating to the Subject, the Body and Others

Edited by

Tom Feldges, Josh N.W. Gray
and Stephen Burwood

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PREFACE

This book emerged from a seminar series held within the department of philosophy at the University of Hull. Many of us were (and some still are) working on different phenomenological approaches to account for self-hood and the self's ability to overcome the imminent danger of solipsism. This danger is implied by the probability of putting too much importance upon the immanent evidence as it is available to the self when assessing its own world in the form of directly accessible intentional mental states (the phenomena) and their respective horizons. And exactly this danger, when it realises itself, poses the difficulty of accounting for the counterpart of any social interaction, i.e. for the *alter ego* – or the Other.

Nevertheless – and we are here by no means questioning the huge benefits of these seminars – surrounding oneself with like-minded Others, pursuing similar projects, working within similar traditions, does not always foster an atmosphere in which challenging thoughts are brought forward, or could be brought forward. Recognising this lurking danger and not wanting to succumb to it provided the motivation for us to organise a multi-disciplinary conference to be held at the University of Hull. The chosen theme for this multi-disciplinary event, "Subjectivity and the Social World", aimed to provide a platform for a multitude of disciplines and approaches to either investigate aspects of self-hood or the self's contact with the Other or Others. Our goal was to attract presenters who would be able to bring something entirely new to the party. Young researchers, currently working in the field, pursuing novel ideas to get their own projects going – what better seedbed for fresh and new thoughts could one wish for?

In this vein, we set out to seek the influence of and the uncomfortable exposure to new ideas. We wanted our own – dearly held – beliefs challenged by alternative interpretations, by other academic disciplines, and we wanted to engage in a fruitful discussion across philosophical traditions from various cultural backgrounds. Our conference, held in July 2012, surely achieved this.

We were lucky enough to receive the offer from the publisher to turn the proceedings of this conference into a themed book and we chose to engage in such a project. Although the conference had attracted a great number of speakers from all over the world, we had to organise the materials and make decisions about which of these to include in this collection. For the sake of coherence, we decided to mainly concentrate on philosophical papers and to carve the overall theme into three sub-themes. As the conference-title "Subjectivity and the Social World" already indicates, it seemed almost inevitable that there would be a differentiation between issues regarding the subject, the self, the ego or the transcendental ego and those issues concerning the Other, the *alter ego*, the one that forms the self's social world. We maintained this differentiation and as a result we provide, within the first two main parts of this collection, papers investigating specific aspects regarding the self (section I) and the relation between the self and the Other (section II). However, we decided to add a third sub-theme concerning the issue of mental illness (section III). This decision owes to the fact that the papers presented here made interesting use of psycho-pathologies to reveal aspects of a possible structural conceptualisation of a self's mental processes and the possibility to communicate aspects of these pathologies within a clinical/diagnostic setting to an Other. All three sections have an introduction to their respective sub-themes, but the sections taken together – despite all being written to fit the overall theme – do not cater for the formulation of an overall argument as an end-result. This edition was never intended to make one specific point, but – as explained earlier – tries to provide a basis for a multitude of approaches to account for subjectivity in a social world.

A project of such a size, that is the antecedent conference as well as the subsequent book-project, would not have been possible without the help and support of the staff of the University of Hull in general and especially the Philosophy Department. Although it is not possible to name everyone who willingly – and beyond their normal work-commitments – was happy to lend us a helping hand, we would especially like to thank Professor Kathleen Lennon, who, when first confronted with our idea, immediately welcomed it and helped us to turn it into a success. Our thanks must also include our co-editor, Dr. Stephen Burwood, then head of the Philosophy Department, who helped in every possible way to support our organisational efforts and thus contributed to the success of the conference, as well as for his willingness to lend his ongoing support to this publication project. We are grateful to have been able to convince Professor Michael Wheeler and Dr. Donna Cox to appear at our

conference and present the key-note talks and, even more so, for allowing us to publish versions of their talks in this collection. Finally, we would not want to miss this opportunity to send our thanks to Mrs. Chris Coulson, secretary of the philosophy-office, for her help with all our administrative quandaries (and there were a lot) and her advice upon how to navigate the sometimes amazingly huge maze of an academic institution.

Tom Feldges, Josh N.W. Gray, Hull, November 2013

SECTION I. –

THE SUBJECT, THE SELF AND THE EGO

INTRODUCTION

STEPHEN BURWOOD

In recent years there has been something of a thawing of the philosophical cold war between two Western philosophical traditions which have enjoyed cool, and sometimes frosty, relations for most of the last century: so-called Anglo-American, analytic philosophy and what is generally, but clumsily, known as continental philosophy. This détente has manifested itself in various ways, both in terms of teaching (university departments in the UK are now more likely to include elements of both on their curricula) and in terms of scholarly activity. The latter cannot just be seen in an increasing number of references to Husserl and Heidegger in the work of analytic philosophers of mind and metaphysics but also in a trend (one cannot yet call this a movement) towards collaborative treatment of certain issues where there has always been a convergence of interest. Perhaps the area where this has been most apparent is in the philosophy of mind.

Both traditions have been concerned to problematise the picture of the human subject or self we have inherited from thinkers such as Descartes whereby, according to Kant, purely abstract and formal properties of the self were reified and taken to be properties of a soul. This conception of the self, notoriously, is also one of a pure consciousness or absolute subject: unworldly, inner and private. In the case of each tradition, philosophers have engaged in this problematisation by exploring, in their own way, what we could term the immanence or concreteness of the self: that is, different ways in which the human subject is rooted in the world. In this very broad sense, therefore, there has been then some common ground between the two traditions on this topic (there is even some convergence on the reductionist strategies employed by some in either camp). Central to continental narratives on the rootedness of the human subject has been, post-Husserl, the human body – a subject, it is fair to say, which has been neglected in the other tradition. It was natural, therefore, that a turn towards interest in extended and embodied cognition in recent Anglo-American, analytic philosophy of mind should look for insights from continental philosophy, particularly phenomenology.

There are, of course, important differences: Anglo-American, analytic philosophy of mind has been concerned with the possibility and place of subject-hood within the world conceived of from the point of view of the natural sciences (especially post-Darwinian science); the continentals with the possibility and place of subject-hood within material, historical, and social situations. These differences – and the consequently different conceptions of the body and, not least, philosophy and its purpose that those working within the different traditions articulate or presuppose – mean that convergence, or even constructive engagement, is not something that can be straightforwardly achieved. Philosophers in both traditions may be committed to naturalism, but this is, generally speaking, naturalism of different kinds: what Peter Strawson labelled a "hard (strict or reductive) naturalism" on the one hand and a "soft (catholic or liberal) naturalism" on the other (Strawson 1985, 1; cf. McDowell 1996, 88–89). Consequently, given the hard naturalism in much Anglo-American, analytic philosophy of mind, the body here still largely remains conceived as what Husserl termed *Körper* (straightforwardly, an 'in-itself' materiality), whereas in phenomenology it appears as the lived-body or *Leib*, a source of meaning and not merely another object in the world, but that by which we have a world.

The division in Western philosophy between Anglo-American, analytic and continental philosophy is a relatively recent one and, despite the differences, there is a set of strong family resemblances. A more profound division, it might be thought, is the one that has existed between Western and non-Western philosophical traditions. Yet here too we find dialogue and even the possibility of genuine cross-cultural philosophical fusion. Philosophers of the Kyoto School drew on the thought of Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche and Heidegger as well as the philosophical and spiritual traditions of East Asia to form an original philosophical viewpoint, sometimes described as an expression of 'meontology' (a philosophy of absolute nothingness or non-being). This is not just of theological rather than philosophical interest (a distinction that would be alien to Kyoto School thinkers) but has questions for a philosophy of human subjectivity, especially the phenomenological and existential philosophies of its Western influences.

The chapters in this section all address issues around the notion of the subject or self and touch upon, explicitly or implicitly, the foregoing metaphilosophical questions of inter-traditional dialogue. In "Hegel's Critique of Kant's Transcendental Subject", Kant's formalistic response to

Descartes and Hume is put under pressure by Hegel, though it is ultimately argued that Hegel's critique is unjustified. Kant, cognisant of Hume's claim that the self is not a proper object of representation, yet concerned to uncover the necessary conditions for the possibility of subject-hood, posited the transcendental unity of apperception: a purely formal requirement that a 'bare consciousness', an 'I think', should accompany all representations.

Hegel argued that such a bare transcendental subject of thoughts can only be unreflective and 'in-itself': a passive state of consciousness that means experience is impossible as the 'I', so conceived, cannot be related to its objects. In contrast, Hegel argues, experience requires consciousness to be *Geist* (dialectical and 'for-itself') and this requires it not to be separate from the world, but communal, public and even socially interactive. Hegel's critique is that Kant, in positing a transcendental subject, has failed to escape from the Cartesian tradition of treating self-consciousness in purely psychological and private terms. However, it is not clear that this general criticism is entirely fair to Kant, given the stance he adopts in the refutation of Idealism and the fact that his formalism does not preclude a further filling out of the notion of subject-hood.

The following three chapters all address the place of phenomenology in our theorising about the self and the nature of subject-hood. The first two evaluate the relationship between phenomenology and naturalistically driven approaches with strong empirical elements in the analytic tradition: viz. cognitive science and neuro-philosophy. Both reach cautious – if not quite pessimistic – conclusions, though from different directions. In "The Rest is Science: What Does Phenomenology Tell Us About Cognition?" the contributions of phenomenology understood in two different ways are examined. The first of these is the way the term is commonly used in analytic philosophy of mind and cognitive science as the study of the structure of consciousness, carried out through first-person investigation of what experiences are like for the experiencer. This is phenomenology narrowly understood as an introspective method for investigating the nature of mental phenomena. As such, the prospects for it playing a productive role in such an investigation are bleak as first-person reports on a subject's cognitive processes are notoriously unreliable. Furthermore, given that many such processes are sub-personal and not available to conscious experience, an introspective method seems doubly redundant.

The second understanding of phenomenology is a richer notion, as commonly used in continental philosophy, whose purview goes beyond the narrow confines of mental phenomena (even if that category itself is relatively broad in scope) and which understands 'experience' to encompass all aspects of human existence in which someone has an experience of something. In this wider understanding, it is not just the subjective, 'what it is like' for the subject, aspect of experience that is important to the phenomenologist but also –indeed, more so – the object, or activity, or condition (or whatever phenomenon) experienced. In other words, it is the way the world and aspects of our lives manifest themselves to us. In this guise, it is argued, the forecast for constructive engagement looks more promising. However, there is an important caveat: whatever outcome such an investigation yields, its results are subject to empirical science, as naturalism – at least in a harder form – demands. If there is to be constructive engagement, this must be on the terms of a naturalistic enterprise: empirical investigation may constrain the phenomenology but the phenomenological investigation cannot constrain the science.

The methodological problem raised by first person subject reports is an issue that also arises in "Understanding Pain and Neuroscientific Approaches to Pain". Here, however, the issue is not necessarily their reliability but rather their incompatibility with scientific assessments of a given psychological phenomenon. The 'full-blown' experience, for example of pain, it is argued, escapes the narrow, operationalised descriptions utilised in scientific assessments and perhaps does not share a functional property with the physical state. These 'thin' descriptions are encompassed by but are by no means equivalent to Gadamer's 'thick' concept of pain as that which embraces our life and challenges us constantly. Understanding the experience of pain in this sense involves 'negotiations' with oneself and interpersonal 'conversations'. Unfortunately, pain in this thick sense does not map onto the underlying neurological activity, as this, given the investigative methods, can only be the neural correlate of pain in the thin sense.

Phenomenology here looks as if it might have a role in guiding better neurological investigations; but there is a rather large elephant in the room, an *aporia* that puts this role in doubt. Pain in the experiential context, with its extended temporality and enlarged conception of the subject of pain (so allowing for a Gadamerian negotiation of a self with its pain), appears not to be something that is easily handled within the scientific context. The understanding of pain in each context is so different it appears that each is

working with different concepts. Nonetheless, any neuroscientific use of the term 'pain' cannot completely free itself from its underlying, everyday use in the experiential context, so the understanding of pain in each context is intuitively linked. As a result, the neuroscientific project cannot just decide to go its separate way, so thinking through this *aporia* is crucial for an adequate neuroscientific account and not just for future collaboration between different methodological approaches.

To do justice to a Gadamerian sense of negotiation and conversation, we seem to need, it is argued, more than just an indexical *Me* that happens to be afflicted by pain-stimuli. However, in the final chapter in this section, "On the Way to a Zen Phenomenology? A Critique of Heidegger and French Phenomenology on Self Experience", a different approach to the self and pain is taken. In problematising the Cartesian self and arguing instead that the self is worldly, there is always a danger of not doing justice to the 'Cartesian intuition': that is, in understanding human experience as something enjoyed by a subject that is essentially a 'being-in-the-world', we may compromise the idea of there being an irreducible first-person perspective as the essence of subjectivity. "The experience of pain", it is argued here, drawing on Levinas, Henry and the Kyoto School thinkers Ueda and Davis, "is not really an experience of the world, but instead should be understood as self-experience." What follows is akin to what Levinas calls a "defence of subjectivity" (Levinas 1969, 26), where a primacy and centrality is awarded to subjectivity. This sets up a challenge to Heidegger, who, in viewing the phenomenon of phenomenology as worldly and therefore existentially distanced, still has to work within a framework of a subject/object split.

There is a sense in which pain is 'world annihilating' (cf. Scarry 1985); but here, instead of there being a concomitant annihilation of the self, it is argued that the self is revealed as an absolute subject, *à la* Henry. Precisely because, through pain, the claims of the world are nullified and conscious acts become impossible, all we can do is passively submit to the suffering and pain: "All we can do is *feel* it". What is of utmost importance here is the interiority of this experience, in which, it is argued, we do not experience the world or others, but directly experience our own self, as something completely unified, immanent to itself with the pain immanent to it. Here, then, we have an argument for a radical subjectivism describing neither a self that Heidegger's *Dasein*, or any attempt to root the self completely in the world, can capture, nor yet a self that is a mere formal requirement of subject-hood.

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HEGEL'S CRITIQUE OF KANT'S TRANSCENDENTAL SUBJECT

PAUL GILADI

This chapter is focused on understanding and assessing Hegel's complex critique of Kant's theory of the transcendental subject (self). After introducing the basics of the transcendental unity of apperception, I will develop four specific criticisms and one general criticism of Kant's transcendental subject made by Hegel. The first criticism is named "The Problem of Heterogeneity"; the second is the charge of a specific kind of solipsism; the third is focused on a rejection of Kant's doctrine of transcendental synthesis; while the fourth is named "The Problem of Indeterminacy", and is concerned with how a formal 'I' can establish the grounds of identity in both the subject and in differing subjects. The general criticism is focused on the idea that the 'I think' of transcendental apperception is just a formal mechanism, which, according to Hegel's account, Kant limited to the domain of psychology, rather than expanding to the societal realm, which, according to Hegel, is something that he ought to have done. Then I will argue that whilst the first four criticisms do work against Kant's position, this critique is not justified, given Kant's views on self-consciousness in the Refutation of Idealism and the excessive demands of Hegel's position.

The importance of transcendental apperception may be seen where Kant suggests that:

> 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. (A107)

> As *my* representations … 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. (B131–3)

In both passages, Kant is concerned with transcendental claims about what a subject of experience must be to have *experiences*. In other words, Kant is concerned with establishing the necessary conditions for both subject-hood and experience. In considering the former, we find *identity*, *unity*, and *self-consciousness* are features of transcendental consciousness, in that if a subject of experience is to be a *subject*, such a subject must be an *identical* subject through time. For any 'I' to have experiences of any kind, the experiences must belong to *that* 'I', otherwise the 'I' cannot be considered a subject, nor can the myriad of his representations be considered *experiences.* Without such identity, "the synthetic reproduction and re-identification that Kant has already argued are necessary for experience could not occur". [1] Secondly, for there to be unity of representations in a single subject, that subject must actively unify them, since

> the transcendental unity of apperception forms out of all possible appearances, which can stand alongside one another in experience, a connection of these representations according to laws. (A108)

In other words, to bring the manifold of intuitions, which in themselves have no unity, under synthetic unity, the subject must impose the schema of unity onto objects, otherwise "there would be only associative unities, and so no unity of experience and no possible experience [*Erfahrung*] at all".[2]

Finally, experience – as opposed to simply a collection of representations not belonging to a subject – would be impossible if the subject was not capable of being conscious of himself *as* a subject, as

> It must be possible for the 'I think' to accompany all my representations; for otherwise something would be represented in me which could not be thought at all, and that is equivalent to saying that the representation would be impossible, or at least would be nothing to me. (B132)

From these passages, we can re-construct the following argument:

- To have an experience, the subject of experience must bring the myriad of intuitions under synthetic unity to his consciousness, otherwise the myriad of intuitions cannot be considered an experience.

[1] R.B. Pippin 1989, 19.
[2] Ibid., pp. 26–27.

- Synthetic unity consists in bringing the myriad of intuitions under an identical, unified and self-conscious subject.
- Therefore, bringing the myriad of intuitions under an identical, unified and self-conscious subject is a necessary condition of possible experience.

The transcendental unity of apperception – which Kant also considers to be the *synthetic* unity of apperception – importantly does not have any representational content to it. The reason Kant argues for formalism regarding the self here is that the self is not a proper object of representation – in that the self is not the kind of thing that has any kind of intuition attached to it, as Hume had also argued.[3] This is not to say that the self can be reduced to a bundle of psychological operations, as Hume had also claimed, because Kant does not think we can give any metaphysical description of the 'I'. All that we are entitled to talk about is the epistemic function of the self, viz. the 'I think'. This is what lies at the centre of Kant's critique of rational psychology in the Paralogisms, (cf. A402), where he argues that the errors of Descartes et al. consist in taking the formal features of the self, such as simplicity, and then reifying these properties to refer to a soul that corresponds to the formality of the analytic unity of apperception, i.e. the purely formal unity of the transcendental subject. For Kant, the transcendental subject must lie

[3] As Hume famously writes in the *Treatise of Human Nature*: "For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of Heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception. When my perceptions are remov'd for any time, as by sound sleep; so long am I insensible of myself, and may be truly said not to exist. And were all my perceptions remov'd by death, and cou'd I neither think, nor feel, nor see, nor love, nor hate after the dissolution of my body, I shou'd be entirely annihilated, nor do I conceive what is farther requisite to make me a perfect non-entity. If any one upon serious and unprejudic'd reflexion, thinks he has a different notion of *himself*, I must confess I can reason no longer with him. All I can allow him is, that he may be in the right as well as I, and that we are essentially different in this particular. He may, perhaps, perceive something simple and continu'd, which he calls *himself*; tho' I am certain there is no such principle in me … But setting aside some metaphysicians of this kind, I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind, that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement." (Treatise of Human Nature; Book I, Part 4, Section 6)

outside the empirical realm, and cannot be accounted for as a genuine object of possible experience. As Kant writes,

> We can assign no other basis for this teaching [of rational psychology] than the simple, and in itself completely empty representation 'I'; and we cannot even say that this is a concept, but only that it is a bare consciousness which accompanies all concepts. Through this I or he or it (the thing) which thinks, nothing further is represented than a transcendental subject of the thoughts = X. (A345-6/B404)

However, this fundamental separation of the 'I' from the world of experience, for Hegel, is problematic. As he writes in *Faith and Knowledge*,

> On one side there is the Ego, with its productive imagination or rather with its synthetic unity which, taken thus in isolation, is formal unity of the manifold. But next to it there is an infinity of sensations … A formal idealism which in this way sets an absolute Ego-point and its intellect on one side, and an absolute manifold, or sensation, on the other side, is a dualism. (1997c, 76–78)

For Hegel, this 'dualism' is the conception of the 'I' as purely 'in-itself', distinct from the manifold of empirical intuitions. I think we can construe what this means in two different ways: firstly, Hegel can be seen as claiming that because Kant separates form and matter, he thereby makes it very difficult for the two to relate to one another. The second way of understanding Hegel's claim in the above passage is by situating it within the immediate post-Kantian critique of transcendental idealism. We can regard Hegel as claiming that there seems to be no way that the 'I think' can actually engage with its objects, because of the heterogeneity of the 'I' and the manifold. To put the point differently, Hegel's worry here is with the metaphysics of the transcendental subject, specifically the idea that the self, being in its own domain, can somehow interact with the objects residing in the empirical world. Let us call this argument against Kant "The Problem of Heterogeneity". If this is an accurate way of understanding the passage from *Faith and Knowledge*, then it seems that Hegel is (a) reading Kant as having a position that is more or less identical to Fichte's, and (b) critiquing Kant (and Fichte) on precisely the same grounds as those who criticised Cartesian dualism for the separation of mind and body to the extent that interaction between the two was impossible.

With regard to (a), I believe there is much to support the idea that Kant and Fichte were read by Hegel as more or less claiming the same thing:[4] like Kant before him, Fichte holds that the transcendental self, by virtue of its discursive cognitive make-up, aims to bring given representational contents under the 'I think'; he also shares with Kant the view that the absolute Ego is purely formal, as can be seen in the conclusion of both the 1794 *Wissenschaftslehre* (cf. I, 310-12) and of the *Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*. Though Fichte regards the cognitive activity of applying concepts to content as a form of 'striving', and while he differs from Kant in how he conceives of concept-employment, he still shares the same commitment as Kant: in aiming to bring nature under its rational authority, the transcendental subject is seen as having to compel phenomenal reality to conform to noumenal spontaneity. However, because of the heterogeneity of the 'I' and nature, we can see why Hegel and Schelling rejected the dualism of both Kant and Fichte, on the grounds that just as Descartes could not explain how an immaterial mind could interact with a physical body, Kant (and Fichte) could not explain how a transcendental subject could interact with representational content.

Turning our attention to one of Hegel's later works, the *Encyclopaedia*, we find the following criticism made of Kant's transcendental ego:

> The word 'I' expresses the abstract relation-to-self; and whatever is placed in this unit or focus is affected by it and transformed into it … and to this end the positive reality of the world must be as it were crushed and pounded, in other words, idealised. (1971, §23: 69)

In contrast to the previous objection to Kant's transcendental self, namely the Problem of Heterogeneity, which was dealing with metaphysical issues, I take this passage to offer a different line of critique: for Hegel, the Kantian understanding of the 'I' is highly problematic here, since in contributing the formal structure of empirical reality, the objectivity we encounter, what Hegel calls the "positive reality of the world", is not genuinely *objective*. By consequence, the type of knowledge we have of the empirical realm is not genuine knowledge of things independent of us, but rather a special kind of self-knowledge: we only have knowledge of what we have put in by our own cognitive forms. The basic steps of Hegel's argument here can be put as follows: all representational content

[4] Support for this reading can come from how Hegel runs his criticism of Kant und Fichte together in the opening of *Observing Reason* – though, of course, Hegel does not mention *either* by name.

and formal principles are reliant on our *a priori* mechanisms. In contributing unity and order, etc., the epistemological cost of subjecting the world to our filtering is that what we took to be 'world-knowledge' turns out to be 'self-knowledge'. The transcendental subject, therefore, in being the provider of formal unity, takes us towards some kind of solipsism. However, in calling this 'solipsism', I do not mean that Hegel is charging Kant with either claiming that there are no minds apart from my own (metaphysical solipsism), or that we can only know the contents of our mental states (epistemological solipsism), or that philosophic investigation into the extra-mental realm is posterior to and independent of investigation into our cognitive faculties (methodological solipsism). Rather, Hegel's charge of solipsism consists in the claim that Kantianism leads to the conclusion that what we ordinarily take to be knowledge of an independent world turns out to be a specific kind of self-knowledge.

In an obvious way, Hegel's worry about solipsism relates to his concern for the separation of thought and being. However, what I think this objection also reveals is a deep worry about Kant's theory of transcendental synthesis. Such a worry is made explicit in the *Phenomenology*, where Hegel discusses Kant in the section "Perception". In this section of Hegel's first major work, he draws a distinction between two ways of characterising the object of perceptive consciousness, as 'Also' and as 'One'. The former refers to considering an object as a bundle of properties. For example, one could conceive an apple as being composed of redness, tartness, roundness, etc. The ascription of 'One', in contrast to 'Also', conceives an object as also possessing an underlying substratum, that holds these properties together and underlies them. As Hegel writes,

> Now, in perceiving in this way, consciousness is at the same time aware that it is *also* reflected into itself, and that, in perceiving, the opposite moment to the Also turns up. But this moment is the *unity* of the Thing with itself, a unity which excludes difference from itself. Accordingly, it is this unity which consciousness has to take upon itself; for the Thing itself is the *subsistence of the many diverse and independent properties*. Thus we say of the Thing: *it is* white, *also* cubical, and *also* tart, and so on. Positing these properties as a oneness is the work of consciousness alone which, therefore, has to prevent them from collapsing into oneness in the Thing. To this end it brings in the 'in so far', in this way preserving the properties as mutually external, and the Thing as the Also. Quite rightly, consciousness makes itself responsible for the oneness, at first in such a way that what was called a property is represented as 'free matter'. The Thing is in this way raised to the level of a genuine Also, since it becomes

> a collection of 'matters' and, instead of being a One, becomes merely an enclosing surface. (1977a, 73-4)

Hegel sees Kant's explanation for the unity of perceptual objects as claiming that a transcendental self encounters a plurality of representational contents and then combines these contents together, to form a unified object. This interpretation of Kant is repeated in the *Encyclopaedia*, where Hegel writes:

> The 'I' is as it were the crucible and fire through which the loose plurality of sense is consumed and reduced to unity. This is the process which Kant calls pure apperception in distinction from common apperception, which takes up the manifold as such in itself, whereas pure apperception is to be viewed as the act which makes the manifold 'mine'. (1971, §23: 69)

However, Hegel rejects Kant's position on the grounds that there is no synthesising on our part that gives objects their unity. As Robert Stern writes, "Hegel suggests reality has an intrinsic unity that is free of any activity of synthesis on the part of a Kantian transcendental subject".[5] In contrast to Kant, Hegel claims that objects in themselves are unities, and that we only think of them as being unified by us when we misconstrue our own cognitive activity. Our cognitive activity, according to Hegel, does not consist in being the sources of the unity in individual objects and does not consist in us being the sources of the unity of the world as a whole. Rather, what this activity consists of is our ability to detect and reflect upon the intrinsic unity of individual objects themselves and the intrinsic unity of the world as a whole, cf. *EPSO*, §381: 11-12.

A further objection to the formalism of the transcendental ego is made in the section "Sense-Certainty", where Hegel writes:

> "I" is only universal in the way that *now*, *here*, or *this* is universal. To be sure, I mean an individual *I*, but I can no more say what I mean by "now," "here," than I can say what I mean by "I." Since I say: *This here, this now,* or an *individual*, I say: *All this's, all here's, now's, individuals*. Likewise in that I say, "*I, this* individual *I*," what I say is "***all** I's*." Each is what I say it is: *I, this* individual I. If this demand is to be laid before science as its touchstone (a demand which would surely do it in), namely, that it deduce, construct, find a priori, or however one wishes to express it, a so-called "*this thing*" or "*this person*," then it is reasonable that the demand should *state* which of the many things "*this thing*" or which of the "I's" "*this I*" means. But it is impossible to state this. (1977a, 91-2)

[5] R. Stern 1990, 39.

In this passage, Hegel can be understood in two different ways, though these two accounts are not in competition with each other at all. One can read Hegel as either providing a critique of reference through indexical devices, or as highlighting a fundamental problem with the metaphysics of the Kantian I, the transcendental ego. With regard to the first interpretation, Hegel's central claim is that like the other indexical devices, which cannot refer (by virtue of their meaning) to anything particular – i.e. establish particular identity-conditions – the expression 'I' fails to determine anything specific or idiosyncratic about individual minds. Such a reading of this passage is consistent with what I believe to be the general thrust of "Sense Certainty", namely the refutation of the idea that consciousness can achieve knowledge independently of any conceptual framework. As Pippin writes, "the goal [of Hegel's argument] is obviously to demonstrate that even the simplest form of demonstrative reference would not be possible without some describing capacity, a capacity that requires descriptive terms or predicates ... not merely deictic expressions and atomic objects".[6] Given the focus it has on reference-conditions and the criterion for knowledge (specifically, knowledge of appearances), this reading of the passage is non-metaphysical. To some extent, I agree with the idea that Hegel's concern here is with problems about reference and the structure and conditions of empirical knowledge. However, I take Hegel to *ultimately* be worried about the coherence of treating the self as an 'I', a transcendental subject: because the 'I' is formal, as a result of this formalism, we cannot then determine the identity of mind *x*, mind *y*, mind *z*, etc. Using formalism as the ground of identity will not enable me to differentiate my mind from someone else's and differentiate other minds from one another, nor will 'I' even enable one to work out what makes them the person that they are. For Kant, then, to avoid the problem here, he must provide a criterion for determining the identity of different minds, by claiming that something like our individual mental content or spatio-temporal location (e.g. the position in a room we take up to perceive a public object) can provide an intelligible criterion for differentiating between minds. But if Kant provides such an account, whereby he specifies the importance of *content* and sensibility, then he will have violated his conception of the self as formal and as outside experience. Therefore, Kant seems to be faced with a dilemma: if he keeps the formalism of the self, he will be committed to an implausible position which cannot provide a meaningful criterion for identifying and differentiating other minds; and if he does provide a meaningful criterion,

[6] Pippin 1989, 117.

he will have violated his conception of the self. We can call Hegel's concerns about the self here "The Problem of Indeterminacy".

Thus far, I have suggested that Hegel has four specific objections to Kant's idea of a transcendental subject: the Problem of Heterogeneity, the charge of solipsism, the rejection of transcendental synthesis, and the Problem of Indeterminacy. I now wish to draw attention to what I believe is Hegel's fundamental critique of the Kantian 'I'. We have seen that transcendental consciousness is apparently defined as an epistemic operator or logical device. The 'I' has no substantial content, but is merely abstract and formal. Understood in the Kantian sense, Hegel holds that the self – or consciousness in the general sense – is consciousness-in-itself, because it is considered separately from other things, given its position prior to and independent of experience, and (in the case of a form [*Gestalt*] of consciousness) it is unreflective. That is why, for Hegel, the 'in-itself' (*an-sich*) is mere potentiality: actuality, understood as the 'for-itself' (*für-sich*), requires determination, negation, and relations with other things.

Taking into account Hegel's distinction between consciousness-in-itself and consciousness-for-itself, we can establish that, for Hegel, the Kantian account of human subjectivity restricts itself to the point of view of consciousness-in-itself, alone, and so does not understand subjectivity as it should be, as 'spirit' (*Geist*), which grasps consciousness as consciousness-for-itself. As Pippin has argued, to see how, if at all, this is possible, we can notice how "[Hegel] proposes to alter the aspect of Kant's *idealism* that he found so otherwise attractive: Kant on the apperceptive nature of experience".[7] As Hegel wrote about Kant's theory:

> Since the 'I' is construed not as the Notion, but as formal identity, the dialectical movement of consciousness is not construed as its own activity, but as in itself; that is, for the 'I', this movement is construed as a change in the object of consciousness. (1981, 11)

Although Hegel's language is obscure and seemingly impenetrable, what he means to say is that the Kantian 'I' does not do justice to the dialectical activity of consciousness. For Hegel, because the Kantian 'I' is unreflective and in-itself, such a 'passive' state of consciousness renders experience impossible, where this is "taken in its literal meaning: a journey or adventure (*fahren*), which arrives at a result (*er-fahren*), so that

[7] Ibid., p. 36.

'*Erfahrung*' is quite literally '*das Ergebnis des fahrens*'".[8] Consciousness can only have experience in this sense, if it is dialectical, and it can only be dialectical if it is not separate from the world. In this way, the possibility of absolute knowledge is contingent on the metaphysical structure of mind and world: only if mind and world are bound up together can experience be systematic. This is why Hegel writes,

> The experience of itself which consciousness goes through, can in accordance with its Notion, comprehend nothing less than the entire system of consciousness. (1977a, 56)

The 'entire system of consciousness' is synonymous with the 'dialectical movement of consciousness', which understands the relation of the 'I' to other concepts necessary for its own application, "concepts that might originally have appeared 'other', or the contrary of the original"[9] as one of interdependence. If consciousness is purely formal, unreflective, and fundamentally distinct from its objects, then such an epistemological journey cannot occur, because its formal nature prevents it from being part of the world as a whole.

However, for all this critique of Kant, it seems that Hegel's argument for viewing self-consciousness as dialectical (i.e. 'for-itself') is firstly obscure, and secondly marks a return to the pre-paralogism position of rational psychology, wherein "a feature of self-consciousness (the essentially subjectival, unitary and identical nature of the 'I' of apperception) gets transmuted into a metaphysics of a Cartesian mental substance or mental state that is ostensibly known through reason alone to be substantial, simple, identical, etc.".[10] However, to be in a pre-paralogism position, Hegel would have to accept the Cartesian view of consciousness as "private, inner, or a spectator of itself and world".[11] However, his notions of dialectic, 'for-itself' and *Geist* are in opposition to the rational psychologist's claims, since Hegel asserts consciousness is communal, public and even socially interactive. As such, if anything, Hegel is directly *opposed* to the pre-paralogism position.

[8] F.C. Beiser 2005, 171.
[9] Pippin 1989,37.
[10] M. Grier, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-metaphysics/#RejSpeMetTraDia.
[11] Pippin 1989, 36.

For Hegel, the 'I' must be conceived as *Geist* or 'for-itself' if it is to engage with its objects. Taking into account the various Hegelian passages that we have discussed, we can construct his argument as follows:

1. To engage with its objects, the 'I' must be related to its objects.
2. To be related to its objects, the 'I' must not be 'in-itself'.
3. Therefore, to be related to its objects, the 'I' must be 'for-itself'.
4. Being 'for-itself', the 'I' reflects on both itself and its objects, and as such is conceived as a Notion.
5. Conceiving of itself as a Notion, and conceiving of itself as 'for-itself' is to conceive of itself as *Geist*.
6. Therefore, to engage with its objects, the 'I' must be *Geist*.

The formalism of the Kantian 'I' means that the self cannot reflect on the entire history of its experience, because such a form of reflection requires the self to not be empty and abstract. Accounting for consciousness as 'for-itself' and as *Geist* involves viewing the 'I' not as immediate formal consciousness, but as a developing and self-examining consciousness. For that matter, ascribing a dialectical *Begriff* to the 'I' sees the 'I' not as simply accompanying its representations to establish metaphysical unity amongst the manifold; rather such a dialectical presence establishes that the 'I', while accompanying its representations, is critically reflecting on all its experience – i.e., engaging in absolute knowledge. As Hegel writes,

> This last shape of Spirit – the Spirit which at the same time gives its complete and true content the form of the self and thereby realises its Notion as remaining in its Notion in this realisation – this is absolute knowing; it is Spirit that knows itself in the shape of Spirit, or a comprehensive knowing. (1977a, 427)

We can now re-phrase Hegel's argument against Kant.

- Absolute knowledge is the reflection on the history of the experience of the 'I' (the subject of experience.)
- To have absolute knowledge requires the 'I' (the subject of experience) to be *Geist.*
- The Kantian 'I' is not *Geist*.
- Therefore, under the Kantian 'I', absolute knowledge is impossible.

It is unclear to me if Hegel's fundamental critique of Kant's theory of apperception is ultimately effective against Kant. Whilst Kant may accept the charge of formalism, in that he has not provided any more detail to

subjectivity other than merely a transcendental mechanism, he would not consider formalism to be problematic on his own terms. After all, Kant would consider the formal nature of the 'I' to be consistent with his formal idealism. As such, it would require more from Hegel to find Kantian apperception flawed than to just regard it as being empty. The way, though, in which Hegel aims to problematise the transcendental unity of apperception, the 'I think', is by conceiving of Kant's transcendental subject as having failed to escape from the Cartesian tradition of treating self-consciousness in purely psychological and private terms: this is what, I believe, is the central claim behind Hegel's charge of dualism in the passage from *Faith and Knowledge*. However, if such an interpretation of Hegel is compelling, then it would seem that his understanding of transcendental psychology is to be rejected, given how Kant's conception of self-consciousness – cf. the Refutation of Idealism[12] – is, following Paul Abela (2002), decidedly opposed to the Cartesian tradition of treating self-consciousness as private or prior to and independent of consciousness of external objects. I admit that some defenders of Hegel may find this critique of Hegel's position uncharitable or too cursory. In response to such potential rebuttals, though, I believe it is reasonable to suggest that when Hegel chastises Kant for not conceiving of the 'I' as *Geist*, he is expressing a concern that the transcendental subject is not understood as a socially reflective/normative consciousness. For Hegel, *Geist* principally consists in sociality, namely awareness of others as *equals* and the necessity of such awareness to *realise* self-consciousness. However, the sociality of *Geist*, which is for Robert Brandom (2000, 34) the reason why Spirit is normative, is contrasted with the apparent limited sociality of the transcendental unity of apperception, which manifests itself as separate

[12] The argument in the Refutation of Idealism is as follows: "I am conscious of my own existence as determined in time. All determination in regard to time presupposes the existence of something permanent in perception. But this permanent something cannot be something in me, for the very reason that my existence in time is itself determined by this permanent something. It follows that the perception of this permanent existence is possible only through a thing without me and not through the mere representation of a thing without me. Consequently, the determination of my existence in time is possible only through the existence of real things external to me. Now, consciousness in time is necessarily connected with the consciousness of the possibility of this determination in time. Hence it follows that consciousness in time is necessarily connected also with the existence of things without me, inasmuch as the existence of these things is the condition of determination in time. That is to say, the consciousness of my own existence is at the same time an immediate consciousness of the existence of other things without me.: (B275–6)