

HEGEL'S IDEALISM

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In an influential recent article, Karl Ameriks posed the question: 'But can an interesting form of Hegelian idealism be found that is true to the text, that is not clearly extravagant, and that is not subject to the [charge] of triviality...?',¹ and concluded by answering the question in the negative: 'In sum, we have yet to find a simultaneously accurate, substantive, and appealing sense in which Hegel should be regarded as an idealist'.² Other commentators on this topic have tended to be more positive; but then the fact that these commentators have differed sharply between themselves may suggest that another concern is over the coherence of Hegel's position, and whether a consistent account is possible of it at all.

In this paper, I will consider the charges of inaccuracy, triviality and extravagance that Ameriks and others have raised. Of these charges, the first two are obviously damaging; but it might reasonably be felt that that last is less clearly so (why shouldn't a philosophical theory be extravagant?), and also that it is open to different readings (for example, does it mean 'not consistent with "common sense"', or 'not consistent with the findings of the sciences' – but what do these include?). The context of Ameriks' concern here is how far Hegel's position can be made consistent with Kantian objections against the pretensions of metaphysics, either by respecting those objections, or at least by satisfactorily addressing them. The interpretative issue here is thus one of charity: Hegel's position will seem reactionary and ill-informed if it appears to be conceived in ignorance of the work of his great predecessor. One prominent recent interpreter has put the worry as follows:

More to the general and more obvious point, however, much of the standard view of how Hegel passes beyond Kant into speculative philosophy makes very puzzling, to the point of unintelligibility, how Hegel could have been the post-Kantian philosopher he understood himself to be; that is, how he could have accepted, as he did, Kant's revelations about the fundamental inadequacies of the metaphysical tradition, could have enthusiastically agreed with Kant that the metaphysics of the "beyond," of substance, and of traditional views of God and infinity were forever discredited, and then could

have promptly created a systematic metaphysics as if he had never heard of Kant's critical epistemology. Just attributing moderate philosophic intelligence to Hegel should at least make one hesitate before construing him as a post-Kantian philosopher with a precritical metaphysics.³

In considering the issue of extravagance, then, I shall conceive it primarily in this manner, as concerning the relation between Hegel's position and Kant's 'critical turn' in metaphysics. I will argue that a view of Hegel's idealism emerges from Ameriks' criticisms which is defensible against his three charges; however, to make sense of it we have to see that Hegel's conception of idealism has aspects that are unusual in terms of the contemporary debate, while nonetheless his position still has a direct bearing on it.

I

The account of Hegel's idealism which Ameriks charges with textual inaccuracy is the one put forward by Robert Pippin in his book on this topic,⁴ which has been widely discussed.⁵

Pippin argues that Hegel's idealism should be seen in the light of Kant's turn from traditional metaphysics to critical metaphysics, a turn which Hegel followed and which led both him and Kant towards idealism. Simply put, Kant believed that metaphysics could not be carried out in the traditional rationalist manner, of claiming insight into the fundamental features of reality on the basis of a priori speculation; rather, we must direct our inquiry to the concepts we use to think about the world and which are necessary for us to have experience of it as self-conscious subjects, so that (as Pippin puts it) '[t]hereafter, instead of an *a priori* science of substance, a science of "how the world must be"...a putative philosophical science was directed to the topic of how any subject must "for itself" take or construe or *judge the world to be*'.⁶ The hope was that this critical turn would make metaphysics more tractable and less vainglorious: we would now be proceeding by investigating the necessary conditions of our experience, rather than things in general.⁷ However, an obvious difficulty with this enterprise is the scope it leaves open for scepticism: why should we think that the concepts which are necessary to enable us to have experience actually correspond to

the world? Surely, it might be objected, '[a]n inquiry into the structure of human thought is...something quite different from an inquiry into the structure of the world thought is about',⁸ so how can the Kantian approach claim to be doing metaphysics in any sense at all? Now, one Kantian response to this worry is to reject the realist assumption on which it is based, namely that such a gap between mind and world could arise, and thus that there is any coherent notion of 'world' on the basis of which the problem could be posed; rather, it is argued, notions like 'object', 'representation', 'truth', 'knowledge' and so on only apply *within* the conceptual scheme we are considering. This outlook is often characterised as 'anti-realism' or 'internal realism', in so far as it rejects the realist 'external' standpoint that appears to make scepticism about conceptual schemes of genuine concern, but without the more strongly idealist commitment to the claim that things in the world are 'mental' or 'mind dependent' in any phenomenalist sense.⁹

Now, according to Pippin, Hegel followed Kant in taking this critical turn, and thus in attempting to determine the categories necessary for a conceptual scheme, based on the conditions for unified self-conscious (what Kant called 'apperception'). However, where Kant had undermined his own position by allowing room for the realist notion of 'things-in-themselves' as possibly lying outside our conceptual framework, Pippin takes Hegel's project to be that of developing a more thorough-going anti-realism, which would close off any such possibility. Thus, for Pippin, Hegel follows Kant in so far as 'the issue of the "determinations of any possible object"' (the classical Aristotelian category issue) has been critically transformed into the issue of "the determinations of any object of a possibly self-conscious judgment"; but he goes beyond Kant in so far as 'he has, contra Kant, his own reasons for arguing that any scepticism about such results (about their holding only for "our" world, for self-conscious judges "like us") is, although logically coherent, epistemically idle'.¹⁰ Pippin thus gives Hegel's idealism a strikingly Kantian interpretation and rationale: accepting the lesson of Kant's critical turn that 'contrary to the rationalist tradition, human reason can attain nonempirical knowledge only *about itself*, about what has come to be called recently our "conceptual scheme"',¹¹ Hegel nonetheless claims to also be investigating the nature of reality itself in so far as no content can be given to the realist or sceptical thought that reality might in fact lie 'outside' the scheme altogether, by showing that there can be no such 'external' standpoint: '[W]hat Hegel is after is a way of demonstrating the "ultimate" or absolute objectivity of the Notion

not by some demonstration that being as it is in itself can be known to be as we conceive it to be, but that a Notionally conditional actuality is all that “being” could intelligibly be, even for the most committed realist skeptic. Or, if you like, Hegel’s skeptic is co-opted into the idealist program, not simply “refuted”.¹²

There are undoubtedly many aspects of Pippin’s account of Hegel’s idealism that make it profound and attractive. By placing such emphasis on its Kantian background, and how much Hegel shared in the Kantian critique of traditional metaphysics, Pippin offers a reading that shows Hegel to be in tune with the progressive intellectual forces of his time, rather than the reactionary philosophical figure of some standard interpretations. Pippin also argues that Hegel’s position follows ‘immanently’ from Kant’s own, suggesting that in the second edition version of the transcendental deduction in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant himself took back his earlier strict distinction between intuition and understanding, so that he now argues that no representation could be given to us in sensuous intuition unless it were subject to the categories;¹³ this, according to Pippin, opens up the way for Hegel’s own radicalisation of Kant’s transcendental approach, so that ‘it is with the denial that a firm distinction can ever be usefully drawn between intuitional and conceptual elements in knowledge that distinctly Hegelian idealism begins, and Hegel begins to take his peculiar flight, with language about the complete autonomy, even freedom of “thought’s self-determination” and “self-actualization”’.¹⁴ By linking Hegel to Kant in this way, Pippin shows how contemporary developments from Kant have every reason to take Hegel seriously. Pippin’s reading also casts fresh light on many of the darker aspects of Hegel’s texts, particularly his introductory remarks to Book III of the *Science of Logic*, where Hegel identifies his own account of the Concept or Notion (*Begriff*) with Kant’s doctrine of apperception, and in terms that seem to fit Pippin’s transcendental interpretation.¹⁵ Moreover, Pippin is able to offer a challenging account of how Hegel’s system works in general, particularly how the *Phenomenology* relates to the *Logic*.

Nonetheless, Pippin’s reading remains controversial with Hegel scholars, where Ameriks and others have questioned its textual accuracy, and how far it does justice to Hegel’s actual position and procedures. It is not possible to go into all the details here, but one issue is fundamental, namely whether Pippin is right to claim that Hegel followed Kant in attempting to deduce the categories from the conditions of self-consciousness, to “ground” them in the “I”.¹⁶ For Pippin, as we have seen, such

‘grounding’ is essential to the critical turn in metaphysics, as no other basis for metaphysics as the nonempirical inquiry into ‘how the world must be’ can be taken seriously after Kant. Nonetheless, as Pippin himself recognizes, in presenting his account of the categories in the *Logic*, Hegel himself seems to go further than this, in presenting his argument in more straightforwardly ontological terms, and so ‘slips frequently from a “logical” to a material mode, going far beyond a claim about thought or thinkability, and making a *direct* claim about the necessary nature of things, direct in the sense that no reference is made to a “deduced” relation between thought and thing’.¹⁷ Now, Pippin argues that these ‘slips’ are merely apparent;¹⁸ but critics of Pippin’s approach are unconvinced, and argue instead that Hegel’s position is *non-transcendental*, in that he rejects any Kantian restriction of metaphysics to a method based around the conditions of self-consciousness, rather than of ‘being as such’.¹⁹

Of course, Pippin could reply that from a properly Kantian perspective, the whole idea is that there is no such distinction, which is why Hegel could be happy conducting his metaphysics in a transcendental manner, by arguing from the necessary conditions of self-consciousness. But, it would seem that Pippin’s critics could respond by saying that if there really is no sense to a radical mind-world dichotomy, why think of an investigation into the categories as an investigation into the conditions of *self-consciousness* at all, and so why treat the ‘I’ (rather than ‘being’) as the ‘ground’ of the inquiry? According to Pippin, as we have seen, Kant himself made his critical turn to the ‘I’ because he believed he had reason to think that here we could establish genuinely necessary claims: but why is this so obviously so? Why is there any reason to think that the necessary conditions for apperception are any easier to establish than the necessary conditions for reality as such? Or even, if one has naturalistic or sceptical doubts about the intelligibility of necessary conditions for the latter, that these doubts can be removed concerning necessary conditions for the former? In fact, doesn’t any such expectation reveal a Cartesian privileging of the ‘inner’ over the ‘outer’, or ‘self-knowledge’ over ‘worldly knowledge’, of the kind that Hegel himself seems to have rejected as suspect.²⁰ Thus, critics of Pippin’s transcendental reading of Hegel can agree that Hegel is a post-Kantian in accepting important elements of Kant’s critique of traditional metaphysics, particularly as a *metaphysica specialis* with its focus on transcendent entities like God and the soul, while still arguing that Hegel is closer to Aristotle than Kant in conducting his inquiry

ontologically, as a *metaphysica generalis*, for which '[t]he categories analysed in the *Logic* are all forms or ways of being...; they are not merely concepts in terms of which we have to understand what is'.²¹

Nonetheless, even if it is accepted that Pippin is wrong to claim that Hegel followed Kant in attempting to 'ground' the categories in the 'I' as conditions for self-consciousness, it is still possible that he is right to treat Hegel's idealism as a form of anti-realism, for the two positions are logically distinct. However, much of the *motivation* for the latter comes from the former, as it is anti-realism that gives the transcendental inquiry metaphysical teeth. And yet, without anti-realism as a block to realist scepticism, how can Hegel claim that his *Logic* is a metaphysics?²² On what basis can he show that he is establishing the fundamental nature of being, in a way that will silence sceptical doubts? Here it might be tempting to re-introduce a form of anti-realism, and thus to return to something like Pippin's view of Hegel's idealism.

It is of course the case that Hegel had every confidence in his inquiries, that the *Logic* shows that it is possible to arrive at a metaphysical picture of the world that has a legitimate claim to truth: but is that confidence based on a commitment to anti-realism, or the more traditional grounds that this picture has been thoroughly tested against all alternatives and shown to be the most comprehensive, cohesive and coherent? Of course, the anti-realist strategy is more radical than this because it makes (or tries to make) sceptical doubt *senseless* or *unassertible*, by closing any *possible* gap between how we think about the world and how it is:²³ but what is wrong with the less radical but also less demanding strategy, of asking the sceptic to come up with some *grounds* for thinking that the gap really exists, by showing that we have reason to think our world-view is flawed in some way, where the aim would be to show the sceptic that no such flaw can be found, so that in this more modest sense the sceptic has no place to stand? Wouldn't this render scepticism 'epistemically idle', but without any commitment to anti-realism, as the view that any such 'external' questioning is unintelligible simply *because* it is 'external'? On this view, Hegel has no conceptual argument to rule out scepticism *in advance*, but on the other hand the sceptic must do more than raise just the abstract *possibility* of error: grounds for doubt must be given by showing how the picture being put forward of reality is mistaken, where the inquiry is successfully concluded if and when any such grounds have been dealt with and excluded. Seen from this perspective, both anti-realism and sceptical realism make the same mistake, as both attempt to establish the necessity or

impossibility of knowledge too *early*, by claiming to show prior to starting that we can or cannot succeed in coming to know how things are: in the face of a priori realist scepticism, the anti-realist provides a priori reassurance. It might be argued, however, that Hegel simply sets out on the path of inquiry aiming to establish how things are (for why should we believe in advance that we cannot?), but without seeking any sort of guarantee (for why is this needed, unless we have some reason for such a doubt?).

I would therefore question Pippin's claim that Hegel could not possibly be a realist, but must be committed to some form of anti-realism, because he is a 'modern philosopher' who feels compelled to make the 'critical turn' as a response to scepticism: 'This all leads Hegel into a wholly new way of resolving the great problem of post-Cartesian philosophy – how can we reassure ourselves that what initially can only be *our* way of taking up, discriminating, categorizing the world, and our criteria for evaluating deeds, can also ultimately be critically and reflectively transformed, secured from realist scepticism, and somehow pass from "ours" to "Absolute" status'.²⁴ What Pippin ignores, I believe, is Hegel's insight that it is fatal (and quite uncalled for) to *begin* with anything like the Kantian 'instrument' model of cognition, and thus with the presupposition that the categories are 'only *our* way of taking things up, discriminating, categorizing the world': for this approach 'presupposes that the Absolute stands on one side and cognition on the other',²⁵ while vainly struggling to close the gap. To make this anything *more* than a presupposition, we must be shown where it is that there is something wrong with our way of thinking, which raises the real (and not just abstract) doubt that it is merely 'ours', and so not related to the world: but to do that, we need to be shown a genuine case where that thinking breaks down, otherwise scepticism is just a form of paranoia, 'whereby what calls itself fear of error reveals itself rather as fear of the truth'.²⁶ The *Phenomenology* thus justifies the project of the *Logic* by showing that a series of *particular* arguments a sceptic might give to suggest that the world is unknowable are based on questionable epistemological and metaphysical assumptions – from the 'supersensible beyond' of the Understanding to the transcendent God of certain forms of religious consciousness – so that in removing these sceptical grounds for doubt, 'pure science [i.e. the *Logic*] presupposes liberation from the opposition of consciousness',²⁷ and thus liberation from the worry that if for example we find 'pure being' incoherent as an idea (because it seems indistinguishable from nothing) this just tells us something about *us*, and not the nature of the world (namely, that if anything *is*, it must be

determinate): but there is nothing in this ‘liberation’ that commits Hegel to anti-realism.

But, it might be said, even if Hegel sees no need to turn to anti-realism at the *outset* of his inquiry, surely the nature of that inquiry shows that we need to be anti-realists *at the end*, because how do we otherwise explain the success of our metaphysical investigations into the fundamental nature of reality? After all, hadn’t Kant been brought to see that there was something deeply mysterious about metaphysical knowledge, a mystery he encapsulated in the question ‘how is synthetic a priori knowledge possible’? Kant’s concern was that when we reach a metaphysical conclusion (such as ‘every event must have a cause’), we cannot do so either by knowing the meaning of the concepts in question (because these metaphysical propositions are not analytic), or ‘reading it off’ the world in any direct sense (because our only direct confrontation with the world is in sensible experience: and this experience tells us just that things are thus and so, not that they could not be otherwise).²⁸ The metaphysical rationalist might argue that we reach our metaphysical conclusions by finding that we cannot contemplate how things could be any other way (e.g. an event occurring without a cause). But, if our metaphysical conclusions are reached on the basis of what *we* find conceivable, what *we* can envisage, what account can we give of how these conclusions come to conform to *the world*? Kant argued that it is unsatisfactory to offer as an explanation some sort of pre-established harmony between the limits of what we find conceivable and the limits of how things can be, as if God or some ‘third thing’ ensured that the former correspond to the latter, because this leaves open the question of why God should have arranged things this way, and why we should expect him to continue to do so.²⁹ Rather, Kant argued, we must make the ‘Copernican turn’, and accept that it is because things must conform to our conceptual structures that the limits of the latter can tell us about the limits of the former (although this knowledge only extends as far as things as they appear within those structures, not to things as they are in themselves). So, if Hegel is to claim that his *Logic* is a metaphysics, doesn’t he have to explain this in anti-realist terms?

However, it is not clear that the metaphysician need feel obliged to accept this Kantian way out, because he may not feel compelled to accept the terms in which the problem is posed in the first place. For, this rests on the assumption that when we accept a metaphysical proposition on the basis of our inability to conceive of its negation, there is some *special* difficulty, which is that we are moving from the limits

of our thought to the limits of the world. But this assumes, Hegel would argue, that in metaphysical thinking we are limning the limits of what we can conceive, rather than what is conceivable *as such*. But can we accept this restriction, unless we can make more sense of there being *other* ways of conceiving things than Kant can properly allow? For, there is a dilemma here for the Kantian: Either he argues that it is because of the limits on what we can conceive that we find some ways of being to be unthinkable, where he convinces us that this is really down to some fact about us – but then why would we stick to the modal claim and not rather abandon it? Or he convinces us to stay with the modal claim, by arguing that it is impossible *in general* (not just *for us*) to conceive of things any other way: but then if all minds must think in this way, and there is no way of conceiving the world differently, isn't *this* now an extraordinary fact, the best explanation for which lies in the impossibility of things being any other way, thereby providing an argument for realism rather than anti-realism? As a result, we can now see why Hegel might say that '*logic*', as 'the science of *things* grasped in *thought*', coincides with '*metaphysics*', which has been 'taken to express the *essentialities* of the *things*'.³⁰

We have found, therefore, that there are interpretative and philosophical reasons to be doubtful about Pippin's account of Hegel's idealism: Hegel's texts suggest he did not feel compelled by Kant's arguments to take an anti-realist turn in metaphysics, and the arguments that the Kantian might give to make this seem necessary can be reasonably resisted. We can now proceed by looking at other ways of understanding Hegel's idealism.

II

As we have seen, Pippin's treatment of Hegel's idealism was in part a reaction against other accounts that he takes to raise Ameriks' concern of 'extravagance', which treat Hegel as an idealist in the sense of a 'spirit monist', 'who believed that finite objects did not "really" exist (only the Absolute Idea exists), [and] that this One was not a "substance" but a "subject," or mental'.³¹ To Pippin and others, this kind of idealism appears to be a return to the 'metaphysics of the "beyond"', which treats the absolute mind as the transcendent cause or ground of the world, in a thoroughly pre-critical

manner; they argue we should therefore hesitate before attributing this position to Hegel.

Now, one way to respond to this charge of pre-critical ‘extravagance’ might be to try to license Hegel’s position as a natural extension of Kant’s, and thus to claim that this interpretation (like Pippin’s) also builds on Hegel’s Kantian heritage, but in a way that is closer to full-blooded mentalistic or Berkeleyan idealism than anti-realism. Thus, according to these interpretations of Hegel’s idealism, Kant held that the empirical world – everything in space and time – is mind-dependent, so that the world as we know it is nothing but an appearance. However, Kant retained a residual element of realism in his conception of things-in-themselves or noumena, which exist independent of our minds and outside the boundaries of our knowledge. It is argued that Hegel then came to reject this realism as incoherent, and so radicalised Kant’s mentalistic idealism, thereby arriving at the doctrine of an *absolute* mind, in which all reality is contained as the experience of a supra-individual subject. On this account, then, Hegel is an idealist in the sense that he treats the world as thoroughly mind-dependent, a transformation of Kant’s merely ‘subjective’ idealism into a form of *absolute* idealism.³²

However, one difficulty with this approach, is that in order to claim that this kind of Hegelian idealism is an extension of Kant’s, it is necessary to begin with a mentalistic account of Kant’s idealism, which is itself problematic, and ignores the full complexity of Kant’s talk of ‘appearances’ and ‘things-in-themselves’, and his distinction between empirical realism and transcendental idealism. Thus, if it is claimed that Hegel derived his idealism from a Berkeleyan reading of Kant, it will seem to many that this position is founded on a simplistic misunderstanding of Kantianism, and one that we no longer have any reason to take seriously.³³

As well as the issue of ‘extravagance’, there are, moreover, textual reasons to resist this account as a reading of Hegel. For, this account seems to misunderstand Hegel’s notion of ‘absolute mind’, which is mind that is able to ‘free *itself* from the connection with something which is for it an Other’, where ‘[t]o attain this, mind must liberate the intrinsically rational object from the form of contingency, singleness, and externality which at first clings to it’.³⁴ Thus, mind for Hegel becomes absolute when it finds itself ‘at home in the world’, and thus is able to make the world intelligible to itself; but this conception in no way entails that as absolute, mind somehow ‘contains’ or constitutes the world, and so involves treating the latter as dependent on the former

in any mentalistic sense. Hegel would seem to reject just this position, when at one point in his lectures he characterises as ‘spiritualism’ the view which holds that ‘spirit is what is independent, true, that nature is only an appearance of spirit, not in and for itself, not truly real’, and comments of this view that it would be ‘utter foolishness to deny its [nature’s] reality’.³⁵ And of course, in systematic terms, the fact that Nature comes before Spirit creates difficulties for the mentalistic reading.

But surely, it might be argued, how can Hegel be so confident that the Kantian (or the sceptical realist) is wrong to talk of things-in-themselves as outside our cognitive capacities, unless he has brought the world ‘within’ the mind and so collapsed the distinction? To exclude talk of ‘things-in-themselves’, doesn’t Hegel have to believe he has some sort of guarantee that the mind will conform to the world, and isn’t the only way to provide that guarantee some sort of mentalistic idealism?³⁶

It is not clear, however, that this kind of guarantee is something that Hegel needed or sought, and thus that he felt this kind of motivation towards mentalistic idealism. For, Hegel’s objection to Kant’s conception of ‘things-in-themselves’ is that it sets up an absolute limit to our cognitive capacities, telling us that the gap between mind and world cannot be bridged; but how can such a positive claim be made, unless something is already known about the world on the other side of the gap? The difficulty is that this looks like a form of scepticism that is nonetheless based on a metaphysical claim about what is supposed to be unknowable, and which can be answered by pointing out this incoherence. Or, if Kant refuses to make any such metaphysical claim, how can his block on our inquiries be motivated, as nothing can now be said about what it is we do not know?³⁷ However, in removing the sceptical worry here, Hegel is not thereby committing himself to the opposite view, that knowledge of the world is guaranteed, and that before we set out in our inquiries we can be sure they will succeed; he is just objecting to any attempt to set an absolute barrier to that inquiry at the outset.³⁸ Our response here thus parallels the response we offered to the similar worry in the previous section: just as we found there no reason to think Hegel’s epistemic optimism requires a commitment to anti-realism, so here we have found it also doesn’t require any commitment to mentalistic idealism.

We have thus found reason to accept Ameriks’ critical claims regarding this kind of idealism as a reading of Hegel: not only is it ‘extravagant’ and so objectionable on that score, but it is also textually unwarranted, as Ameriks also recognizes.³⁹

III

In the face of these exegetical difficulties, it is tempting to return to Hegel's own writings, and look there at what Hegel says about idealism as a philosophical doctrine, and see how this relates to his own position. This is a strategy Ameriks also tries, but which he thinks either leads us back into 'extravagance', or into the third of his interpretative vices, namely 'triviality'.

If one looks at the way in which Hegel himself characterises idealism, the results are certainly striking. Here is one passage where the characterisation seems clear:⁴⁰

The proposition that the finite is ideal [*ideell*] constitutes idealism. The idealism of philosophy consists in nothing else than in recognizing that the finite has no veritable being [*wahrhaft Seiendes*]. Every philosophy is essentially an idealism, or at least has idealism for its principle, and the question then is how far this principle is actually carried out. This is as true of philosophy as of religion; for religion equally does not recognize finitude as a veritable being [*ein wahrhaftes Sein*], as something ultimate and absolute or as something underived, uncreated, eternal. Consequently the opposition of idealistic and realistic philosophy has no significance. A philosophy which ascribed veritable, ultimate, absolute being to finite existences as such, would not deserve the name of philosophy; the principles of ancient or modern philosophies, water, or matter, or atoms are *thoughts*, universals, ideal entities, not things as they immediately present themselves to us, that is, in their sensuous individuality – not even the water of Thales. For although this is also empirical water, it is at the same time also the *in-itself* or *essence* of all other things, too, and these other things are not self-subsistent or grounded in themselves, but are *posited* by, are *derived* from, an *other*, from water, that is they are ideal entities.⁴¹

Can anything be gained in our understanding of Hegel's idealism by considering passages such as these?

Ameriks cautions against optimism here, because he thinks that by taking this passage at face value, we will end up making Hegel's idealism merely trivial, as Hegel seems to be saying only that 'immediate appearances point to something else, some non-immediate things or relations': 'The alternative to idealism [in this sense] is such a straw man that here the real issue becomes simply what specific variety of idealism one should develop'.⁴² The charge of triviality arises if by idealism, Hegel merely means that the world as it presents itself immediately to the senses is not how the world actually is, so that the former cannot be ascribed any ultimate truth – the 'booming, buzzing confusion' of mere sensible experience is not a veridical representation of reality (assuming, indeed, that this notion of experience is even coherent).

Now, it would certainly seem right that if this is all that Hegel is saying here, Ameriks can justifiably argue that he is not saying very much. But, in claiming that 'finite existences' lack 'veritable, ultimate, absolute being', Hegel would appear to be talking not about the effervescent phenomena presented to us in sensation, but ordinary concrete objects, such as this table, this tree, and so on;⁴³ Ameriks is therefore wrong to identify 'immediate appearances' with the former and not the latter. There is thus enough in Hegel's position here to overcome the charge of triviality, if we take his 'finite existences' to be concrete individual objects and not just sensory appearances.

However, Ameriks argues that if we try to escape triviality in this way, we expose Hegel to the opposite danger, which is extravagance. It is the threat of this danger that I now wish to explore, as it arises from different readings of this passage.

One reading of the passage, which would return us to the kind of extravagant position discussed in the previous section, would be to take Hegel here to be characterising idealism in mentalistic terms, as claiming that 'the finite has no veritable being' because finite existences qua individual objects are dependent on an absolute mind. But, in fact this charge of extravagance is obviously misplaced, as in reality this passage counts *against* a mentalistic conception of Hegel's idealism. For, we can see here that Hegel did not mean anything mentalistic by idealism, because if he did, it would surely have been an absurd exaggeration to say that '[e]very philosophy is essentially an idealism', as mentalistic idealism is a position held by few philosophers, and not by those classical philosophers directly and indirectly referred to here, such as Thales, Leucippus, Democritus and Empedocles, not to

mention Plato and Aristotle. Hegel clearly recognized this,⁴⁴ and so is hardly likely to have claimed that '[e]very philosophy is essentially an idealism' if this is what he meant by the position.

Another reading of the passage sees Hegel as offering a picture of idealism here not as mentalistic, but as *holistic*.⁴⁵ On this account, Hegel claims that finite entities do not have 'veritable, ultimate, absolute being' because they are dependent on other entities for their existence in the way that parts are dependent on other parts within a whole; and idealism consists in recognizing this relatedness between things, in a way that ordinary consciousness fails to do.⁴⁶ The idealist thus sees the world differently from the realist, not as a plurality of separate entities that are 'self-subsistent or grounded in themselves', but as parts of an interconnected totality in which these entities are dependent on their place within the whole. It turns out, then, that idealism for Hegel is primarily an ontological position, which holds that the things of ordinary experience are ideal in the sense that they have no being in their own right, and so lack the self-sufficiency and self-subsistence required to be fully real.

Now, this is an account of Hegel's idealism that Ameriks also considers, but dismisses on the grounds of extravagance. For, if Hegel is taken to be suggesting that finite existences lack 'veritable, ultimate, absolute being', it may seem he is basing this on the claim to have found a candidate for absolute status elsewhere – in the 'world-whole', which as 'a self-standing, self-realizing structure' constitutes a limit to explanation in the way no finite entity can, because as a totality 'there is nothing else it could depend on'.⁴⁷ But if it involves theorizing about the world-whole in this way, it may appear that Hegel's idealism is guilty of just the kind of pre-Kantian metaphysical irresponsibility that Pippin and others have sought to escape,⁴⁸ so that as contemporary philosophers we should treat this project with caution.⁴⁹

It is not clear, however, that this account of Hegel's idealism should be dismissed on these grounds, because not all forms of holism of this kind need be seen as extravagant, at least from a Kantian perspective. For, while such a theory will require the abandonment of a purely naturalistic explanatory framework, which is suspicious of explanations which have global scope and have a reflexive or 'free-standing' structure, this abandonment is arguably already a feature of Kant's transcendental turn, where the aim is (as David Bell has put it), to provide a 'genuinely self-subsistent, self-warranting framework of explanation'.⁵⁰ Where the

theory would become objectionable in Kantian terms, would be if it led to a *transcendent* claim, and so to a form of explanation based on appeal to some metaphysical ground *outside* or *beyond* the empirical world – for example, a self-positing infinite Absolute that gives rise to finite existents as their creator. But it seems clear that a proponent of Hegel as an holistic absolute-theorist could plausibly claim that Hegel’s aim was to *avoid* any transcendence of this kind,⁵¹ while nonetheless holding that the world-whole constitutes a satisfactory limit to explanation; so proponents of this reading will characteristically argue that Hegel’s position was designed to show that the world is a kind of totality that makes notions of ‘cause’ and ‘ground’ inapplicable at this level, rather than to bring the regress of explanation to an end by positing a transcendent starting-point.⁵² Thus, the holistic strategy is arguably to claim that the pressure towards transcendence only arises because we are operating with an incomplete picture of the world which drives us into a regress of explanations which this transcendent first cause is then designed to block; but once we see the world as a totality in itself, no such transcendent answer to the question of explanation will be needed. The aim of this approach, then, is ‘to articulate an alternative vision of reality – and not a vision of some alternative reality’,⁵³ so that far from being a form of pre-Kantian metaphysics that tries to claim access to some extramundane absolute, Hegel’s idealism is a form of absolute-theory that can be treated as in line with the transcendental turn, of giving us a conception of the world that will show how the need for explanation can be satisfied without going *beyond* it.

However, even if it is right to say that holism can be thought of as an option that follows not just from metaphysical extravagance on Hegel’s part, but from a concern with the limits of naturalistic explanation that was also shared by Kant, the suspicion may nonetheless be raised that Hegel goes further here than Kant would allow, in that Kant did not want his ‘alternative vision of reality’ to undercut our ordinary, ‘empirical’, conception of the world,⁵⁴ while Hegel’s form of holism by contrast threatens to undermine it completely. For, it is often held that Hegel’s holism is Spinozistic, and based around the principle that ‘*omnis determinatio est negatio*’ (‘all determination is negation’),⁵⁵ understood as the idea that everything depends on its difference from other things to be itself. If this is so, it may appear that the status of individuals within this holism is lost: for a consequence seems to be that nothing has any *intrinsic* properties as each is what it is through its relation to others, so there are

only relational properties, and in such a purely relational system, how can the relata be said to be entities in their own right, even to the extent of being parts – so that in the end, the whole becomes the One.⁵⁶ By posing a threat to the status of individuals in this way, Hegel's holism may appear to be revisionary in a way that Kant claimed his idealism was not (as well as having troubling ethical consequences, of the sort also sometimes attributed to him, concerning the low moral value of individuality within his system).

Now, there are possible replies that might be given to this kind of concern from the perspective of a holistic reading of Hegel, such as questioning whether this can indeed be derived from the idea of determination through negation, or the assumption that even if this means there are relations 'all the way down', this leaves no room for individuals. However, another response is to question the holistic reading as an accurate account of Hegel's position. For, in fact this reading suffers from a textual difficulty, which can be explained as follows. The passage we are discussing comes as part of a 'Remark' appended to the second chapter of Book I of the *Science of Logic*, where this chapter is divided into an account of 'Determinate Being (*Dasein*) as such', 'Finitude' and 'Infinity', so that the passage forms part of a sequel to Hegel's discussion of the relation between the finite and the infinite. This is important, because it strongly suggests that when Hegel writes that finite things lack 'veritable being' and so are ideal because not 'self-sufficient or grounded in themselves', he does not mean that they are related to other finite things (as on the holistic reading), but rather that they are related to the *infinite*, which is the conclusion he has been trying to establish in the part of the chapter to which this Remark is appended. Immediately before the Remark, Hegel makes this clear by saying: 'ideal being [*das Ideelle*] is the finite as it is in the true infinite – as a determination, a content, which is distinct but is not an *independent, self-subsistent* being, but only a *moment*'.⁵⁷

That this context is important to understanding Hegel's conception of idealism is equally clear in the equivalent discussion in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, where again Hegel's striking claim that 'every genuine philosophy is *idealism*' is made in the course of his discussion of the connection between the finite and the infinite. Here he argues that while 'finitude...is under the determination of reality at first' because finite things are seen to have the reality of 'being-there' or *Dasein*, it now becomes clear that they are not merely self-related but contain their 'other', where this other is

the infinite, which is likewise essentially related to the finite in a relation Hegel calls ‘being-for-itself’ (*Fürsichsein*), whereby the one is ‘sublated’ (*aufgehoben*) in the other:

In being-for-itself the determination of *ideality* has entered. *Being-there*, taken at first only according to its being or its affirmation, has *reality* (§91); and hence finitude, too, is under the determination of reality at first. But the truth of the finite is rather its *ideality*... This ideality of the finite is the most important proposition of philosophy, and for that reason every genuine philosophy is *Idealism*. Everything depends on not mistaking for the Infinite that which is at once reduced in its determination to what is particular and finite.⁵⁸

The details of Hegel’s position and terminology here are difficult, but the basic idea is fairly straightforward: the infinite cannot be ‘beyond’ the finite as something external to it, as this would be to limit the infinite and thus make it finite; the infinite must therefore be incorporated within the finite in some way, so that the finite is not to be viewed as simply ‘being-there’, but as related to its ‘other’ while preserving its difference from its other and remaining finite, so that the distinction between the one side and the other is ‘sublated’, in Hegel’s sense of being both ‘cancelled’ and ‘preserved’.⁵⁹ It would appear from this, then, that what Hegel means by claiming that the finite is ideal, is not that finite things depend on one another as parts of a whole (as on the holistic reading), but that these things stand in a complex dialectical relation to the infinite.

Now, at first sight, none of this may appear to help us much with the worry that Hegel’s idealism poses a threat to the status of individuals and so does not ‘leave the world alone’ in a properly Kantian manner; for it may now seem that we are obliged to move from holism to *monism* as an account of Hegel’s system, and while the former can at least in principle allow for the status of individuals (even if in Hegel’s hands it seems it might not), monism cannot do so even in principle. For, while holism stresses the dependence of finite things on one another, in its *modest* form it can still respect the individuality of finite things in so far as parts can be individuals, to the extent of having identity conditions that make it intelligible to treat a part as the *same*, and so as persisting over time; but monism denies the individuality

of finite things in these respects, treating them as ‘accidents’ or ‘modifications’ or ‘appearances’ of a unified substance or ground or underlying reality that takes on these forms, in the way that a single piece of paper may have many wrinkles, or a face may have many expressions, where the paper or the face constitute individuals of which the wrinkles and the expressions are modifications, lacking in any of the continuity or identity conditions that make them individuals (for example, it doesn’t make sense to ask ‘is the smile you have got today the same as the one you had yesterday?’, whereas it does make sense to ask of a limb that has been sown back onto a body ‘is that the arm you had before, or someone else’s?’).⁶⁰ While of course monism has had its philosophical defenders, it is clearly more revisionary of our common-sense ontology than a modest holism, and so would make Hegel’s idealism problematic in the same way as it was on the earlier holistic reading, if this is what it has turned out to involve.

The question is, then, if we take Hegel’s idealism to amount to the claim that the finite and infinite are dialectically related, does this commit us to giving a monistic reading of this position? In fact, I do not believe this is so, for this would be to overlook the complexity of Hegel’s thinking here. As Hegel’s discussion later in the *Logic* shows, he holds that categories like substance and accident or ground and existence can be misleading in the kind of metaphysical picture they give rise to: but this is what happens on the monistic reading, where the infinite is treated as if it itself must be a self-standing individual or substance, and because it cannot be one individual amongst others, this means that the individuality of finite existents is thereby lost. Hegel’s preferred model, by contrast, is to think of finite existents as embodiments of the infinite, but not in a way that robs them of their individuality⁶¹ – just as Thales took the principle of everything to be water, which is permanent and eternal, but which has its existence in *individual* things, while Democritus thought the same of atoms and Empedocles of the four material elements. From Hegel’s perspective, therefore, the picture of the infinite/finite relation that might lead to a monistic worry is really based on a simplistic model of that relation, and one that he believed we ought not to take up.⁶²

We can now see why for Hegel, a position like Thales’ is idealistic in his sense, with his doctrine that ‘the principle of all is water’. On the one hand (at least following Aristotle’s account), Thales treated the world as containing ordinary finite objects, while on the other hand, he recognized in these objects an eternal and

imperishable material substance – water – which constitutes these objects through a process of change, as it takes on new forms. Objects are thus transient and perishable, but in this transience water remains as permanent and unchanging, so that the finite contains the infinite within it. At the same time, water is required to take on these changing manifestations as part of its nature: it has no being simply as water, so that in this sense the infinite also requires the finite. Similarly, atoms or matter are the infinite contained within the finite, as a law within its instances, or a universal within its instantiations. All such positions are idealistic in Hegel's sense, in a way that shows Hegel's idealism is neither straightforwardly a form of monism or holism, though it is related to both. His idealism is not monistic in the sense we have discussed, because the finite entities retain their status as individuals, and are not mere attributes of a single substance. And his idealism is not holistic, because the fact that a finite thing is constituted by something 'ultimate and absolute' like water or atoms does not make it a part of a whole with other such things, any more than two houses that are both made from bricks are so related. However, while this shows that idealism for Hegel does not entail holism, it is no accident that Hegel will talk of the parts of a whole as 'ideal':⁶³ for Hegel believed that a proper part must be seen as a limited reflection of the totality to which it belongs, where this relation makes the whole 'infinite' in relation to the parts as 'finite'. Thus, for example, Hegel describes the state as 'infinite within itself' because it can be viewed holistically in this way: 'this divided whole exhibits a fixed and enduring determinacy which is not dead and unchanging but continues to produce itself in its dissolution'.⁶⁴ We can therefore see while idealism in Hegel's sense may not entail holism (cf. Thales and the ancient atomists), nonetheless holism may entail idealism for Hegel, in that to be a part is to be a limited aspect of a totality, as when the parts of a body manifest the life of the whole, or the state as a unity is manifested in its different constitutional elements, much in the way matter is realized through different finite individuals.

Of course, a metaphysical position of this kind is not without its difficulties; and Hegel does not attempt to work them through here, at the stage of the *Logic* which we have been discussing: rather, he goes on to do so in the third book of the *Logic*, in his 'Doctrine of the Concept'. There, we are introduced to the dialectically interrelated structure of universality, particularity and individuality, whereby each category is seen to imply the others, so that the Concept as such forms a self-contained system that abolishes the problem of an external 'ground': for, an

individual is no more than a particularized universal (I [individual] am a human being [universal] of such and such a height, weight etc [particular]); particularization is no more than the individualization of the universal (my height, weight etc pertain to me as an individual human being, and not as a ‘bare individual’); and the universal is distinguished from other universals by the way it is particularized into individuals (‘human being’ differs from ‘lion’ qua universal, by the way in which it belongs to one group of determinate individuals, and not others). This can be seen as Hegel’s own attempt to complete the project which he thought began with Thales and which he takes to be distinctive of philosophy itself, of finding a way of thinking that will articulate the kind of self-reflexive structure needed to understand the relation between the conditioned and the unconditioned, which recognizes the limited nature of the former without making the latter transcendent – just as each of the categories of the Concept require the others in order to be explained and understood, without any having priority *over* the others as an ‘external’ ground.⁶⁵

IV

We have seen, then, that an account of Hegel’s idealism which treats it primarily as a metaphysical position – as the claim that finite existents should not be treated as ‘ultimate and absolute’ – need not necessarily lead into absurd extravagance, whilst avoiding triviality and having some claim to textual accuracy. However, this account may seem to suffer from a fourth vice: namely, a kind of *irrelevance*, because to be told that this is what Hegel’s idealism amounts to is to be presented with a form of idealism that is rather *sui generis*, and hard to connect to contemporary debates that surround the idealism/realism issue, which essentially concern how the mind relates to things outside the mind, and what these things (if any) are. Of course, it would be wrong to criticise Hegel himself on this score alone: but it would nonetheless suggest that there is less to be gained from considering Hegel’s idealism than we might at first have hoped. Hegel may seem merely to be claiming the following: Finite things are not themselves infinite, but are limited forms in which the infinite is realized; they therefore lack ‘veritable being’, because they are not in themselves ‘ultimate and absolute or...underived, uncreated, eternal’; they are therefore ideal, while ‘it is not the finite which is real, but the infinite’.⁶⁶ Even if we grant Hegel this conclusion, it is

hard to see how this would establish ‘idealism’ in a way that relates to current concerns.

However, though I think we should take the way Hegel characterises ‘idealism’ seriously, and take note of the ontological use he gives it, it is also clear that Hegel takes his position here to have wider implications, which may make what he says of greater contemporary relevance and interest. To see what these implications might be, we should focus on Hegel’s claim that ‘[e]very philosophy is essentially an idealism’, where here Hegel is suggesting that any properly philosophical position must endorse idealism as he conceives it. His implied contrast here, I think, is not just with ‘common sense’ or ‘ordinary consciousness’, which recognizes that objects are ‘not self-subsistent or grounded in themselves’, but cannot reconcile this with its stronger sense that objects are individuals and thus (it supposes) ‘self-standing and self-founded’, and so cannot grasp the complex philosophical outlook Hegel is proposing which is supposed to accommodate both insights;⁶⁷ an additional contrast, I believe, is also with *non-philosophy*, which for Hegel is a position associated with the empiricist tradition as it existed in Germany, particularly in the work of F. H. Jacobi.⁶⁸ For Hegel, Jacobi counts as a follower of ‘those radical arch-empiricists, Hume and Locke’ because like them, he has ‘posited the particular as such as the Absolute’,⁶⁹ rather than seeing that finite particulars lack ‘veritable being’ in Hegel’s sense, that is, that they are ‘not self-subsistent or grounded in themselves’; Jacobi has thus ended up with a position in which ‘the *finite* is posited as absolute’,⁷⁰ and so with a position that counts as an example of *realism*, in Hegel’s use of this term. Thus, while Hegel believes that as far as *philosophy* is concerned ‘the opposition of idealistic and realistic philosophy has no significance’, he does not expect it to have no significance for ordinary consciousness or (more importantly) non-philosophy, of the sort propounded (Hegel thinks) by Jacobi. In tracing out this issue further, we will see that Hegel’s idealism is relevant to contemporary issues after all, because of the wider questions this raises.

What this dispute with Jacobi brings out, is that for Hegel his idealism requires a repudiation of empiricism, and thus a richer conception of the relation between thought and world. Idealism for Hegel, as we have seen, is a position that does not treat finite things as ‘ultimate and absolute’ in themselves, but relates them to an enduring and infinite ‘ground’ of some kind, of which these finite things are limited realizations; but what idealism in this sense requires, Hegel thinks, is that we move

beyond 'empirical cognition'. This is because this infinite ground is not something that is apparent to us in experience, but can only be something we arrive at through reflection;⁷¹ the idealist must therefore be prepared to treat this non-observable form of being as *real* in the way that the empiricist refuses to do, because the empiricist cannot allow such 'ideal entities' into his ontology. Now, Hegel takes it to be characteristic of the philosopher that he *is* prepared to take this step and to take such 'ideal entities' to be real, because he is prepared to trust in those capacities of thought that go beyond the direct evidence of our senses through a process of theorizing and intellectual reflection that arrives at a deeper level of explanation and understanding. This is why, then, Hegel believes he can claim that '[e]very philosophy is essentially an idealism' in his sense: for in his view the philosopher is characteristically driven to seek more satisfactory forms of explanation than can be given at the level of the observable phenomena, while being a realist about the entities such explanations require, whether these are Thales' water, Democritus' atoms, or the laws and genera of natural science, in which 'things as they immediately present themselves to us' have a more stable grounding:

Nature offers us an infinite mass of singular shapes and appearances. We feel the need to bring unity to this manifold; therefore, we compare them and seek to [re]cognize what is universal in each of them. Individuals are born and pass away; in them their kind is what abides, what recurs in all of them; and it is only present for us when we think about them. This is where laws, e.g., the laws of the motion of the heavenly bodies, belong too. We see the stars in one place today and in another tomorrow; this disorder is for the spirit something incongruous, and not to be trusted, since the spirit believes in an order, a simple, constant, and universal determination [of things]. This is the faith in which the spirit has directed its [reflective] thinking upon phenomena, and has come to know their laws, establishing the motion of the heavenly bodies in a universal manner, so that every change of position can be determined and [re]cognised on the basis of this law... From all these examples we may gather how, in thinking about things, we always seek what is fixed, persisting, and inwardly determined, and what governs the particular. This universal cannot be grasped by means of the senses, and it counts as what is essential and true.⁷²

This, then, explains Hegel's incongruous-looking claim in the main passage we have been considering, that 'the principles of ancient or modern philosophies, water, or matter, or atoms are *thoughts*, universals, ideal entities', when this may seem hard to square with the sort of *materialism* that Hegel is here referring to. The explanation for this claim, we can now see, is that even a materialist like Thales as well as a more modern materialist must agree that their conception of matter is not matter as it is given to us in experience (not just *empirical* water), and thus that 'there is no truth in the sensible as such',⁷³ because 'matter is itself already something abstract, something which cannot be perceived as such'.⁷⁴ It is for this reason that Hegel believes that '[w]ith Thales we, properly speaking, first begin the history of Philosophy',⁷⁵ because Thales starts the process of looking for an explanation for the nature of finite existents while at the same time seeing that this explanation must go further than our 'sensuous perception' in whatever 'first principle' it comes up with, as nothing revealed to us by the senses can be 'ultimate and absolute' in a way that is required to make this explanation satisfactory: 'The simple proposition of Thales [that the principle of all things is water] therefore, is Philosophy, because in it water, though sensuous, is not looked at in its particularity as opposed to other natural things, but as Thought in which everything is resolved and comprehended'.⁷⁶ Thales is therefore responsible for allowing 'the world of Thought [*die Gedankenwelt*]' to be found, without which 'there is as yet no pure unity'.⁷⁷

Now, while Hegel takes it to be characteristic of a classical philosopher like Thales to accept that his non-empirical conception of water is valid on purely theoretical grounds (because it provides a unifying form of explanation), he recognizes that in modern philosophy 'the presupposition of the older metaphysics, namely, that what is true in things lies in thought',⁷⁸ has been radically questioned; in its place has come a kind of empiricist positivism, which trusts only experience to tell us about the world, and so treats as real only what is observable:

Ancient metaphysics had in this respect a higher conception of thinking than is current today. For it based itself on the fact that the knowledge of things obtained through thinking is alone what is really true in them, that is, things not in their immediacy but as first raised into the form of thought, as things *thought*. Thus this metaphysics believed that thinking (and its determinations)

is not anything alien to the object, but rather is its essential nature, or that things and the thinking of them – our language too expresses their kinship – are explicitly in full agreement, thinking in its immanent determinations and the true nature of things forming one and the same content.

But *reflective* understanding took possession of philosophy... Directed against reason, it behaves as ordinary common sense and imposes its view that truth rests on sensuous reality, that thoughts are *only* thoughts, meaning that it is sense perception which first gives them filling and reality and that reason left to its own resources engenders only figments of the brain. In this self-renunciation on the part of reason, the Notion of truth is lost; it is limited to knowing only subjective truth, phenomena, appearances, only something to which the nature of the object itself does not correspond: knowing has lapsed into opinion.⁷⁹

In his work, Hegel treats Jacobi as a typical product of this modern turn, and uses him to illustrate its consequences. The basis on which Jacobi takes this turn is a hostility to any search for explanation of the sort that philosophy goes in for, which he fears leads into empty abstractions: as Jacobi famously puts it, ‘In my judgment the greatest service of the scientist is to unveil *existence*, and to reveal it...Obsession with explanation makes us seek what is common to all things so passionately that we pay no attention to diversity in the process; we only want always to join together, whereas it would often be much more to our advantage to separate... Moreover, in *joining* and *hanging* together only what is explainable in things, there also arises in the soul a certain lustre that blinds more than it illuminates’.⁸⁰ As a result of this fear of abstractionism, Hegel argues, Jacobi no longer treats our intellectual capacities as a source of knowledge, and instead prioritises the ‘*faculty of perception*’ over the ‘*faculty of reflection*’.⁸¹ The consequence of this position, Hegel claims, is that Jacobi cannot do anything other than treat finite entities as ‘self-subsistent and grounded in themselves’, because to offer any deeper explanation of them would require violating the ‘immediacy’ of perception and going beyond ‘sensuous reality’. Hegel therefore writes: ‘In this declaration...Jacobi explicitly restricts faith and eternal verities to what is temporal and corporeal’.⁸² We can see, then, how Hegel might reasonably associate philosophy as he conceives it with idealism in his sense, and why he might

think of Jacobi as illustrating the link between the abandonment of this idealism and the turn to non-philosophy.⁸³

Now, as a matter of interpretation, it might be said that Hegel's view of Jacobi here is rather curious: for, if one considers the *theological* side of Jacobi's position, Jacobi was no straightforward empiricist, as he recognized a *higher* faculty that gives us access to God as a supernatural entity – a faculty which Jacobi came to call 'reason'.⁸⁴ His claim was that to get to an awareness of God, we could not use the *understanding*, which merely 'hovers above the intuitions of the senses'⁸⁵ by looking for causal explanations in a way that cannot lead us to the unconditioned, but only to an infinite regress: so while reason is akin to the senses in being immediate, it gives us access to a very different kind of being, one that is infinite rather than finite; and, in view of this, how can Hegel's characterisation of Jacobi as positing 'the *finite*...as absolute' be considered appropriate?

It could be replied, however, that if there is a difficulty here, it is Jacobi's and not Hegel's. For, of course, Hegel was fully aware of this theological side to Jacobi's thinking, and was critical of it in its turn, in ways that need not concern us here. But the fact that this side of Jacobi's position is in tension with his attempt to give experience of ordinary objects priority over the 'abstractions' of philosophy (for doesn't Jacobi's 'reason' also threaten the store we set by that experience?)⁸⁶ does not show that Hegel is wrong to identify elements of empiricist 'commonsensism' in Jacobi's thinking, even if these may seem to conflict with aspects of his theological position.⁸⁷

We can now also understand the way in which Hegel compares his idealism to Kant's. On the one hand, Kant is an idealist in Hegel's sense, because he treats 'things...in their sensuous individuality' as less than the full story about reality, and so goes beyond empiricism, which takes these things to be all that is real: 'Critical Philosophy has in common with Empiricism that it accepts experience as the *only* basis for our cognitions; but it will not let them count as truths, but only as cognitions of appearances'.⁸⁸ While this goes against 'ordinary consciousness', which holds that what exists 'can be perceived by the senses (e.g., this animal, this star, etc.)' because 'this appears to it as what subsists on its own account, or as what is independent',

Hegel endorses Kant's position here, agreeing with what he takes to be the Kantian point, that 'what can be perceived by the senses is really secondary and not self-standing'. Now, against this view held by 'ordinary consciousness', as we have seen, Hegel wants to argue that reality does not fully reveal itself to us in perception, but also requires us to use thought, which is able to arrive at a grasp of the 'ideal entities' which constitute the 'enduring and inwardly stable' basis of reality. According to Hegel, Kant was unable to take this second step of granting objective truth to such 'ideal entities', because he held that 'thoughts, although they are universal and necessary determinations, are still only *our* thoughts, and are cut off from what the thing is *in-itself* by an impassable gulf'. Thus, while Kant recognized that thought was required in order to grasp the world as more than the 'fleeting and transient' objects of experience, he did not accept that this thought gave us access to the world as such; he therefore did not recognize 'the true objectivity of thinking...: that thoughts are not merely our thoughts, but at the same time the *In-itself* of things and of whatever else is objective'.⁸⁹ To Hegel, therefore, Kant remains a merely subjective idealist, in contrast to his own objective idealism, because Kant is not prepared to treat 'what is universal and necessary' as really anything more than 'what is only thought by us', and so not as ultimately real.

If this is the view that Hegel's idealism leads to, however, isn't it still guilty of pre-critical extravagance, when set against the kind of epistemological and metaphysical outlook (of which Kant is part) which abandons 'the presupposition of the older metaphysics, namely, that what is true in things lies in thought',⁹⁰ and so tries to go no further than the empirical phenomena?⁹¹ In fact, however, Hegel would claim that in finding something in the classical tradition that still needs to be taken seriously, he was building on the real lesson to be learned from Kant (even if it was not learned by Kant himself). This is that there can be no workable distinction between 'immediate' experience and 'mediated' thought, as conceptualisation runs through *all* cognitively relevant levels, making it impossible for the empiricist to

question our faith in thinking without ending up in total scepticism:⁹² for to claim that we should not trust our conceptual capacities when it comes to theorizing about the world is to imply that we should not trust our experience of it either, as Kant showed that these capacities are involved in the latter as much as in the former.⁹³ This interpretation, then, draws on the same line of argument as Pippin's Kantian one, which also recognizes (as we have seen) that 'it is with the denial that a firm distinction can ever be usefully drawn between intuitional and conceptual elements in knowledge that distinctively Hegelian idealism begins'; but it takes this argument in a different direction, that attempts to do greater justice to the other important influence on Hegel, which is the classical tradition. Insofar as Kant himself points *beyond* empiricism, therefore, Hegel can claim not to have made a merely regressive move.⁹⁴

Ameriks himself offers two objections to the kind of account of Hegel's idealism that I have offered. The first is that the implied difference from Kant is misleading,⁹⁵ a point that we cannot consider in the detail it requires here; and the second is that '[this] notion of idealism does not mark a contrast with traditional realism',⁹⁶ for while it holds that 'what is true in things lies in thought', this does not mean that things are mind-dependent, but that they are fundamentally constituted in a way that is accessible to thought rather than sense, by 'universals, ideal entities, not things as they immediately present themselves to us'. I do not see this second point as a difficulty, however: for why should any contrast be expected or required? To think that there must be a contrast between idealism and realism is to see idealism as having only its modern sense, according to which the former treats things as mind-dependent and the latter as mind-independent. But once it is recognized that idealism can also be understood in a more classical manner, where the disagreement is whether the world contains 'ideal entities' (and thus with positivism and nominalism) and not whether the subject constitutes the world (and thus not with realism), we can see how Hegel could have quite properly called himself an idealist whilst remaining a realist, so no contrast need to be drawn here to make sense of his position in the way we have done.⁹⁷

We have thus found two (related) senses in which Hegel is an idealist, and one in which he is a realist, and shown how these positions are compatible: he is an idealist in his special sense, of holding that the 'finite is ideal', and (therefore) an idealist in the more classical (anti-nominalist) sense of holding that taken as mere finite individuals, things in the world cannot provide a satisfactory terminus for

explanation, but only when they are seen to exemplify ‘universals, ideal entities’ (in the manner of Thales’ water onwards) which are not given in immediate experience, but only in ‘[reflective] thinking upon phenomena’. However, none of this implies that Hegel is an idealist in the modern (subjectivist) sense of claiming that the world is mind-dependent, for individuals can be understood as instantiations of such ‘universals, ideal entities’, which then in turn explains how such individuals are accessible to minds, without the need for this subjectivist turn.⁹⁸ And I have also tried to suggest that this can be presented as more than just a reversion to a pre-critical outlook, in so far as the Kantian objection to the cogency of empiricism plays a vital role at a crucial point, albeit it in a way that Kant did not envisage and would no doubt have tried to resist – so this is a case of ‘reculer pour mieux sauter’, where the intention is not *just* to go back, but to go back *in order* also to get further, and go ‘beyond Kant’ as well. In the end, therefore, we have arguably reached an account of Hegel’s idealism that meets Ameriks’ original desiderata, of being textually accurate, philosophically interesting, and not dubiously extravagant.⁹⁹

¹ Karl Ameriks, ‘Hegel and Idealism’, *The Monist*, 74 (1991), pp. 386-402, p. 397.

² *Ibid.*, p. 398.

³ Robert B. Pippin, *Hegel’s Idealism: The Satisfaction of Self-Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 7.

⁴ Pippin, *Hegel’s Idealism*.

⁵ As well as the paper by Ameriks mentioned above, see also: Terry Pinkard, ‘The Categorical Satisfaction of Self-Reflexive Reason’, *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain*, 19 (1989), pp. 5-17; H. S. Harris, ‘The Problem of Kant’, *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain*, 19 (1989), pp. 18-27; Terry Pinkard, ‘How Kantian Was Hegel?’, *Review of Metaphysics*, 43 (1990), pp. 831-8; Ludwig Siep, ‘Hegel’s Idea of a Conceptual Scheme’, *Inquiry*, 34 (1991), pp. 63-76; Karl Ameriks, ‘Recent Work on Hegel: The Rehabilitation of an Epistemologist?’, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 52 (1992), pp. 177-202; Kenneth R. Westphal, ‘Hegel, Idealism, and Robert Pippin’, *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 33 (1993), pp. 263-72; Sally Sedgwick, ‘Pippin on Hegel’s Critique of Kant’, *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 33 (1993), pp. 273-83; Frank B. Farrell, *Subjectivity, Realism and Post-modernism: The Recovery of the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 20-29. Replies by Robert Pippin to some of these pieces can be found in

'Hegel's Idealism: Prospects', *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain*, 19 (1989), pp. 28-41, and 'Hegel's Original Insight', *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 33 (1993), pp. 285-95.

⁶ Robert B. Pippin, 'Hegel and Category Theory', *Review of Metaphysics*, 43 (1990), pp. 839-48, p. 839.

⁷ Cf. Pippin, 'Hegel's Original Insight', p. 286. Cf. also P. M. S. Hacker's characterisation of the motivation of P. F. Strawson's turn from metaphysics as 'limning the ultimate structure of the world' to 'sketching the structure of our conceptual scheme': 'The conception of a form of necessity that is not logical, but no less adamant than logical necessity, that is an objective, language-independent form of necessity that can nevertheless be apprehended a priori by reason alone is, surely rightly, dismissed as a fiction' (P. M. S. Hacker, 'On Strawson's Rehabilitation of Metaphysics', in Hans-Johann Glock (ed.), *Strawson and Kant* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 43-66, p. 55).

⁸ Michael J. Loux, *Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 9.

⁹ Pippin characterises Hegel's position as a form of anti-realism at several places, e.g. *Hegel's Idealism* p. 99, p. 262 note 15, and p. 267 note 23.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.250.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 98.

¹³ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 29-32. For doubts about Pippin's reading of Kant, see Sedgwick, 'Pippin on Hegel's Critique of Kant', with a reply from Pippin in his 'Hegel's Original Insight'.

¹⁴ Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism*, p. 9.

¹⁵ Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism*, pp. 18, 232. Pippin has the following sort of remark from Hegel in mind: '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* is recognized as the *original synthetic* unity of *apperception*, as unity of the *I think*, or of self-consciousness' (G. W. F. *Hegel's Science of Logic*, translated by A. V. Miller (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969), p. 584; *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, edited by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel, 20 vols and index (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1969-71), VI, p. 254). However, Pinkard has argued that comments such as these should not be taken to imply that Hegel is taking the transcendental turn, but rather that he is drawing attention to the way in which the structure of the *Notion* resembles the structure of the unity of *apperception*, so that it is the structural similarity between the *Notion* and the 'I think' that is here being highlighted: 'Thus, in Hegel's eyes, what is

important in the Kantian philosophy is *not* its attempt to derive everything from the conditions of self-consciousness, but its attempt to construct a self-subsuming, self-reflexive explanation of the categories. Self-consciousness is only an *instance* of such a reflexive structure' (Pinkard, 'The Categorical Satisfaction of Self-Reflexive Reason', p. 8). Cf. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, p. 583 (*Werke*, VI, p. 253), where Hegel says that 'the *I* is the pure Notion itself which, as Notion, has come into *existence*' because the *I* is like the Notion, in combining the moments of universality and individuality, and thus of being a unity that contains difference within it: 'The absolute *universality* which is also immediately an absolute *individualization*, and an absolutely determined being, which is a pure positedness and is this *absolutely determined* being only through its unity with the *positedness*, this constitutes the nature of the *I* as well as the Notion; neither the one nor the other [i.e. the *I* and the Notion] can be truly comprehended unless the two indicated moments [of universality and individuality] are grasped at the same time both in their abstraction and also in their perfect unity'. Henrich explains what Hegel is getting at here as follows: 'By saying "I think," the self asserts its distinctive existence; but the self also knows, with respect to the structure of this act, that it does not differ from other selves... For reasons that may well be evident, Hegel says that the ontological constitution of the self is the structure of the Notion' (Dieter Henrich, *Between Kant and Hegel: Lectures on German Idealism*, edited by David S. Pacini (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 323).

¹⁶ Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism*, p. 33.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

¹⁸ See e.g. *ibid.*, p. 193: 'Thus, if there is a logical problem in Hegel's introduction of finitude, it does not lie in carelessly confusing the conceptual with the real order. I have tried to show that the issues are conceptual throughout and determined by the overall conceptual strategy of the *Logic*'.

¹⁹ Cf. Pinkard, 'The Categorical Satisfaction of Self-Reflexive Reason', pp. 7-10; Pinkard, 'How Kantian Was Hegel?', pp. 832-4; Ameriks, 'Hegel and Idealism', p. 391; Siep, 'Hegel's Idea of a Conceptual Scheme', pp. 71-2; Stephen Houlgate, 'G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1831)', in Steven M. Emmanuel (ed.), *The Blackwell Guide to the Modern Philosophers: From Descartes to Nietzsche* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), pp. 278-305, p. 282; Stephen Houlgate, *The Opening of Hegel's 'Logic'*, forthcoming.

²⁰ Cf. G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, translated by E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson, 3 vols (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1892-1896; reissued Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), III, p. 486 (*Werke*, XX, p. 392): '[For Descartes and Fichte] The ego is certain, it cannot be doubted; but Philosophy desires to reach the truth. The certainty is subjective, and because it is made to remain the basis, all else remains subjective also without there being any possibility of this form being removed'.

²¹ Houlgate, 'G. W. F. Hegel', p. 282. On the move from a *metaphysic specialis* to a *metaphysica generalis*, cf. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, pp. 63-4 (*Werke*, V, p. 61), where Hegel notes that the *Logic* will not concern itself with 'particular substrata taken primarily from figurate conception [*aus der Vorstellung genommenen Substrate*], namely the soul, the world and God', but consider the 'forms of pure thought' (i.e. the categories) 'free from those substrata, from the subjects of figurate conception'.

²² Cf. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, p. 27 and p. 63 (*Werke*, V, p. 16 and 61); G. W. F. Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic: Part I of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences*, translated by T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting and H. S. Harris (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), §24, p. 56 (*Werke*, VIII, pp. 80-1).

²³ Cf. Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism*, pp. 98-9: '...what Hegel is after is a way of demonstrating the "ultimate" or absolute objectivity of the Notion not by some demonstration that being as it is in itself can be known as we conceive it to be, but that a Notionally conditional actuality is all that "being" could intelligibly be, even for the most committed realist skeptic... Hegel's resolution of the objectivity and skepticism problems raised by his idealism must involve a way of arguing *that* such a self-knowledge by Spirit, although not "metaphysically identical" with "what there is, in truth," nevertheless in some way defines or transcendently constitutes the possibility of "objects" ' .

²⁴ Pippin, 'Hegel's Original Insight', p. 287.

²⁵ G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 47 (*Werke*, III, p. 70).

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Hegel, *Science of Logic*, p. 49 (*Werke*, V, p. 43).

²⁸ Cf. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B3.

²⁹ The seeds of this dissatisfaction can be found in the famous letter to Marcus Herz of 21st February 1772; and for later expressions of the point see e.g. *Critique of Pure Reason*, B167, and *Prolegomena*

to *Any Future Metaphysics*, §36. Cf. also John Stuart Mill, *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, edited by John M. Robson (London and Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), IX, p. 68: ‘even assuming that inconceivability is not solely the result of limited experience, but that some incapacities of conceiving are inherent in the mind, and inseparable from it; this would not entitle us to infer, that what we are thus incapable of conceiving cannot exist. Such an inference would only be warrantable, if we could know *a priori* that we must have been created capable of conceiving whatever is capable of existing: that the universe of thought and that of reality, the Microcosm and the Macrocosm (as once they were called) must have been framed in complete correspondence with one another...’

³⁰ Hegel, *Encyclopaedia Logic*, §24, p. 56 (*Werke*, VIII, p. 81).

³¹ Pippin, *Hegel’s Idealism*, p. 4.

³² For interpretations of Hegel along these lines, see the following: Robert C. Solomon, *Continental Philosophy Since 1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 57: ‘The dialectic is not so much a method as it is the central idea of Hegel’s philosophy, and its purpose, in each of his works, is to demonstrate the ultimate necessity of an all-encompassing acceptance of the self as absolute – what Hegel calls ‘Spirit’ (*Geist*)... [Hegel] accepted the general move of Kant’s first Critique, regarding objects as being constituted by consciousness, but he also saw the manifest absurdity of making this an individual matter, as if each of us creates his or her own world; it is consciousness in general that does this, collectively and not individually, through the shared aspects of a culture, a society, and above all through a shared language’; Peter Singer, *Hegel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 72-3: ‘Hegel rejects the view that there are countless different “realities” corresponding to the countless different minds that exist. He calls this form of idealism *absolute idealism* to distinguish it from subjective idealism. For Hegel there is only one reality, because, ultimately, there is only one mind... [Hegel] needs the conception of a collective or universal mind not only to avoid a subjective form of idealism, but also to make good his vision of mind coming to see all of reality as its own creation’; William H. Walsh, ‘Subjective and Objective Idealism’, in Dieter Henrich (ed), *Kant oder Hegel* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1983), pp. 83-98, p. 95: ‘[Hegel] wanted to argue that things are not just coloured or informed by mind, but penetrated and constituted by it... To put it crudely, mind could know the world because the world was mind writ large’.

³³ Cf. Arthur W. Collins, *Possible Experience: Understanding Kant’s ‘Critique of Pure Reason’* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 25: ‘The things that Kant says prominently and

repeatedly about space and time and appearances...make it easy to understand how his principal German successors could have taken his transcendental idealism to be an idealist philosophy like their own. But they are nonetheless mistaken. Thus the German idealists are among those who, in an essentially Cartesian spirit, equate Kant's subjectivism with idealism and imagine that he ascribes a mental status to objects in so far as he says that they are, as appearances, irreducibly subjective'.

³⁴ G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind: Part Three of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, translated by William Wallace and A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), §441 Addition, p. 182 (*Werke*, X, p. 233).

³⁵ G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie des Geistes. Berlin 1827/1828, Nachgeschrieben von Johann Eduard Erdmann und Ferdinand Walter*, edited by Franz Hespe and Burkhard Tuschling (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1994), p. 17. It should be said, however, that passages can be found which are closer to the traditional reading: cf. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, §448 Addition, p. 198 (*Werke*, X, p. 253): 'But when we said that what is sensed receives from the intuiting mind the form of the spatial and temporal, this statement must not be understood to mean that space and time are only subjective forms. This is what Kant wanted to make them. But things are in truth themselves spatial and temporal; this double form of assunderness is not one-sidedly given them by our intuition, but has been originally imparted to them by the intrinsically infinite mind, by the creative eternal Idea'.

³⁶ Cf. Singer, *Hegel*, pp. 70-1.

³⁷ Cf. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, p. 36 (*Werke*, V, pp. 25-6): 'The way in which the critical philosophy understands the relationship of these three terms is that we place our thoughts as a medium between ourselves and the objects, and that this medium instead of connecting us with the objects rather cuts us off from them. But this view can be countered by the simple observation that these very things which are supposed to stand beyond us and, at the other extreme, beyond the thoughts referring to them, are themselves figments of subjective thought, and as wholly indeterminate they are only a single thought-thing – the so-called thing-in-itself of empty abstraction.' Cf. also Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, §44, p. 87 (*Werke*, VIII, pp. 120-1), and Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 46-8 (*Werke*, III, 68-70).

³⁸ It might be argued on Kant's behalf that it mischaracterize the Kantian position to describe it in these terms, as the limits Kant claims to discern are not set in advance, but through a recognition of the intractable difficulties faced by our inquiries into certain metaphysical questions; but here, of course, Hegel is more optimistic than Kant over our capacity to resolve these questions, and so would also

reject this Kantian motivation for scepticism as ungrounded and premature. For further discussion of this issue, see Robert Stern, *Hegel and the 'Phenomenology of Spirit'* (London: Routledge, 2002), 36-41.

³⁹ Karl Ameriks, 'Introduction: Interpreting German Idealism', in Karl Ameriks (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 1-17, pp. 7-10. For a more detailed discussion that counters any mentalistic conception of German Idealism generally, but which does not include any extended discussion of Hegel himself, see Frederick C. Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism 1781-1801* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002).

⁴⁰ Pippin has argued that we should not read too much into this passage, because its context is a limited one, in so far as here 'Hegel is...quite self-consciously appropriating the language of a pre-critical metaphysics and making his point in passing within the assumptions of such a framework... In general, dipping onto Book One of the *Logic* for "definitions" of what Hegel means by "idealism"...and so forth is very unwise' (Pippin, 'Hegel's Original Insight', p. 289, note 6). However, as we shall see, this is by no means the only place within the system where Hegel uses 'idealism', 'ideal' and so on in the way suggested in this passage, and in fact this use turns out to be fairly typical throughout Hegel's works; so Pippin's warning seems misplaced.

⁴¹ Hegel, *Science of Logic*, pp. 154-5 (*Werke*, V, p. 172). For an equivalent passage in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, see §95, p. 152 (*Werke*, VIII, p. 203): '[F]initude...is under the determination of reality at first. But the truth of the finite is rather its *ideality*... This ideality of the finite is the most important proposition of philosophy, and for that reason every genuine philosophy is *Idealism*'.

⁴² Ameriks, 'Hegel and Idealism', pp. 387-8.

⁴³ Cf. G. W. F. Hegel, *Element of the Philosophy of Right*, translated by H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), §44 Addition, p. 76 (*Werke*, VIII, p. 107): 'The free will is consequently that idealism which does not consider things [*Dinge*], as they are, to be in and for themselves, whereas realism declares them to be absolute, even if they are found only in the form of finitude. Even the animal has gone beyond this realist philosophy, for it consumes things [*Dinge*] and thereby proves that they are not absolutely self-sufficient'. Cf. also Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 65 (*Werke*, III, p. 91).

⁴⁴ Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, II, pp. 43-4 (*Werke*, XIX, pp. 54-5): '[T]he idealism of Plato must not be thought of as being subjective idealism, and as that false idealism which has made its appearance in modern times, and which maintains that we do not learn anything, are not influenced from without, but that all conceptions are derived from out of the subject. It is often said that idealism means that the individual produces from himself all his ideas, even the most immediate. But this is an unhistoric, and quite false conception; if we take this rude definition of idealism, there have been no idealists amongst the philosophers, and Platonic idealism is certainly far removed from anything of this kind'.

⁴⁵ Cf. Kenneth R. Westphal, *Hegel's Epistemological Realism* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989), p. 143: 'Hegel's idealism is thus an ontological thesis, a thesis concerning the interdependence of everything there is, and thus is quite rightly contrasted with epistemologically based subjective idealism', and his 'Hegel's Attitude Toward Jacobi in "The Third Attitude of Thought Toward Objectivity"', *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 27 (1989), pp. 135-56, p. 146: 'The basic model of Hegel's ontology is a radical ontological holism'. Cf. also Thomas E. Wartenberg, 'Hegel's Idealism: The Logic of Conceptuality', in Frederick C. Beiser (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, 1st edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 107: '[Hegel's] manner of characterizing his idealism emphasizes that it is a form of holism. According to this view, individuals are mere parts and thus are not fully real or independent'.

⁴⁶ Cf. Hegel, *Encyclopaedia Logic*, §45 Addition, p. 88 (*Werke*, VIII, p. 122): 'For our ordinary consciousness (i.e., the consciousness at the level of sense-perception and understanding) the objects that it knows count as self-standing and as self-founded in their isolation from one another; and when they prove to be related to each other, and conditioned by one another, their mutual dependence upon one another is regarded as something external to the object, and not as belonging to their nature. It must certainly be maintained against this that the objects of which we have immediate knowledge are mere appearances, i.e., they do not have the ground of their being within themselves, but within something else.' Cf. also *Philosophy of Mind*, §420 Addition, pp. 161-2 (*Werke*, X, p. 209); translation modified: 'Although perception starts from the observation of sensuous materials it does not stop at these, does not confine itself simply to smelling, tasting, seeing, hearing, and feeling (touching), but necessarily goes on to relate the sensuous to the universal which is not observable in an immediate manner, to cognize each thing as in itself a connectedness: in force, for example, to comprehend all its

manifestations; and to seek out the connections and mediations that exist between separate individual things. While therefore the merely sensuous consciousness merely *shows* things, that is to say, exhibits them in their immediacy, perception, on the other hand, apprehends the connectedness of things, demonstrates that when such and such circumstances are present such and such a thing follows, and thus begins to demonstrate the truth of things’.

⁴⁷ Willem A. deVries, *Hegel’s Theory of Mental Activity* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 15 and 13.

⁴⁸ Cf. Ameriks, ‘Hegel and Idealism’, p. 397.

⁴⁹ Cf. deVries, *Hegel’s Theory of Mental Activity*, p. 13: ‘We have to be extremely suspicious of Hegel’s rather dogmatic belief that the world-whole does form a unitary totality’.

⁵⁰ David Bell, ‘Transcendental Arguments and Non-Naturalistic Anti-Realism’, in Robert Stern (ed), *Transcendental Arguments: Problems and Prospects* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 189-210, p. 199; see also David Bell, ‘Is Empirical Realism Compatible With Transcendental Idealism?’, in Ralph Schumacher (ed), *Idealismus als Theorie der Repräsentation?* (Paderborn: Mentis, 2001), pp. 167-180.

⁵¹ Cf. Hegel, *Encyclopaedia Logic*, §94 Addition, p. 150 (*Werke*, VIII, p. 200): ‘Philosophy does not waste time with such empty and otherworldly stuff. What philosophy has to do with is always something concrete and strictly present’.

⁵² Cf. G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel’s Philosophy of Nature: Part Two of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, translated by A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), §247 Addition, p. 16 (*Werke*, IX, pp. 26-7): ‘In our ordinary way of thinking [*Vorstellung*], the world is only an aggregate of finite existences, but when it is grasped as a universal, as a totality, the question of a beginning at once disappears’. For further discussion of this ‘negative’ strategy, which (I claim) can also be found in the work of some of the British Idealists who commented on Hegel, see Robert Stern, ‘British Hegelianism: A Non-Metaphysical View?’, *European Journal of Philosophy*, 2 (1994), pp. 293-321.

⁵³ Bell, ‘Is Empirical Realism Compatible With Transcendental Idealism?’, p. 177.

⁵⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 177: ‘If the goal of a transcendental theory is to articulate an alternative vision of reality – and not a vision of some alternative reality – then clearly it is a condition of success that there must be some sense in which the notion of reality remains constant throughout. There must, that is, be a sense

in which “philosophy leaves everything as it is,” in which it “leaves the world alone” and refrains, say, from contesting the findings of natural science as if those findings were simply *false*’.

⁵⁵ Cf. Hegel, *Encyclopaedia Logic*, §91 and Addition, p. 147 (*Werke*, VIII, pp. 196-7). As was his wont, Hegel was slightly misquoting Spinoza here; in his Letter 50 (to Jarig Jelles, 2nd June 1674), Spinoza writes ‘determinatio negatio est’. See ‘*On The Improvement of Understanding*’, ‘*The Ethics*’, *Correspondence*, translated by R. H. M. Elwes (New York: Dover Publications, 1955), p. 370: ‘This determination [i.e. figure] therefore does not appertain to the thing according to its being, but, on the contrary, is its non-being. As then figure is nothing else than determination, and determination is negation, figure, as has been said, can be nothing but negation’.

⁵⁶ This concern was raised by Jacobi, in his critical discussion of Spinoza that (inadvertently) did so much to introduce Spinoza into the thinking of the period. See F. H. Jacobi, *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza in Letters to Herr Moses Mendelssohn*, in *The Main Philosophical Writings*, translated by George di Giovanni (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994), p. 220, where Jacobi glosses Spinoza’s remark in Letter 50 as follows: ‘Individual things, therefore, so far as they only exist in a certain determinate mode, are *non-entia* [non-entities]; the indeterminate infinite being is the one single true *ens reale, hoc est, est omne esse, & praeter quod nullum datur esse* [real being; it is the all of being, and apart from it there is no being]’. The quotation in the last part of Jacobi’s remark comes from Spinoza’s *On The Improvement of the Understanding*, p. 29.

⁵⁷ Hegel, *Science of Logic*, pp. 149-50 (*Werke*, V, p. 165). Cf. also *ibid.*, p. 151 (*Werke*, V, p. 168): ‘The resolution of this contradiction [that finite and infinite are both the same and different] is not the recognition of the equal correctness and equal incorrectness of the two assertions – this is only another form of the abiding contradiction – but the *ideality* of both, in which as distinct, reciprocal negations, they are only *moments*... In this being which is thus the *ideality* of the distinct moments [of finite and infinite], the contradiction has not vanished abstractly, but is resolved and reconciled, and the thoughts are not only complete, but they are also *brought together*’.

⁵⁸ Hegel, *Encyclopaedia Logic*, §95, p. 152 (*Werke*, VIII, pp. 202-3).

⁵⁹ Cf. Hegel, *Encyclopaedia Logic*, §96 Addition, p. 154 (*Werke*, VIII, pp. 204-5) and *Science of Logic*, pp. 106-7 (*Werke*, V, pp. 113-4).

⁶⁰ This way of characterising monism is to treat it as an answer to the question of how many individuals there are (sometimes called *substance monism*), rather than as an answer to the question of how many types or varieties of things there are (sometimes called *kind monism*).

⁶¹ Thus, while commenting that ‘to be a follower of Spinoza is the essential commencement of all Philosophy’ (Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, III, p. 257 (*Werke*, XX, p. 165)), Hegel makes it very clear that he found Spinoza’s monism to be too extreme: ‘As all differences and determinations of things and of consciousness simply go back into the One substance, one may say that in the system of Spinoza all things are merely cast down into this abyss of annihilation. But from this abyss nothing comes out’ (ibid., p. 288 (*Werke*, XX, p. 166)).

⁶² Another route from holism to monism, adopted after Hegel by F. H. Bradley, is to argue from the unreality of relations to the non-existence of any kind of plurality of individual things, even as parts within a whole: but there is no reason to think that Hegel would have endorsed this argument either. For further discussion, see Rolf-Peter Horstmann, *Ontologie und Relationen: Hegel, Bradley, Russell und die Kontroverse über interne und externe Beziehungen* (Königstein: Athenäum, 1984).

⁶³ See for example G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel’s Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, translated by T. M. Knox, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), I, p. 120 (*Werke*, XIII, pp. 162-3): ‘The process of life comprises a double activity: on the one hand, that of bringing steadily into existence perceptibly the real differences of all the members and specific characteristics of the organism, but, on the other hand, that of asserting in them their universal ideality (which is their animation) if they try to persist in independent severance from one another and isolate themselves in fixed differences from one another. This is the idealism of life. For philosophy is not at all the only example of idealism; nature, as life, already makes a matter of fact what idealist philosophy brings to completion in its own spiritual field’; and Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §276 Addition, p. 314 (*Werke*, VII, pp. 441-2): ‘This ideality of the moments [in the state] is like life in an organic body: it is present at every point, there is only one life in all of them, and there is no resistance to it. Separated from it, each point must die. The same applies to the ideality of all the individual estates, powers, and corporations, however much their impulse may be to subsist and have being for themselves. In this respect, they resemble the stomach of an organism which also posits itself as independent [*für sich*] but is at the same time superseded and sacrificed and passes over into the whole’.

⁶⁴ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, §270 Addition, pp. 302-3 (*Werke*, VII, p. 429).

⁶⁵ It is of course profoundly difficult to assess whether this distinctive Hegelian conception of the Absolute is ultimately cogent, as it forms the basis for the critique of Hegel from late Schelling onwards: it is impossible to consider this debate in any further detail here, but in different ways the work of Dieter Henrich, Michael Theunissen, Manfred Frank, Rolf-Peter Horstmann and Vittorio Hösle would all be relevant. Among authors working in English, the contributions of J. N. Findlay, Stanley Rosen and Andrew Bowie also bear on this issue.

⁶⁶ Hegel, *Science of Logic*, p. 149 (*Werke*, V, p. 164).

⁶⁷ Cf. Hegel, *Encyclopaedia Logic*, §45 Addition, p. 88 (*Werke*, VIII, p. 122). Hegel of course believed that this kind of difficulty is characteristic of ‘ordinary consciousness’, which oscillates between ‘one-sided’ views that it is unable to reconcile.

⁶⁸ Jacobi himself characterised his own position as a ‘non-philosophy’: see Jacobi, *Jacobi to Fichte*, in the *Main Philosophical Writings*, p. 501, p. 505, p. 519. Cf. Hegel’s remark that ‘the only philosophy acknowledged [by Jacobi and his followers] is not a philosophy at all!’ (Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, III, p. 477 (*Werke*, XX, p. 384)).

⁶⁹ G. W. F. Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, translated by Walter Cerf and H. S. Harris (Albany: SUNY Press, 1977), p. 137 (*Werke*, II, pp. 376-7).

⁷⁰ Hegel, *Encyclopaedia Logic*, §74, pp. 120-1 (*Werke*, VIII, p. 163): ‘The form of immediacy gives to the *particular* the determination of *being*, or of relating *itself to itself*. But the particular is precisely the relating of itself to *another* outside it; [but] through that form [of immediacy] the *finite* is posited as absolute’.

⁷¹ Cf. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, III, p. 445 (*Werke*, XX, pp. 352-3): ‘It is certainly correct to say that the infinite is not given in the world of sensuous perception; and supposing that what we know is experience, a synthesis of what is thought and what is felt, the infinite certainly cannot be known in the sense that we have a sensuous perception of it. But no one wishes to demand a sensuous proof in verification of the infinite; spirit is for spirit alone’.

⁷² Hegel, *Encyclopaedia Logic*, §21 Addition, p. 53 (*Werke*, VIII, pp. 77-8). Cf. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, III, p. 440 (cf. *Werke*, XX, p. 347): ‘The question of whether a completed sensuousness or the Notion is the higher may...be easily decided. For the laws of the heavens are not immediately perceived, but merely the change in position on the part of the stars. It is only when this object of immediate perception is laid hold of and brought under universal thought determinations that

experience arises therefrom, which has a claim to validity for all time. The category which brings the unity of thought into the content of feeling is thus the objective element in experience, which receives thereby universality and necessity, while that which is perceived is rather the subjective and contingent’.

⁷³ Hegel, *Encyclopaedia Logic*, §76, p. 122 (*Werke*, VIII, p. 166).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, §38, p. 79 (*Werke*, VIII, p. 111).

⁷⁵ Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, I, p. 171 (*Werke*, XVIII, p. 195).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 179 (*Werke*, XVIII, p. 202).

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 178 (*Werke*, XVIII, p. 203).

⁷⁸ Hegel, *Encyclopaedia Logic*, §38 Addition, p. 79 (*Werke*, VIII, p. 110); translation modified.

⁷⁹ Hegel, *Science of Logic*, pp. 45-6 (*Werke*, V, p. 38). Cf. also *ibid.*, p. 160 (*Werke*, V, p. 178):

‘However, to call thought, spirit, God, *only* an ideal being, presupposes the standpoint from which finite being counts as real, and the ideal being of being-for-one has only a one-sided meaning’; *ibid.*, p. 590 (*Werke* VI, p. 262): ‘Would one ever have thought that philosophy would deny truth to intelligible entities because they lack the spatial and temporal material of the sensuous world?’; *ibid.*, p. 707 (*Werke*, VI, p. 404): ‘A philosophizing that in its view of being does not rise above sense, naturally stops short at merely abstract thought, too, in its view of the Notion; such thought stands opposed to being’; *Encyclopaedia Logic*, §21, p. 52 (*Werke*, VIII, p. 76): ‘In §5 we mentioned the old belief that what is genuine in objects, [their] constitutions, or what happens to them, [i.e.,] what is inner, what is essential, and the matter that counts, is not to be found in consciousness immediately; that it cannot be what the first look or impression already offers us, but that we must first *think it over* in order to arrive at the genuine constitution of the object, and that by thinking it over this [goal] is indeed achieved’; *ibid.*, §22 Addition, p. 54 (*Werke*, VIII, p. 79): ‘...it has been the conviction of every age that what is substantial is only reached through the reworking of the immediate by our thinking about it. It has most notably been only in modern times, on the other hand, that doubts have been raised and the distinction between the products of our thinking and what things are in themselves has been insisted on... The sickness of our time, which has arrived at the point of despair, is the assumption that that our cognition is only subjective and that this is the last word about it’; Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, §465 Addition, p. 224 (*Werke*, X, p. 286): ‘Those who have no conception of philosophy become speechless, it is true, when they hear the proposition that *Thought is Being*. None the less, underlying all our actions is the

presupposition of the unity of Thought and Being. It is as rational, thinking beings that we make this presupposition... Pure thinking knows that it alone, and not feeling or representation, is capable of grasping the truth in things, and that the assertion of Epicurus that the true is what is sensed, must be pronounced a complete perversion of the nature of mind'; Hegel, 'Aphorisms from the Wastebook', in Jon Stewart (ed), *Miscellaneous Writings of G. W. F. Hegel* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2002), p. 246 (*Werke*, II, p. 542): 'The peasant woman lives within the circle of her Lisa, who is her best cow; then the black one, then the spotted one, and so on; also of Martin, her boy, and Ursula, her girl, etc. To the philosopher, infinity, knowledge, movement, empirical laws, etc. are things just as familiar'.

⁸⁰ F. H. Jacobi, *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza in Letters to Herr Moses Mendelssohn*, in *The Main Philosophical Writings*, pp. 194-5.

⁸¹ F. H. Jacobi, *Preface to David Hume on Faith*, in *The Main Philosophical Writings*, p. 541. Cf. also *David Hume on Faith*, in *The Main Philosophical Writings*, p. 303: 'It follows that, with respect to all created beings, their rational cognition would have to be tested, ultimately, against their sensible one; the former must borrow its *validity* from the latter'.

⁸² Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, p. 139 (*Werke*, II, p. 379). Cf. also *ibid.*, p. 169 (*Werke*, II, p. 410): 'Jacobi reproaches the Kantian system for being a mishmash of idealism and empiricism. Of these two ingredients, however, it is not the empiricism, but the idealistic side, the side of infinity, which incurs his reproach. Although the side of infinity cannot win through to the perfection of the true nothing, still Jacobi cannot bear it because it endangers the absoluteness of the empirical...'; and *ibid.*, p. 125 (*Werke*, II, p. 363): 'Jacobi becomes as abusive about the nullification of this empirical truth and of faith in sense-cognition [by Kant] as if it were an act of sacrilege or a temple robbery'.

⁸³ A related diagnosis informs Hegel's discussion of scepticism, and in particular his contrast between ancient and modern scepticism: for whereas he saw the former as a prelude to philosophy in its *questioning* of experience as a source for knowledge, he saw the latter as a form of non-philosophy, because it leaves experience *unquestioned*, and so abandons all attempts to go beyond it. See G. W. F. Hegel, 'Relationship of Scepticism to Philosophy: Exposition of its Different Modifications and Comparison to the Latest Form with the Ancient One', translated by H. S. Harris, in George di Giovanni and H. S. Harris (eds), *Between Kant and Hegel* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1985) (*Werke*, II, pp. 213-72). Cf. also Hegel, *Encyclopaedia Logic*, §39, p. 80 (*Werke*, VIII, p. 112): 'In Humean

scepticism, the *truth* of the empirical, the truth of feeling and intuition, is taken as basic; and, on that basis, he attacks all universal determinations and laws, precisely because they have no justification by way of sense-perception. The old scepticism was so far removed from making feeling, or intuition, into the principle of truth that it turned itself against the sensible in the very first place instead.’

⁸⁴ Jacobi, *Preface to David Hume on Faith*, *Main Philosophical Writings*, p. 569.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 568.

⁸⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 569, where Jacobi talks of reason as a ‘different faculty of perception’ from ordinary experience, which is a ‘spiritual eye’ that gives us access to ‘spiritual objects’; but this does not tell us how it is these ‘spiritual objects’ stand in relation to the ‘visible and tangible’ ones, and thus how our faith in the latter can remain ‘immediate’, once our ‘spiritual eye’ is opened.

⁸⁷ Hegel himself seems to remark on this conflict when he notes that Jacobi speaks of faith (*Glaube*) in relation to God, but also in relation to our awareness of our bodies and outer objects (cf. Jacobi, *Concerning the Doctrine of Spinoza*, in *Main Philosophical Writings*, p. 231), and comments: ‘Hence the expression faith, which had a deep significance in religion, is made use of for different contents of every kind; this in our time is the point of view most commonly adopted’ (Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, III, p. 419 (*Werke*, XX, p. 324)).

⁸⁸ Hegel, *Encyclopaedia Logic*, §40, p. 80 (*Werke*, VIII, p. 112). Cf. also Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, p. 103 (*Werke*, II, p. 341): ‘...Kant’s most important result [as against Jacobi] will always remain this: these relations of the finite (whether they are relations within the sphere of the subject alone, or relations of things as well) are nothing in themselves, and cognition in accordance with them is only a cognition of appearances, (even though it becomes absolute because it is not to be transcended).’

⁸⁹ Hegel, *Encyclopaedia Logic*, §41 Addition, pp. 82-3 (*Werke*, VIII, pp. 115-6). Cf. also Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature*, §246 Addition, pp. 9-10 (*Werke*, IX, p. 19): ‘Intelligence familiarizes itself with things, not of course in their sensuous existence, but by thinking them and positing their content in itself; and in, so to speak, adding form, universality, to the practical ideality which, by itself, is only negativity, it gives an affirmative character to the negativity of the singular. This universal aspect of things is not something subjective, something belonging to us: rather is it, in contrast to the transient phenomenon, the noumenon, the true, objective, actual nature of things themselves, like the Platonic Ideas, which are not somewhere afar off in the beyond, but exist in individual things as their substantial genera. Not until one does violence to Proteus – that is not until one turns one’s back on the sensuous

appearance of Nature – is he compelled to speak the truth. The inscription on the veil of Isis, “I am that which was, is, and will be, and my veil no mortal has lifted”, melts away before thought”; G. W. F.

Hegel, *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, translated by T. M. Knox and A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 90 (*Einleitung in die Geschichte der Philosophie*, edited by Johannes Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Meiner, 1940), p. 121): ‘A thought is the universal as such; even in nature we find thoughts present as its species and laws, and thus they are not merely present in the form of consciousness, but absolutely and therefore objectively. The reason of the world is not subjective reason. Thought is what is substantive and true, in comparison with the singular which is momentary, passing, and transient. Knowledge of the nature of thought removes the subjective mode of its appearance, and then this means that thought is not something particular, subjective, belonging to our consciousness merely, but is the universal, objective absolutely’.

⁹⁰ Cf. Pippin, ‘Hegel’s Original Insight’, p. 288, note 5: ‘...such an interpretation [of Hegel as a concept realist] still makes Hegel a fundamentally pre-critical philosopher, committed to the basic rationalist dream shattered by Kant. Hegel’s many remarks about “completing” the Kantian revolution, or celebrating the modern “principles of subjectivity,” are very hard to understand on such a reading. It is as if Hegel simply missed the point, the massive, unavoidable point, of the *Critique of Pure Reason*’.

⁹¹ There is little indication that Hegel had any patience for appeals to modesty of this kind. Cf. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, I, p. 277 (*Werke*, XVIII, p. 318): ‘It shows excessive humility of mind to believe that knowledge [*das Erkennen*] has no value; but Christ says, “Are ye not better than the sparrows?”, and we are so inasmuch as we are thinking; as sensuous we are as good or bad as sparrows’; and *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, I, p. xliii (*Werke*, XVIII, pp. 13-14): ‘The love of truth, faith in the power of mind, is the first condition in Philosophy. Man, because he is Mind, should and must deem himself worthy of the highest; he cannot think too highly of the greatness and the power of his mind, and, with this belief, nothing will be so difficult and hard that it will not reveal itself to him. The Being of the universe, at first hidden and concealed, has no power which can offer resistance to the search for knowledge; it has to lay itself open before the seeker – to set before his eyes and give for his enjoyment, its riches and its depths’.

⁹² Cf. Hegel’s claim against Jacobi, that the latter sets up an unworkable antithesis between immediacy and mediation: cf. *Encyclopaedia Logic*, §§65-67, pp. 114-6 (*Werke*, VIII, pp. 155-8), and *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, III, p. 421 (*Werke*, XX, p. 328): ‘This opposition between immediacy and

mediacy is thus a very barren and quite empty determination; it is a platitude of the extremest type to consider anything like this to be a true opposition; it proceeds from a most modern understanding, which thinks that an immediacy can be something on its own account, without a mediation within itself’.

⁹³ Cf. *Encyclopaedia Logic*, §47, p. 90: ‘... Kant himself makes cognition in general, and even *experience*, consist in the fact that our *perceptions* are thought, i.e. that the determinations which first belong to perception are *transformed* into thought-determinations’ (*Werke*, VIII, p. 125). Cf. also *Encyclopaedia Logic*, §20 and §21 Addition, pp. 51 and 57-8 (*Werke*, VIII, p. 74 and p. 83): ‘Kant employed the awkward expression, that I “accompany” all my representations – and my sensations, desires, actions, etc., too... “I” is the existence of the entirely *abstract* universality, the abstractly *free*. Therefore “I” is *thinking* as the *subject*, and since at the same time I am in all my sensations, notions, states, etc., thought is present everywhere and pervades all these determinations as [their] category.../ In the “I” there is a manifold inner and outer content, and, according to the way in which this content is constituted, we behave as sensing, representing, remembering, [beings], etc. But the “I” is there in all of these, or, in other words, thinking is present everywhere. Thus man is always thinking, even when he simply intuits’. This is arguably also the moral of Hegel’s discussion of sense-certainty in the *Phenomenology*, where once again the target may plausibly be taken to be Jacobi’s empiricism, which *per impossibile* tries to avoid all *comprehension* in favour of sheer *apprehension*: see Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 58-66 (*Werke*, III, pp. 82-92).

⁹⁴ Cf. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* III, p. 176 (*Werke*, XX, p. 79); translation modified: ‘The empirical is not merely an observing, hearing, feeling, etc., a perception of the individual; for it really sets to work to find the species, the universal, to discover laws. Now because it does this, it comes within the territory of the Notion – it begets what pertains to the region of the Idea... The demand of *a priori* knowledge, which seems to imply that the Idea should construct from itself, is thus a reconstruction only’.

⁹⁵ Ameriks, ‘Hegel and Idealism’, pp. 394-5.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 395.

⁹⁷ In his later article, ‘Introduction: Interpreting German Idealism’, p. 8, Ameriks himself seems to recognize the legitimacy of thinking of idealism in this way. For further discussion see my *Hegel, Kant and the Structure of the Object* (London: Routledge, 1990), Ch. 5.

⁹⁸ Cf. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, p. 51 (*Werke*, V, p. 45): ‘Thought is an expression which attributes the determinations contained therein primarily to consciousness. But inasmuch as it is said that understanding, reason, is in the objective world, that mind and nature have universal laws to which their life and changes conform, then it is conceded that the determinations of thought equally have objective value and existence’; Hegel, *Encyclopaedia Logic*, §24 Addition, p. 57 (*Werke*, VIII, p. 82): ‘Just as thinking constitutes the substance of external things, so it is also the universal substance of what is spiritual... If we regard thinking as what is genuinely universal in everything natural and everything spiritual, too, then it overgrasps all of them and is the foundation of them all’.

⁹⁹ I am grateful to David Bell, Fred Beiser, Paul Franks, Sebastian Gardner and James Kreines for very helpful comments on earlier versions of this paper. I would also like to acknowledge the support of the Arts and Humanities Research Board, for funding the research leave during which this paper was written.