

# A Doctrine of Unfreedom: Hegel's Critique of Empiricist Indifference

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper considers the epistemological bases of Hegel's claim in the *Encyclopedia Logic* that historical empiricism is a "doctrine of unfreedom." Hegel argues this claim in two ways. Firstly, empiricism for Hegel is unable to account for its own cognitive activity, and this inability necessitates some form of idealism. In arguing that "Humans are always thinking, even if they are only perceiving," Hegel's idealism accounts for freedom by articulating the irreducibility of judgment in experience. This first argument is seen in deflationary Hegel scholarship to bring Kantian and Hegelian idealisms together. While valid to an extent, this reading does not explain Hegel's grouping of Kantianism with empiricism. This paper thus turns to a reconstruction of Hegel's second argument: for Hegel, empiricism illegitimately holds to an indifferentist account of the relations between givens, indicated by Hume's reduction of causality to contiguity and succession. Despite Kant's opposition to Hume, Hegel considers this empiricist form of relationality to persist within Kant's critical project. This indifferent, external or 'side-by-side' relation between givens will be shown to be addressed in the dialectic of something and other in the *Science of Logic*.

**KEYWORDS:** Hegel, Kant, empiricism, epistemology.

## 1. Introduction

The "Preliminary Conception" that opens the *Encyclopedia Logic* outlines what Hegel takes to be the theoretical and practical limitations of three prior 'positions of thought towards objectivity.' Namely: classical metaphysics; empiricism and Kantianism; and 'immediate knowing' (in the work of F.H. Jacobi). In the addition to §38, Hegel states:

Now, insofar as [the] sensory component is and remains a given for empiricism, it is a doctrine of unfreedom [*eine Lehre der Unfreiheit*], for freedom consists in my having no absolutely other over against me, but depending instead on a content that I am myself.

This paper unpacks the epistemological bases of the claim that empiricism denies human freedom in presenting the sensuously given as "absolutely other" to consciousness. In so doing it seeks to explain why empiricism is grouped with Kantianism in Hegel's *Encyclopedia*. It is contended that this grouping can only be fully explained by recognising that Hegel's critique of empiricism is argued in two distinct though interrelated ways.



On the one hand, Hegel argues that empiricism is unable to legitimate or verify universal and necessary relations solely by recourse to sense experience, and takes Hume's philosophy as indicative in this regard. The Humean demonstration that universal and necessary causal relationships are not properties of objects but merely a 'determination of the mind' opens for Hegel (as it did for Kant) onto an idealist account of the determinative role of thought in experience. In arguing that "Humans are always thinking, even if they are only perceiving," Hegel's idealism accounts for freedom by articulating the irreducibility of judgment. As such, the givenness and alterity of sense experience does not play a determinative explanatory role for human knowledge and action. This argument for irreducible judgment and concomitant critique of givenness is seen in deflationary, 'non-metaphysical' readings of Hegel to bring Kantian and Hegelian idealisms together.<sup>1</sup>

This reading of Hegel, however, does not explain Hegel's "Preliminary Conception" grouping together empiricism and Kantianism. A second argument for the unfreedom of empiricism thus needs to be reconstructed. Hegel's second argument is that empiricism models the mind-world relation on its account of the relation between particulars as indifferent, external, and 'side-by-side.' Hume is for Hegel again indicative: indifferent relationality finds its clearest expression in Hume's reduction of causation to contiguity and succession (spatial and temporal forms of 'side-by-sideness'). The dialectic of 'something' and 'other' in the first book of the *Science of Logic* (the 'Being Logic') will be presented here as Hegel's onto-logical critique of the indifferentist view.<sup>2</sup> In Hegel's thinking, indifference is linked to unfreedom as a model of the relation between givens in the world *and* between mind and world. For Hegel, both Hume and Kant hold that only a specifically 'subjective' contribution can ground the meaningful relation of indifferent givens to one another ('fiction' and its cognates in Hume; transcendental synthesis in

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<sup>1</sup> The non-metaphysical reading is usually seen to begin with Robert Pippin's seminal work, **Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness**. Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1989. For an overview of this and related texts, see LUMSDEN, S. The Rise of the Non-Metaphysical Hegel. **Philosophy Compass**, n. 3/1, 2008, p. 51-65. For a 'revised metaphysical' critique of Pippin's reading see HOULGATE, S. **The Opening of Hegel's Logic**. West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2006, p. 137-143. Adrian Johnston makes a similar case and notes the "growing list of deflationism's discontents" in Where to Start? Robert Pippin, Slavoj Žižek, and the True Beginning(s) of Hegel's System. **Crisis & Critique**, n. 1:3, 2014, p. 371-418.

<sup>2</sup> The *Phenomenology's Perception* chapter is usually presented as Hegel's critique of the empiricist account of the object (and its characteristic tension between unity and plurality of properties). WESTPHAL. Hegel and Hume on Perception. See also HOULGATE, S. **Hegel's 'Phenomenology of Spirit': A Reader's Guide**. London: Bloomsbury, 2013, p. 48. The *Logic* is here preferred in order to complement scholarly appreciation of this phenomenological analysis with an account of its logical counterpart.

Kant). This subjective contribution however remains ungrounded in the world, in the sense that it is ‘projected’ on to it. On this picture, the world is a mass of indifferent givens themselves indifferent to processes of determination grounded in the activity of the subject.<sup>3</sup> The practical consequence of this epistemological picture is in Hegel’s view that the world and human mindedness remain ‘absolutely other.’ In Hume, the pragmatic guides for human moral action (‘belief’) cannot be fully related to or grounded in that which is rationally demonstrable (‘knowledge’). In Kant, this dualism continues in the distinction between practical faith and cognition that Hegel addresses in the 1802 *Faith and Knowledge*, which already links this Kantian dualism to British empiricism.<sup>4</sup> It should be noted at this point that this paper will not tackle practical philosophy directly, but approach the epistemological bases that in Hegel’s mature work are said to lead to faith/knowledge dualism.

It should also be noted that I am mindful of two possible objections to the approach taken here. Firstly, following Hegel’s grouping of Kant and Hume obviously risks reduction, and certainly jars with Kant’s own self-presentation. However, a number of non-Hegelian commentators – recent and not-so recent – suggest clear similarities between Humean and Kantian projects: both seek to limit the pretensions of reason (or certain forms of rational justification), by dividing moral motivation from cognition proper.<sup>5</sup> And while Hume and Kant obviously differ in their respective naturalism and transcendentalism, it has also been argued that Hume’s non-experientially grounded terms (‘belief,’ ‘fiction,’ and so on) function similarly to the Kantian *a priori*.<sup>6</sup> Hegel’s insistence

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<sup>3</sup> That Kant maintains in some way the empiricist account of the object as a ‘bundle’ of indifferent properties externally determined by subjective activity is supported by STERN, R. **Hegel, Kant, and the Structure of the Object**. London: Routledge, 1990, p. 17-22. Stern’s work is indispensable to the claims advanced in this paper, namely his recognition of the *Logic* as the site of Hegel’s alternative to empiricist and Kantian epistemology. While Stern focuses on the positive construction of Hegel’s alternative in the *Logic*’s third book, the focus here is ultimately on the critical deconstruction of empiricist indifference in the *Logic*’s first book.

<sup>4</sup> For a good overview of Hegel’s critique of Kantian morality and Hegel’s strategy of contesting the theoretical bases of that morality see SEDGWICK, S. **Hegel’s Critique of Kant: From Dichotomy to Identity**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 2-6. For Hegel’s early connection of Kantian morality and empiricism, see HEGEL, G.W.F. **Faith and Knowledge**. Trans. W. Cerf. Albany: SUNY Press, p. 67-69.

<sup>5</sup> BECK, L. W. **Essays on Kant and Hume**. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978, p. 111-129. ALLISON, H. E. **Custom and Reason in Hume: A Kantian Reading of the First Book of the Treatise**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 11.

<sup>6</sup> Beck cites contemporary claims for the a priori status of certain elements of Humean mindedness in **Essays**, p. 111. More recently, see WESTPHAL, K. R. Hegel and Hume on Perception and Concept-Empiricism. **Journal of the History of Philosophy**, n. 36:1, 1998. But note Westphal’s re-phrasing of the

on the shared ‘subjectivism’ of Hume and Kant certainly goes to this point, and reconstructing Hegel’s account of indifference enables us to perceive further similarities in Hume and Kant’s respective epistemological infrastructures. Secondly, to follow Hegel’s reading of Kantian idealism as ‘subjectivist’ is particularly contentious in contemporary scholarship, a consequence of the deflationary Kantian reading of Hegel, and the subsequent worrying of the Kant-Hegel relation.<sup>7</sup> For the purposes of this article, I take Sally Sedgwick’s eloquent defence of the Hegelian reading of Kant against contemporary Kantians as sufficiently compelling - at least such that scholars of German Idealism (and post-Kantian philosophy more generally) should at least be interested in the possible configurations of realism and idealism opened by Hegel’s critique of Kant.<sup>8</sup>

Finally I should note that after pursuing this epistemological issue into Hegel’s ontology, we will not have room to examine Hegel’s claims against Kantianism in any real detail. It must suffice to note that, for Hegel, Kant unreflectively repeats empiricism’s unsustainable model of external relation in a number of ways – most obviously in the side-by-side typographical presentation of the antinomies in the *Transcendental Dialectic*, but also the presentation of the categories as ‘outside of one another,’ i.e. as not internally related. These critiques of Kantianism by Hegel and other post-Kantians are well known (i.e. the need for an overcoming of the nature-freedom antinomy and the need for an immanent deduction of the categories).<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, their explication here opens an understanding of Hegel’s and Kant’s triangulation around Hume’s work.

This paper is divided into three parts. It begins by outlining Hume’s attempt to verify certain ‘philosophical relations’ (in particular causation) via sense experience in the *Treatise*, reconstructing what I take, from a generally idealist perspective, to be the limits

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issue. WESTPHAL, K. R. Hume, Empiricism, and the Generality of Thought. *Dialogue*, n. 52:2, 2013, p. 233-270.

<sup>7</sup> Stephen Houlgate and Karl Ameriks have recently summarised their opposed positions on the question of Hegel’s charge of Kantian ‘subjectivism.’ HOULGATE, S. and AMERIKS, K. Hegel’s Critique of Kant. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume*, n. LXXXIX, 2015, p. 21-60.

<sup>8</sup> SEDGWICK, S. Hegel, McDowell and Recent Defences of Kant. In: DELIGIORGI, K. (Ed.). *Hegel: New Directions*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2014, p. 49-68. For all his criticisms of Houlgate’s Hegelian position, Ameriks suggests that Kant’s ‘moderate agnosticism’ about “whatever transcends our intuitive sphere of knowledge” nonetheless “still leaves room for considering, case by case, the ambition arguments about things in themselves that Hegelians and others offer.” AMERIKS. *Hegel’s Critique of Kant*, p. 59. This more ecumenical position would perhaps not be supported by those that would contest Ameriks’ reading of Kant’s philosophy as retaining a commitment to a realist (rather than epistemic) conception of noumena. This debate however - namely between Ameriks and Henry Allison - falls outside the scope of this paper.

<sup>9</sup> See BEISER, F. *German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism, 1781-1801*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002.

of this project as they emerge in Hume's text.<sup>10</sup> This outline makes no claim to an original reading of Hume's work.<sup>11</sup> However, it establishes the centrality of the question of necessary relation for Humean empiricism and the German idealist response.<sup>12</sup> Secondly, this paper considers Hegel's first 'Kantian' argument against empiricism, i.e. the irreducibility of judgment in experience. It turns finally to Hegel's dialectical overcoming of the form of relations maintained in empiricism (and in a certain way, Kantianism) in a reading of parts of the first book of the *Science of Logic* proper.

## 2. Hume's Verification Empiricism

Hume's *Treatise* begins by re-affirming the empiricist ambition to ground knowledge claims in sensuous experience, following 'some late philosophers in England,' primarily 'Mr. Locke.' As Hume puts it: "And tho' we must endeavour to render all our principles as universal as possible... 'tis still certain we cannot go beyond experience... or establish any principles which are not founded on that authority" (0.8).<sup>13</sup> The goal of the first book of the *Treatise* is to develop and then apply a new, post-Lockean method to determine the experiential authority of such 'principles' – a kind of "Verification Empiricism."<sup>14</sup> This empiricism is developed in a series of distinctions, the first of which

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<sup>10</sup> I recognise that the choice of the *Treatise* over the *Enquiry* is contentious. I note Galen Strawson's point that the *Enquiry* should be taken as the text of record. STRAWSON, G. David Hume: Objects and Power. In: Read, R.; Richman, K. A. (Eds.). **The New Hume Debate**. Abingdon: Routledge, 2007, p. 32-33. However, Westphal presents compelling evidence that the *Treatise* is the text that Hegel read, and as such will be read here. WESTPHAL. Hegel and Hume on Perception, p. 100. For a convincing argument for the priority of the *Treatise* in relation to certain topics relating to Kantian idealism (and of 'intrinsic philosophical interest' more generally) see Allison's discussion in the introduction to **Custom and Reason**, p. 11-12. It is understood however that Kant only had access to the *Enquiry* before writing the first *Critique* – the *Treatise* was available in German only in small part by 1781. GUYER, P. **Knowledge, Reason and Taste: Kant's Response to Hume**. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> Nor can it, in the current environment of Hume studies, claim to be self-evident or non-contentious. For an overview of current debate in Hume studies (which circles precisely these issues of relationality and realism), see RICHMAN, K. A. Debating the New Hume. **The New Hume Debate**, p. 1-15.

<sup>12</sup> My argument for the centrality of the problem of relation in empiricism and idealism is indebted to Andrew Benjamin's work, in particular the argument that Kantian idealism does not amount to a fully successful 'counter-measure' to empiricism, insofar as it continues to privilege *relata* over relation. BENJAMIN, A. **Towards a Relational Ontology**. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015, p. 6-13. In the context of this paper, it can be suggested that overcoming the priority of *relata* over relation can be seen as a crucial element in understanding the Anglo-American post-positivist critique of givenness.

<sup>13</sup> Hume's *Treatise* will be cited by book, part, section and paragraph, with the exception of lines from its introduction, marked by '0' and paragraph number. HUME, D. **A Treatise of Human Nature**, Norton, D. F.; Norton, M. J. (Eds.) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

<sup>14</sup> Kenneth Westphal's summary definitions of 'concept,' 'verification,' 'meaning,' and 'judgement' empiricism has been helpful here. 'Verification empiricism' is only that aspect of Hume's empiricist

is between “perceptions” and “relations.”<sup>15</sup> As Hume’s account of perception grounds his account of relation, both will need to be briefly overviewed here.

Hume shares the assumptions of the “Modern Way of Ideas” instantiated by Descartes and carried on in Locke: that is, that the mind is immediately aware of mental entities that represent or are in some way about objects in the world, not the world itself.<sup>16</sup> “Perceptions” is Hume’s name for these mental entities, which are in turn divided into “Ideas” and “Impressions.” Ideas and impressions are different not in kind but in degree of “force,” “vivacity” and “liveliness.” Impressions moreover are held to cause ideas.<sup>17</sup> The project of Hume’s verification empiricism thus begins with a ‘Copy Theory’ of ideas, that “all our ideas are copy’d from our impressions” (1.3.1.7). The result of this definitional work is to hold simple impressions as foundational and continuous with simple ideas, and ultimately foundational in the case of complex ideas (once the mediation of the ‘imagination’ in combining simple ideas is accounted for). As such, our idea of ‘red’ is linkable to and legitimated by a sensuous encounter with a red thing.<sup>18</sup> Another (possibly contentious) way of putting this is to say that ‘red’ ‘makes sense’ or has meaning because of the existence of particular red things and our experience of them. This delineates a methodology for establishing the legitimacy of knowledge claims: “the examination of the impression bestows a clearness on the idea” (1.3.2.4). If such an examination is impossible or incoherent, the idea in question does not constitute legitimately grounded knowledge, but something with a non- or extra-rational status (designated by the linked terms ‘fiction,’ ‘custom,’ ‘habit,’ ‘belief’ and human ‘nature’).

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approach that is most salient here. Westphal’s definition will be given shortly. WESTPHAL, K. **Hegel’s Epistemological Realism**. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989, p. 48.

<sup>15</sup> “Perceptions and relations... are the basic features of all the philosophical relations found in the treatise.” NORTON, D. F. Introduction to **A Treatise of Human Nature**, by David Hume. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. I17.

<sup>16</sup> GARRETT, D. **Hume**. London: Routledge, 2015, p. 36.

<sup>17</sup> This causal connection between particular impressions and ideas is cited by Allison in **Custom and Reason in Hume** as evidence of Hume’s belief in the real existence of causal powers – his scepticism only goes to our knowledge of such powers. Garrett briefly lists the positions available in the ‘sharp interpretive dispute’ surrounding the philosophical status of Hume’s account of causation. GARRETT, **Hume**, p. 172-174. For a series of engagements with broadly similar ‘sceptical realist’ readings of Hume (as against traditional sceptical readings, according to which Hume denies any knowledge about the reality of causes at all), see the essays collected in READ, R; RICHMAN K.A. (Eds). **The New Hume Debate**. London: Routledge, 2007.

<sup>18</sup> There is of course much more to be said here. A ‘complex’ idea – Hume’s example is the biblical ‘New Jerusalem’ – might seem untraceable to such a sensuous encounter, but is in fact the result of the combination in imagination of a series of simple ideas. Similarly, complex impressions – the example is of eating an apple – can be broken down into simple elements (sweet, hard, heavy, and so on). In both ‘complex’ cases the continuity of simple idea and impression is maintained.

The *Treatise* thus grounds knowledge of a particular idea in a particular impression. The critical efficacy of this position are quickly demonstrated: Hume wastes no time in deploying his verificatory methodology to disqualify the rationalist metaphysical tradition's claim for knowledge outside of the sense experience of particulars. For Hume, a metaphysics of substance is found to be meaningless – “we have therefore no idea of substance, distinct from that of a collection of particular qualities, nor have we any other meaning when we either talk or reason concerning it” (1.1.6.1). Given the (seeming) success of verification empiricism in countering ‘extravagant’ metaphysics, it is understandable that versions of Hume’s ‘phenomenalist foundationalism’ have had and continue to have philosophical appeal.<sup>19</sup>

However, Hume’s program is complicated by a consideration of the forms of ‘relation’ between ideas. Indeed, Hume will find it impossible to experientially ground any form of ‘necessary’ relation between particulars, of which causal law is the paradigm. Kenneth R. Westphal in *Hegel’s Epistemological Realism* defines verification empiricism as: “For any (non-logical) proposition that is known to be true, there is a sensory experience that confirms the proposition.”<sup>20</sup> For Hume, propositions concern claims for relation: “All kinds of reasoning consist in nothing but a *comparison*, and a discovery of those relations, either constant or inconstant, which two or more objects bear to each other.” (1.3.2.2). Hume begins by distinguishing between ‘natural’ and ‘philosophical’ relations. Natural relations are those taken to be principles of psychological association – resemblance, contiguity, and causation. For Hume, the imagination will naturally tend to relate ideas along these lines – in contiguity, for example, we think of the branch of a tree and then ‘naturally’ of its leaves. Philosophical relations are in contrast the result of the conscious, intentional placing of ideas together in an attempt to determine their relation. These ‘philosophical relations’ are then further divided. Resemblance, proportion, quality and contrariety “depend entirely on the ideas, which we compare together” (1.3.1.1). That is to say, the manner and order of appearance of these ideas does not influence their

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<sup>19</sup> See Willem A. Devries discussion of early twentieth-century Russellian epistemology in these terms. DEVRIES, W. A. **Wilfrid Sellars**. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005, p. 95-98. See also James Kreines recent Hegelian critique of historical and contemporary ‘humeanism’ – with a lower-case to bracket debates about Hume’s texts themselves. KREINES, J. **Reason in the World**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 57-77. Kreines’ text is a serious contribution to the empiricism-Hegel relation, and will be returned to in section three below.

<sup>20</sup> WESTPHAL. **Hegel’s Epistemological Realism**, p. 48.

relation. Due to this independence from temporal contexts of appearing, these relations “can be objects of knowledge and certainty” (1.3.1.2). In contrast, identity, relations of time and place, and causation “may be chang’d without any change in the ideas” (1.3.1.1). In David Fate Norton’s gloss, these “relations are affected by, and even determined by, the manner and or order in which ideas or ‘objects’ come before the mind.”<sup>21</sup> What concerns us is that Hume takes the causality to be both the most important of the latter grouping of philosophical relations, *and* to resolve in some sense in the ‘natural’ relation of psychological association.

For Hume, causation is primarily at issue because ‘identity’ and ‘relations of time and place’ do not lead the mind beyond what is immediately present to the senses, either to discover the real existence of the relations of objects. “Tis only *causation*, which produces such a connexion, as to give us assurance from the existence or action of one object, that ‘twas follow’d or preceded by any other existence or action...” (1.3.2.2). What Hume means is that when a claim for identity or for spatial-temporal relation goes beyond what is immediately present, it implies a causal claim (“But this conclusion beyond the impressions of our senses can be founding only on the connexion of *cause and effect*”). For example, if an object that we hold to be self-identical presents different qualities at point A and point B after an interval in observation (e.g. a tree in summer and then in winter) we assume some cause has produced this change in qualitative state. For Hume, the uniqueness of the causal claim is that it moves from something sensuously present to something absent but purportedly real – it pretends to “discover the real existence of the relation of objects.” As Henry E. Allison puts it, unlike identity and situation, “causal connections cannot be immediately perceived, as if some objects come stamped as causes and others as effects.”<sup>22</sup> This lack of immediacy makes it a ‘double-edged sword’ – on the one hand, “... it is a necessary condition of the relation serving as a principle of inference from the observed to the unobserved, whereas, on the other, it makes it problematic and in need of criteria to justify its inferential use.”<sup>23</sup> It is as such the test case for the legitimacy

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<sup>21</sup> NORTON. Introduction, p. I24. See also Allison’s discussion in **Custom and Reason**, p. 64. Most important to note is that the distinction between these two forms of philosophical relation do not resolve into logical and non-logical relation – both are, to put it in Kantian terms, concerned with objects of possible experience.

<sup>22</sup> ALLISON. **Custom and Reason**, p. 90.

<sup>23</sup> ALLISON. **Custom and Reason**, p. 90.



of inferential reasoning. In short, Hume asks if stable criteria for an exercise of causal inference be drawn from experience.

As is well-known, Hume finds that his verification empiricism cannot ground the causal ‘connexion’ between events, insofar as causation implies the necessity and universality of that relation (that something ‘always’ follows from something else in ‘all’ instances).<sup>24</sup> Hume suggests an examination of the experiential legitimacy of claims for causal relation: “Let us therefore cast our eye on any two objects, which we call cause and effect, and turn them on all sides, in order to find that impression, which produces an idea of such prodigious consequence.” (1.3.2.5). When we claim that two events are standing in a relationship of cause and effect to one another, we are in fact inferring from our impression of two distinct relations – contiguity and succession. Contiguity names the two events “lying” next to one another in space, while “succession” names the relation of two events as following after one another in time (1.3.12). The attempt to trace cause and effect to experience leads to two forms of relation that in themselves do not amount to a causal relation. At best we find two events in ‘constant conjunction.’ As such, Hume finds that our belief in causality is not legitimated by experience but is in some sense a ‘habitual’ association contributed by the psychology of the minded subject. As Allison puts it in his *Custom and Reason in Hume*, “causation as a philosophical relation is dependent upon the natural relation.”<sup>25</sup>

Aping the surprise of his presumed (Lockean) reader at reaching his conclusion, Hume exclaims: “What! the efficacy of causes lie in the determination of the mind!” (1.3.14.26). Put differently, the claim that something ‘always’ follows from something else in ‘all’ instances is never present to us in sense-experience. In Hume’s famous example, the rising of the sun tomorrow morning can only be said to be ‘probable,’ but not necessary (unless we were present to all past and future sunsets). That Hume recognises the legitimacy of relations of contiguity and succession – wherein things are in some sense ‘side-by-side’ one another in space contiguity or time succession – but cannot establish necessary causality outside of habits of association will be important to the argument for empiricism as indifferentist considered below.

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<sup>24</sup> “...our impressions of sensation never include an impression from which this idea of causal necessity is copied.” NORTON. Introduction, p. 124.

<sup>25</sup> ALLISON. *Custom and Reason*, p. 121.

### 3. *The Irreducibility of Judgment*

It is possible now to map Hume, Kant and Hegel's respective strategies in response to the limitation on claims for necessary relation discovered in the first book of the *Treatise*. For Hume, that claims for universality go to probability rather than necessity – that they are grounded in our 'nature' and not our 'philosophy' – need not lead philosophy to 'despair.' Rather, the critical investigation into the limits of universally necessary knowledge (1) dissolves the historical philosophical programs that would and in fact has led to such despair, and (2) provides a qualification on knowledge claims amounting to a regulative rule and pragmatic revisability clause.

(1) In discussing the critical or deflationary effect that the empirical enterprise has on the metaphysical 'desire' for necessity and universality, Hume claims in introducing the *Treatise* that "despair has almost the same effect upon us with enjoyment, and that we are no sooner acquainted with the impossibility of satisfying any desire, than the desire itself vanishes" (0.9). Despair reverses into a kind of enjoyment when a philosophical desire (namely for universality and necessity) is dissolved in the face of the demonstrated impossibility of its satisfaction.<sup>26</sup> (2) As Lewis White Beck argues in his classic study, Hume is not content to describe concept acquisition and use, but wants to provide a normative framework for use based on their discovered source. For Beck, "These rules, of course, do not have a transcendental origin or sanction, though they function normatively as if they were a priori regulative." Beck describes the Humean subject as in "a constant battle with itself," between "its instinctive inference to causation from mere association which may be accidental," and "its reflective weighing of evidence to achieve a conception of the world less affected by the vagaries of accidental experience."<sup>27</sup> That is, claims for natural probability are always revisable by future rational reflection placing them in the former category rather than the latter.

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<sup>26</sup> This is supported in the section *Of the Antient Philosophy* (1.4.3), which advocates a moderate scepticism against both the unconsidered common sense belief in causal realism and the peripatetic following of 'every trivial propensity of the imagination' (i.e. sustaining an ideas of substance and accident, and moreso sympathy and antipathy).

<sup>27</sup> BECK. *Studies in Kant and Hume*, p. 123. Allison's supports this claim but rephrases it in Sellarsian terms: causality is both within and without the 'logical space of reasons.' As a natural relation it does not submit to rational justification; as a philosophical relation it is the site of contestable and revisable judgments. ALLISON. *Custom and Reason*, p. 73.

The Kantian analogues here are conspicuous. As Allison puts it in *Custom and Reason in Hume*, “Hume’s analysis of the futile striving for closure, which he regards as endemic to philosophical system builders, bears more than a passing resemblance to Kant’s equally Sisyphean account of reason’s quest for the ‘unconditioned.’”<sup>28</sup> Allison goes so far as to suggest that both Hume is also engaged in a certain “critique of pure reason,” insofar as Hume suggests that reason acting without limitation by certain non-rational factors (nature, custom, et cetera) leads itself into error.<sup>29</sup> I would add that as it is reasoned reflection on our own use of reason that produces this result, the recommendation of reliance on our ‘nature’ for certain inductive judgments can importantly be seen as reason’s own *self*-limitation. That is, reason for Hume is so integral in building the case for the limited and revisable legitimacy of certain natural propensities that it cannot be relegated to a secondary role.<sup>30</sup> This idea of reason judging its own proper use is typically Kantian.<sup>31</sup>

However, at the same time as both appear engaged in a project of rational self-limitation in the theoretical sphere, Hume’s naturalistic reduction of morality to custom and Kant’s emphasis on rational self-determination in practice appear opposed as reason to unreason.<sup>32</sup> While Hume claims that “Reason is, and ought only to be a slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them” (2.3.3.4), for Kant “Reason does not beg but commands” (A653/B681) – not only providing a regulative idea for knowledge in the theoretical sphere, but in providing rational data for practical purposes.<sup>33</sup> From this perspective, the Kant-Hume relation thus turns on (1) what difference naturalistic and transcendental deductions of universality make for the project of

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<sup>28</sup> ALLISON. *Custom and Reason*, p. 11.

<sup>29</sup> As Paul Redding puts it: “...reasoning from concepts alone can result in no substantial knowledge at all. It is in this sense that it is a «critique» of «pure reason» (reasoning from concepts alone).” REDDING, P. *Continental Idealism: Leibniz to Nietzsche*. London: Routledge, 2009, p. 50.

<sup>30</sup> “Rather than being either a slave to sentiment or an instructive mode of natural belief, I believe it is more accurate to claim that Humean reason is an inferential capacity that is dependent for its operation upon non-rational (not irrational) propensities of the imagination in the same way as causation as a philosophical relation is dependent upon the natural relation. In fact, since the relation of cause and effect is reason’s inferential principle for Hume, these are two ways of saying the same thing.” ALLISON. *Custom and Reason*, p. 121.

<sup>31</sup> See for example, KANT, I. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. P. Guyer; A. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, A xi. (Hereafter **CPR**).

<sup>32</sup> “In the case of moral philosophy, the difference between a philosopher who held that the use of reason is never more than merely instrumental to the realization of goals set entirely by sentiment and one who held that the fundamental principle of morality must be founded on pure reason is obvious...” GUYER. *Knowledge, Reason and Taste*, p. 8.

<sup>33</sup> Allison draws my attention to these particular quotes. *Custom and Reason*, p. 113.

the self-limitation of reason; and (2) whether the reason-as-commander/reason-as-slave metaphors are ultimately misleading regarding the practical status and relationship of rational and non-rational motivations for action in Kant and Hume.

Hegel's answers to both questions are revealing. (1) Whether an associative habit or *a priori* category of the understanding, both Kant and Hume for Hegel are subjectivist. Subjectivism involves a loss of universally necessary relations between objects conceivable 'beyond' the constitution of the subject (i.e. it involves some form of anti-realism).<sup>34</sup> As Hegel states in the *Encyclopedia*, Kant has not disputed the empiricist location of universality and necessity in the subject, but has "merely put forward a different explanation of that fact" (§40). The complication, however, is that in resisting this subjectivism Hegel's first and most recognisable move is to avail himself of a broadly Kantian argument for the irreducibility of judgment in experience. The remainder of this section goes to this argument.<sup>35</sup> (2) On the question of the practical implications of epistemological auto-critique, for Hegel neither Kant nor Hume get the distribution of theoretical/practical (or knowledge/belief) right, insofar as (a) these terms cannot be meaningfully related; and (b) both Kant and Hume open themselves to anti-rationalist co-optation (as their immediate reception in Germany shows).<sup>36</sup> This question - how empiricist and by extension Kantian epistemology lays the basis for a "doctrine of unfreedom" - is more complicated again, and will be treated (albeit in an attenuated and programmatic form) in the final section.

Hegel follows Hume in arguing that necessity and universality cannot be grounded in any given experience, but follows Kant in considering them *a priori*. As Kant puts it in the

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<sup>34</sup> For a rejection of Hegel's characterisation of Kantian idealism as somehow cutting us off from the world due to its insistence on a thing-in-itself, see ALLISON, H. E. **Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense**. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

<sup>35</sup> Karl Ameriks would contest the reduction of transcendental idealism to a thesis about irreducible mindedness, emphasising rather Kant's discrete arguments for the ideality of space and time. The former resembles the 'short argument' to idealism critiqued in detail in AMERIKS, K. **Kant and the Fate of Autonomy**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 163-186.

<sup>36</sup> For a philosophical history of this period organised around rationalism and its opponents, see BEISER, F. **The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte**. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989. Westphal connects the persistence of belief in the absence of rational justification to the maintenance of non-rational authority, though in the context of Jacobi's and Hamann's fideist appropriation of "Of Scepticism with Regard to the Senses" (1.4.2.): "...Hegel recognized empiricist scepticism with regard to outer things as the fulcrum on which faith hoists itself above reason. In order to defend the cognitive claims of philosophy Hegel must thoroughly refute empiricist scepticism." WESTPHAL. Hegel and Hume on Perception, p. 100. See also DI GIOVANNI, G. Hume, Jacobi, and Common Sense. An Episode in the Reception of Hume in Germany at the Time of Kant. **Kant-Studien**, n. 89:1, 1989.

B introduction: “Experience teaches us, to be sure, that something is constituted thus and so, but not that it could be otherwise.”<sup>37</sup> Hegel similarly says, “empirical observation does indeed show many, indeed countless, perceptions that are alike. Still, ‘universality’ is something entirely different from a large amount” (*EL* §39). Again, we have no possible experience of an ‘always’ for ‘all’ – unless we were to experience all episodes of a certain kind from the beginning of the universe to its end.

As Kant suggests in the introduction to the *Prolegomena*, Hume’s treatment of causality opened the door to the possibility of more *a priori* thought determinations.<sup>38</sup> Hegel’s own thinking follows this pluralization of *a priori* categories:

The fundamental delusion in scientific empiricism is always that it uses the metaphysical categories of matter, force (not to mention those of the one, the many, universality, infinity, etc.), and proceeds to make inferences guided by such categories... ignorant that in so doing it itself contains and pursues metaphysics and that it uses those categories and their relationships in a completely uncritical and unconscious fashion. (*EL* §38).

Hegel’s example is the claim, “it is a green leaf,” which already “mixes” up the non-empirical categories of “being” (the “is”) and “singularity” (the “a”) in with the empirical givenness of the leaf. At this point, the generally Kantian line of critique Hegel pursues in the above passages can be summed in the line: “Humans are always thinking, even if they are only perceiving” (*EL* §24).

For deflationary readings of Hegel, the demonstration of the irreducibility of thought in experience grounds a claim for autonomy couched in terms of revisable judgment. Given the irreducibility of thought (mediation), there is no foundational sense-impression (i.e. immediacy) on which knowledge of a particular can be grounded. As such, in any cognitive claim, one necessarily makes a judgment of the given object without that object guaranteeing the correctness of such judgment. In Allison’s words from *Transcendental Idealism*, “The basic problem is that we cannot, as it were, stand outside our representations in order to compare them with some transcendently real entity.”<sup>39</sup> Put differently, and to lean on Hegel’s demonstration in of the impossibility of immediate knowledge by acquaintance in the opening “Sense-certainty” chapter of the

<sup>37</sup> CPR, B 3. This is followed by an immediate mention and rejection of Hume, B 5.

<sup>38</sup> KANT, I. *Prolegomena to any future metaphysics*. Trans. G. Hatfield. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 4:260.

<sup>39</sup> ALLISON. *Transcendental Idealism*, p. 60.

*Phenomenology*, one's judgment is not legitimated by pointing to the object as it is before the intervention of such pointing. Thought, not its object, sets the terms of its relation to objectivity. In turn, we are 'free' because our judgments are not determined by the immediacy of the thing, but in some sense by thought as 'our own' activity. This minimal freedom is argued for in Kant's first *Critique* in the account of experimental method: rather than simply taking evidence ready-made from the world, the experimental method testifies to freedom insofar as it sets the terms of such evidence by asking a "question" of the world (a hypothesis).<sup>40</sup>

Moreover, as judgment is implicitly always 'our' judgment, we are able to explicitly reflect on our experience as revisable episodes of such judgment. In Terry Pinkard's formulation:

We must be able – that is, we have the capacity, even if we do not always exercise it – to recognise of any representation that we might only be thinking it, that our experience might turn out not to be the truthful awareness we took it to be... Reporting what one thinks turns out not to be just reporting. It is as much one's taking a position on things.<sup>41</sup>

It is here that the language of 'commitment' will emerge for the deflationary camp – to judge is to implicitly commit oneself to a revisable judgment, and to be able to enter into the game of 'giving and asking for reasons,' the Sellarsian 'Space of Reasons' by explicitly acknowledging one's judgments 'as' judgments. In both Pippin and Brandom, this this move is taken to be the essential continuity between Hegel and Kant – that perceptual acts are implicit acts of judgment, opening an irreducibly normative dimension to human activity (one can judge more or less accurately). Such normativity is irreducible due to the inability of the sensuously immediate to act as a final authority for discursively minded creatures.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> CPR, B xiii.

<sup>41</sup> PINKARD, T. *Hegel's Naturalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 45-46.

<sup>42</sup> For both, the 'transcendental unity of apperception' names the possibility of explicitly reflecting on perceptual episodes as constituted by such judging. For an overview of the problematic of apperception and revisable commitment, see BRANDOM, R. *Reason in Philosophy: Animating Ideas*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap, 2009, p. 12-18; PIPPIN, R. *Hegel's Idealism*, p. 17-24.

#### 4. Indifferentism and 'Unfreedom'

Another way to put this generally idealist point is to say that the organisation of sensory givens into relation is not provided by sensory givens themselves but is supplied by the categories of thought. Westphal in *Hegel and Hume on Perception and Concept-Empiricism* argues that, in Hegel's thinking, this applies as much to the relations 'between' objects as to the relations of distinct properties 'within' a single object ('perceptual synthesis'). Westphal rightly takes the "Perception" chapter of the *Phenomenology* as crucial. For our purposes we can note that that chapter's key example – the properties of a cube of salt – is repeated in the *Encyclopedia's* "Preliminary Conception", though changed to a cube of sugar. In glossing the Critical Philosophy after treating empiricism, Hegel asks us to "Consider, for instance, a piece of sugar. It is hard, white, sweet, and so on. But now we say that all these properties are united in *one* object, and this *unity* does not exist in sensation." (*EL* §42). For Hegel, as for Kant, a relation of unity between 'simple impressions' cannot be demonstrated in observation. Any grouping of particulars under a category that unifies them is thus not explicable by empiricism, and yet practiced by it. Westphal however points out that, from Hegel's point of view, this is a problem as much for Kant's account of sense-experience as Hume's:

The main point is that, on Hume's view as well as Kant's the relata of a supposed causal relation, or analogously our sensory representations of that relation, 'which succeed one another or [stand] next to one another' are originally 'of themselves altogether indifferent to each other.' That holds of Humean 'objects,' which are supposed to be indifferently either outer things or sensory impressions, and it holds as well of Kantian sensations (*Empfindungen*): in principle they are completely independent of each other.<sup>43</sup>

Westphal goes on to suggest that Hegel's goal is to reconceive relata "in fundamentally different terms."<sup>44</sup> A key step toward this goal is the immanent critique of the empiricist account of indifferent givens advanced in the *Logic*.

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<sup>43</sup> WESTPHAL. *Hegel and Hume on Perception*, 107-108.

<sup>44</sup> WESTPHAL. *Hegel and Hume on Perception*, 108. Again, that reconception is best presented in STERN. **The Structure of the Object.** Here we will focus only on the *Logic's* critical work on relata and relation, which Stern does not directly consider.

We can begin by seeing this critique developed within the *Encyclopedia Logic* account. In the addition to §38, Hegel rehearses his critique of empiricism as involved in ‘uncritical and unconscious’ abstraction this time with regard to ‘materialism’ as the doctrinal outcome of empirical method. The debt to Hume here is obvious – it is precisely the argument against substance metaphysics encountered in Hume earlier – except that Hegel turns it against empiricism itself. In materialism, “matter is supposed to be the foundation of everything sensory,”

However, matter itself is already an abstraction, something that cannot be perceived as such. One can, therefore, say that there is no matter, since however it exists concretely it is always something determinate, concrete. Nevertheless, the abstraction called matter is supposed to be the foundation of everything sensory, i.e. the sensory as such, the absolute individuation in itself, and thus what are outside one another [*Aussereinanderseiende*].

Immediately after this long compound (‘outside-one-another-being’), Hegel makes the claim for empiricist ‘unfreedom.’ In line with the overview of Hume’s position on the perceptual legitimacy of contiguity and succession above, Hegel states that “empirical observation indeed affords us perceptions of changes *following upon one another*, or of objects lying side-by-side, *but no connection involving necessity*” (§39). James Kreines in his 2015 *Reason in the World* puts the ontological implication of this indifferentist account of perception as such: “So reality is akin to a mosaic, exhausted by individual tiles whose features would have allowed them equally well to have been placed in any conceivable other arrangement.”<sup>45</sup> This is Russell’s infamous ‘bucket of shot’ view of the universe. For Kreines, such a view is susceptible to the Kantian-Hegelian critiques outlined above, i.e. that empiricism is a kind of disavowed metaphysics. Kreines, however, does not consider this idealist critique fully satisfactory in contemporary debate, however, citing more recent empiricist arguments for the simplicity and efficacy of phenomenalist foundationalism ‘even if’ it unavoidably constitutes a metaphysics unjustified from within the empiricist approach itself. Kreines’ alternative Hegel-inspired counter-empiricist argument (which goes to the difference between empiricist (re-)description and ‘metaphysical’ explanation) is important in this contemporary context.<sup>46</sup> I here follow a different (though

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<sup>45</sup> KREINES. *Reason in the World*, p. 58.

<sup>46</sup> KREINES. *Reason in the World*, p. 69. Kreines treats many of the same passages from the *Encyclopedia Logic* as this paper. An earlier reading of Kreines’ book would certainly have clarified and simplified the presentation of Hegelian arguments against empiricism here.



complementary) path, tracing empiricist indifference into the *Logic's* account of 'something' and 'other.'

The "Preliminary Conception" can be seen to subtly extend empiricist indifferentism to Kant by re-affirming the priority of the post-Humean problem of relation in its account of the Critical Philosophy. Kant's categories of the understanding, Hegel states, "generally contain relationships, hence they are instrumental in the formation of synthetic judgments a priori (i.e. the original relationships between opposed elements)" (§40). Hegel is here not entitled to refer to these elements as 'opposed' – opposition implies a comparison between elements, that, strictly speaking, would not for Hume exist prior to natural or philosophical relation nor for Kant before the forms of our sensible intuition (i.e. not within the 'raw material' of sensation).<sup>47</sup> But that Hegel's sum of Kant's position figures the given as in opposition 'before' the projection of relation is an important hint to the line of thought we are tracing here. Hegel in the dialectic of something and other discovers a minimal form of logical opposition in the ostensibly relationally neutral account of indifferent particulars.

In contrast to both Humean and Kantian positions, which seek in different ways to account for necessary relation in the subject, Hegel's onto-logical project elaborates an account of relation as necessitated by thought's thinking of what it is to be.<sup>48</sup> Hegel's *Encyclopedia Logic* in these sections – from the critique of empiricism, through the longer reading of Kant, into the discussion of 'existence' and on to the dialectic of finite and infinite – is organised by a kind of spatial metaphor, as is the *Science of Logic's* treatment of 'finitude,' and 'infinity' in the 'Existence' section.<sup>49</sup> In the same way that Hegel's first argument claims that empiricism misunderstands its own understanding – does not account for the irreducibility of judgment in its experience of the world – here empiricism is taken to misrepresent the indifference it presents. In Hegel's terminology, empiricism has only a 'one-sided' view of the side-by-side relationality to which it holds. In other words, empiricism prefigures the account of 'Existence' presented in chapter two of the first book

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<sup>47</sup> Raw sensations are for Kant held to be independent even of synthesis under the 'pure forms of intuition,' i.e. space and time. See CPR A 28-29/B 44. Westphal in Hegel and Hume directs my attention to these passages.

<sup>48</sup> The indispensable background to and justification of this 'onto-logical' characterisation of the *Science of Logic* is to be found in HOULGATE. **The Opening of Hegel's Logic**, p. 115-137.

<sup>49</sup> Note however, this 'spatiality' is at most metaphorical, or it is Hegel's intent for it to remain so. As he says in presenting determinate being as existence or 'being-there,' "the representation of space does not belong here" (SL 21.97). Spatio-temporal consideration of objectivity is the preserve of the *Philosophy of Nature*; the *Logic* is rather the thinking through of what is 'logically' entailed in the thought of being. There is not room in this paper to discuss to transition from something and other to 'finitude.'

of the *Logic*, while resisting the results of that which ‘limited’ existence necessarily entails – the ‘internality’ of limit (and therefore ultimately of relation) in particulars immediately held to be indifferent to one another.

Hegel develops his account in terms of the existence or ‘being-there’ [*Dasein*] that emerges from the *Logic*’s initial movement from immediate, indeterminate ‘being’ and its non-difference from ‘nothing.’ This initial indifference of being and nothing entails the thought of ‘becoming’ – as the movement from being to nothing and vice-versa – in order for the difference between being and nothing to be thought. The thought of becoming as the restless ‘vanishing’ of being into nothing and vice-versa results (in one of the *Logic*’s more sudden transitions) for Hegel in ‘existence.’ For Hegel, ‘existence’ is being not thought as immediate and indeterminate (as it initially is), but as in some sense ‘including,’ being-through or being ‘mediated’ by (rather than merely opposing) the moment of nothing or non-being. The task will then be to draw out what the thought of such an existence is held to entail. Hegel outlines the trajectory of this drawing-out at the start of the ‘Existence’ chapter: “Existence is *determinate* being; its determinateness is *existent* determinateness, *quality*. Through its quality, *something* is opposed to an *other*; it is *alterable* and *finite*, negatively determined not only towards an other, but absolutely within it” (SL 21.97). Hegel is thus here tracing the logical grounds of qualitative distinction in being. Being does not remain indeterminate, but of itself provides the resources for its own differentiation into qualitatively determinate existences. This qualitative determination is a moment of being’s own self-determination and is not supplied by a ‘subjective’ thought that would determine it from outside.

While existence is the result of a previous mediation (the indifference of being and nothing entailing becoming) Hegel says that “Existence corresponds to *being* in the preceding sphere.” (SL 21.97). This does not mean that we are back to the beginning of the *Logic* – being as ‘existent’ being is a mediated in a way that the *Logic*’s initial thought of being is not. But, as the ‘existent’ immediately appears to thought, it emphasises the moment of being over non-being:

Existence proceeds from becoming. It is the simple oneness of being and nothing. On account of this simplicity, it has the form of an *immediate*. Its mediation, the becoming, lies behind it; it has sublated itself, and existence therefore appears as a first from which the forward move is made. It is at first in

the one-sided determination of *being*, the other determination which it contains, *nothing*, will likewise come up in it, in contrast to the first (SL 21.97).

The nothing that ‘comes up in’ the being of existence will not be the *Logic*’s initial thought of purely indeterminate nothingness, but emerge alongside determinate existence. Existence [*Dasein*] is being [*Sein*] in a certain place, ‘there’ [*da*]. The thought of something being-there, in a position, entails the thought of it in ‘op-position,’ ‘op-posed’ to another something, and so for Hegel the nothing that ‘comes up in it’ in the thought of existence is an ‘other’ existent. The thought of existence thus entails the thought of something ‘there’ and its other alongside it (in another ‘there’). As he did in the dialectic of being and nothing, Hegel’s first move when introducing something and other is to note their indifference to one another – that is, the inability of thinking to tell something and other apart. “Something and other: at first they are indifferent to one another; an other is also an immediate existent, a something: the negation thus falls outside both” (SL 21.104). Such indifference is not satisfactory because it fails to be the determinate being that existence is thought to be - determinate existence cannot be the determinacy it is if it cannot be distinguished from its other.

Hegel’s ‘Being Logic’ shows that the being of thought itself resolves indeterminacies (indifferences) by articulating necessary relations between that which is being thought. Thus, the initial indifference between ‘being’ and ‘nothing’ results in a determination (‘becoming’) that enables thought to think the difference of the preceding terms by thinking their necessary relation. A similar movement occurs between this originally indifferent ‘something’ and ‘other.’ The indifference of something and other (that a thing without further determination could be itself or its other) is resolved in the recognition of the internality of otherness in any something. The condition of the determinacy of something is that its other is presented against it. But because one can only think the something by implying the existence of an other something, Hegel continues: “Thus the other, taken solely as such, is not the other of something, but is the other within, that is, the other of itself” (SL 91). For Hegel, things do not contingently encounter their other, but necessarily in themselves, just by being a being. To be is to ‘be-for-another’ whether one encounters another or not – otherness is ‘internal’ in the sense that it is not a contingent external encounter of things ‘outside-one-another-being.’ As Houlgate puts it: “Something does not just relate to another thing because that other happens to lie next to it

in space... something relates to another because logically it is determinate, negative, and therefore relational in itself.”<sup>50</sup>

This internal and therefore necessary relation is denied by empiricism. In empiricism, givens remain side-by-side, without relation, insofar as they do not interact or connect as they are in themselves – their relation is a result of our associational habit, or, in Kant, the a priori conditions of our unified mindedness. Relation for empiricism thus ‘falls outside’ of that which it relates, in the same way that for Kant the thing-in-itself is the thing outside of any relation.<sup>51</sup> In contrast, in the *Logic*, when the dialectic of something and other is thought through, something and other are necessarily in relation before any contingent relation is realised. Again, empiricism holds to only one side of the side-by-side that it itself presents, relation imposed from outside (subjectively) and not inside the given (as its own logical structure). So on one level, Hegel’s claim is that empiricism cannot think necessary relation just because it cannot think its own thinking. But more complexly, because empiricism also participates in the irreducibility of thinking demonstrated above, and because thinking is, following Kant, in some sense relational, empiricism presents us with a relation in the form of non-relation, the op-position of indifferent givens. In empiricism, given perceptual episodes are contradictorily ‘alone together.’

Having presented the alternative epistemologies of necessary relation in Hume and Hegel, we are in a position to better understand Hegel’s claim that empiricism is a ‘doctrine of unfreedom.’ Freedom, in the negative definition of Hegel’s cited passage, means to not have an absolutely other over against oneself. On the level of Hegel’s first argument, this means that given sensory data does not have final explanatory authority in acts of judgment. On the level of Hegel’s second argument, empiricism is a doctrine of unfreedom because the relationship it presents between mind and world is modelled on a relation of non-relation between things. In terms of the mind and world axis, empiricism holds that sense-data comes from outside us, imposes itself on our thinking, but remains absolutely other to our thought – ‘we’ think in terms of necessary relation, but that which is given in sense-data presents no such relation. As such, empiricism means we cannot find anything of ourselves in the given, and the given remains a simple limit for mind. As

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<sup>50</sup> HOULGATE. *The Opening of Hegel’s Logic*, p. 356.

<sup>51</sup> “Kant insists, however, that no thing in itself, in abstraction from the conditions under which it is known, is intrinsically related to others purely by virtue of being what it is.” HOULGATE. *The Opening of Hegel’s Logic*, p. 355. See also CPR, B 321.

Hegel's quote in the addition to §38 continues, according to empiricism, we have no right to ask 'in what respect' the sensuous component of experience is rational in and of itself, i.e. what relation it bears to our own rationality. This mind-world relation as simple or external limit is buttressed by empiricism's account of the relation of non-relation between objects in the world. Empiricism presents the other over against the subject in the same way that one particular sits over against another.

Empiricism thus for Hegel opposes freedom at the level of epistemology by maintaining the op-position between givens as merely contingent and external relation. In presenting particulars as side-by-side, in relation and without relation, empiricism both proves the impossibility of non-relation and insists on it. In other words – and at the risk of being reductive – empiricism is a doctrine of unfreedom because it is a 'doctrine,' is dogmatic in the sense that it holds to one side of the side-by-side (the side of non-necessary relation), in the same way that dogmatists hold to one side of the antinomies presented in the first *Critique*. From Hegel's perspective, Kant can be seen to similarly hold, in his own way, to a one-sided view of the antinomies, insofar as he argues that they cannot be true together.

For the sake of concluding, I will briefly address the bivalence of the term 'indifference' on which my title trades. On the one hand, indifference as it has been developed in the above is a technical philosophical term – indifference means a difference that cannot be thought; indifference is difference indistinguishable from identity. In short, indifference names the absence of determinacy in the objects of thought. We have uncovered two models for establishing this determinacy. On the empiricist picture, particulars are indifferent to one another and require a standard that is not their own for relations of similarity and difference to obtain. For both Kant and Hume, that external standard is necessarily provided by thought, insofar as necessity is not provided by the objects themselves. In Kantianism, therefore, the Humean problem of the contingent externality of particulars is resolved in Pyrrhic fashion by adding another external thing (the transcendental subject). In the *Logic*, in contrast, onto-logical thought reveals that determinacy is present as a *self*-determination of being. Indifference resolves 'of itself' into specifically relational determinacy. This is the technical valence of the term, about which much more can (and needs) be said.

On the other hand, ‘indifference’ is a moral term with both positive and negative connotations. The ‘moderate sceptical’ outcome of the first book of Hume’s treatise is said to lead to ‘indifference’ with regard to demonstrably unsolvable philosophical questions (1.4.3.9). This kind of indifference is taken to be positive. But indifference in everyday language can also mean, negatively, that one behaves indifferently towards one’s others, even or especially when they suffer. Whether this negativity can be neatly distinguished from the presumably positive sceptical recommendation to indifference is at issue, though not resolvable here. For Hegel, at least, the *Encyclopedia* begins to suggest the practical consequences of theoretical indifferentism in his critique of political “atomism” (*EL* §98). In this way Hegel’s critique of empiricism via the dialectic of something and other precipitates a commitment to treating the relations between individuals as the locus of ethical and political action, given that relationality proves to be necessary to any determinate individuation.<sup>52</sup> The Hegelian commitment to countering one-sided individualism via an account of constitutive other-relatedness is, of course, well-known, though perhaps not in the terms of the argument developed above.<sup>53</sup> Despite its perhaps idiosyncratic approach, however, this paper should be taken to suggest the achieved self-consistency or self-relation of Hegelian thought at its epistemological, ontological, and practical levels.

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<sup>52</sup> For a discussion of the critical implications of an account of irreducibly primary relationality for liberal political modernity in the context of Kant’s ‘Enlightenment’ paper, see BENJAMIN, A. **Relational Ontology**, p. 61-88. Benjamin however would express serious reservations about presenting Hegelian philosophy as instantiating a coherent relational ontology in his sense. See **Relational Ontology**, p. 113-158.

<sup>53</sup> Robert Pippin’s relatively recent discussion of Hegelian ethical life is an exemplary reconstruction within the traditional recognitive terminology. PIPPIN, R. **Hegel’s Practical Philosophy: Rational Agency as Ethical Life**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 183-209.

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