

Philosophic

Fragments

philosophiques

Volume 25, Spring 2009

Undergraduate Journal of Philosophy
Revue de philosophie des étudiants de premier cycle

McGill University

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Thanks to the Department of Philosophy, the Dean of Arts, the Arts Undergraduate Society, the Philosophy Students' Association and the Dean of Students for funding.



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Fictionalism in Mathematics

Some Remarks

Mark Masztalerz

The Problems

GENERALLY speaking, we take, or would like to take, the surface structure of the sentences of our language to hint at the right interpretation of them: we take *syntax* to be a guide to *semantics*.¹ To put matters more concretely—we are wont to take the sentence ‘Bob Dylan is 67’ to be true if and only if Bob Dylan is 67, and this in virtue of the fact that we intuitively take the sentence to be a structured entity composed of the singular term ‘Bob Dylan’, which refers to Bob Dylan, and the predicate ‘is 67’, which stands for the property of being 67. If Mr. Zimmerman is indeed 67—correspondingly, if the singular term ‘Bob Dylan’ satisfies the predicate ‘is 67’—we take the sentence to be true.

Applying the foregoing reasoning to ‘5 is odd’, however, leads to some difficulties. For if we follow the syntax of the sentence and construe ‘5’ as a singular term, whose role in a sentence is to refer to a given entity, then we are faced with the following question: to what does ‘5’ refer? An easy answer: “a number, of course!” But what *is* a number, precisely? If we are to take numbers to be objects, then we seem to have to ascribe to them (a lack of) characteristics that characterise ordinary physical entities like tables.² Can we make any sense of creating or destroying a number? If we can (which is dubious), it does not seem possible in the same way that we can make sense of destroying a table; we cannot use a baseball bat to destroy number 13 as we could to destroy a vase, for example. We can destroy *instances* of numbers—we can destroy, e.g., 3 apples, 3 chairs, and so

¹Initially, of course, we defer to our semantic intuitions to ascertain the correct semantics for a given sentence. But when faced with a sentence with the same form—e.g., another sentence of the simple subject/predicate ‘S is P’ form—many would like to have this sentence have the same semantics as other sentences of the same form.

²If somebody is a sceptic about those, s/he is free to substitute for them any type of physical entity s/he does believe in (atoms, quarks, or whatnot). If s/he is a sceptic about the physical world *simpliciter*, then s/he can, I think, still substitute for it whatever s/he thinks the world is fundamentally made out of, for *abstracta* seem to be of an altogether different, and indeed puzzling kind. (For instance, whatever anyone takes the world to be made out of will, presumably, have some sort of causal powers—powers which *abstracta* don’t have.)

on—but the number ‘itself’, so to speak, is left untouched. This seems to be in virtue of the fact that numbers *qua* objects (if such there be) lie out of our causal reach. We have similar difficulties in answering questions like “what size is number 2?” or “how long has 22 existed?” Numbers, it seems, lack spatial and temporal extension.

Numbers thus raise concerns which are *ontological* in nature: numbers, if they exist in the way in which the aforementioned intuitions suggest they do—viz., as Platonic objects—are difficult to incorporate in a (more or less) naturalistic picture of the world. Indeed, there is an *ontological* problem with abstract objects in general.³ For there is a strong attractiveness to the view that ‘all there is’ are concrete, physical entities: entities we can touch, entities which touch us back, entities which have spatial and temporal extension. Moreover, it is hard to make sense of how we could have potential knowledge of (the properties of) entities which are out of causal reach.^{4,5} How are we to have knowledge of things which are ‘floating out there, in Platonic heaven’, so to speak?⁶ Many have argued that with naturalism comes naturally⁷ a *causal theory of knowledge* which takes as a necessary condition for knowledge of *X* some sort of causal connection with *X*, whatever *X* may be. (For instance, my knowledge (if it really is knowledge) of a certain table’s being wooden is grounded, according to the causal theory of knowledge, in something like the table in question’s causing my perceptual experience of its looking wooden.⁸) On this view, we have an *epistemological* worry along with the aforementioned ontological/metaphysical one.

Enter Fictionalism

One way of circumventing these difficulties is to draw an analogy between mathematics (mathematical discourse) and fiction (fictional discourse). Consider the statements ‘Bart Simpson is a rascal’ and ‘James Bond is Agent 007’. Most of us do not find these statements problematic (*prima facie*, at any rate). One thing we know for sure,

³Not to mention, *inter alia*, mental, axiological, semantic, and intentional ‘objects’ (loosely speaking).

⁴More precisely, there are difficulties in making sense both of how we have knowledge of numbers—i.e., objectual knowledge (knowing of 2 that it is even)—and of how we have *propositional* knowledge about numbers (knowing that 2 is even).

⁵I assume that abstract objects do not have causal powers—even if *instances* of what some take to be abstract objects (properties, for instance) can have such powers.

⁶These sorts of worries, along with the points about semantics, are raised forcefully by Benacerraf.

⁷Pun intended.

⁸Or the *fact* that the table in question caused my perceptual experience of its looking wooden.

though, is that Bart Simpson and James Bond are not real people inhabiting our world;⁹ they do not exist in the ordinary sense of the term.¹⁰ Notice, however, that there seems to be less puzzlement with fiction with regard to the aforementioned ontological and epistemological worries. In other words, most people generally have no problem accepting that fictions do, in some sense, exist;¹¹ moreover, they do not encounter many obstacles in acquiring knowledge about fiction.¹² In other words, the ontological problem and the epistemological problem as glossed above do not apply as obviously to fiction.

No numbers, no problem: a mathematical statement p is true if and only if, according to the 'story of mathematics', p .¹³ No more numbers floating around in Platonic heaven, no more Sherlock Holmes walking around somewhere in England: it seems that our worries have been dissolved. But have they really?

What Story Should We Tell?

Fictionalist accounts of mathematics are beset with the problem of choosing which fiction mathematics corresponds to. Here there is

⁹If we were to discover that somebody fit the description of James Bond perfectly (i.e., if there really was an agency which also matched the description of MI6, and this person was part of it, and so on), we would still be reluctant, I think, to say that James Bond *really* exists. Intuitively, if an entity is fictional, *eo ipso* it does not exist in our actual world. Note that this does not preclude there being *facta* which are based on worldly entities, nor does it preclude that some works of art may straddle the barrier between fiction and non-fiction. In other words, an entity's being fictional does not preclude its being closely related to a real thing; however, a thing, I propose to say, cannot be both fictional and actual. This view is quite similar to Kripke's concerning the (im)possibility of the actual existence of unicorns (cf. Kripke, Lecture 3).

¹⁰I qualify 'existence' here, since there is a legitimate question about the ontology of *facta*: they may turn out to exist, in some (other) sense of existence, after all.

¹¹Or, at least, most people would think they have more to go on when trying to answer questions like "In what sense, if any, does *The Simpsons* exist?" They will probably bring to bear the fact that it is a product of artistic creation, that it has representational properties, and so on. In contrast, when asked about what the number 2 is, they will have nothing but negative points to bring to bear: it *cannot* be destroyed; it *cannot* be touched, and so on. One may object, however, that it is just as hard to make sense of how fictions—as 'ideas' of some sort, objects of artistic creation with certain representational/expressive/formal properties—exist, either. I acquiesce in this worry. But I think we can follow the lead of intuitions about what fictions are and *reduce* them, in a sense, to elements which we can glean from the intuitions about their 'positive' properties—namely, the fact that they are products of some cognitive activity. I will return to this point at the end of the paper.

¹²Of course there are epistemological problems with fiction, especially concerning the interpretation of works. There are other metaphysical issues, too (for instance, the question of what aesthetic properties of fictions amount to). But these worries are more specific in that, in the mathematical case, we have yet to establish what mathematical objects are and how we have access to them in the first place.

¹³I borrow this locution from Balaguer.

some overlap with the broader 'reconstructive' nominalist projects in mathematics.^{14,15} One such project is the brainchild of Hartry Field.

Field wants to deny that numbers exist, but he takes seriously Quine's indispensability argument.¹⁶ Consequently, if mathematics would turn out to be indispensable to science, then Field would have to bite the bullet and admit that mathematical entities—*viz.*, numbers—exist. But that is a bullet Field, a staunch nominalistic physicalist, does not want to bite; in fact, he argues that mathematics is *not* indispensable to science. In particular, he argues that the entirety of mathematics can be formal systems employing certain axioms, and, therefore, that whatever work mathematics does in science, the axiomatic systems can do just as well. Ergo, mathematics is dispensable, since axiom systems do just as well (and are, according to Field, ontologically noncommittal). As a concrete example, Field gives an axiomatisation of Newtonian physics in his infamous *Science Without Numbers*.

Field's reconstruction, however, does take as a model for its axioms an uncountably infinite number of 'real' spacetime points; this ontological stance with respect to space is often termed, in the philosophy of space and time, *substantivalism*. The position, however, is rivalled by a theory of space and time termed *relationism*, according to which all spatial and temporal properties of entities in the world can be reduced to spatiotemporal *relations* between the points (in comparison with the substantivalist gloss according to which entities' spatial properties are a result of their being located at certain spacetime 'points'). There are many motivations for relationism—many having to do with contemporary physics—but the salient point here is that Field is bringing in a far-from-uncontroversial *ontology* as a model for his axiom systems, and is thus smuggling in one ontology (numbers) for another (spacetime points). Perhaps the latter is preferable to the former, but it is nonetheless a commitment that should be made explicit. The commitment can be eliminated, perhaps, since technically one way we can represent an 'infinite' spacetime is by taking

¹⁴I borrow the 'reconstructive' locution from Burgess and Rosen.

¹⁵*Nominalism* consists of a denial of the existence of an entity central to a certain area of discourse, thought, or philosophy. Nominalism about properties denies the existence of properties; nominalism about universals denies the existence of universals, and so on. 'Reconstructive' nominalists add to this negative claim a positive one, an alternative construal of what (talk about) the entities in question amount to (if we are to take the discourse as true).

¹⁶Roughly, Quine argues that if some area of discourse or thought (e.g., science) is essential to our best way of making sense of the world, then we are ontologically committed to the existence of the entities posited by that area of discourse or thought—more precisely, whatever the quantifiers of a first order formalization of the theory quantify over.

all quadruples of the Cartesian product $\mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R}$ (\mathbb{R}^4 , all possible quadruples of real numbers). A simpler, fictionalist approach that suggests itself, though, is simply to take mathematics to be the story of axioms which take as a fiction the ontology of substantialism—an iterated fiction, as it were. But there are deeper problems with this view. One such problem is raised by Mark Balaguer, who claims that while a given set of axioms may be sufficient to capture mathematics synchronically (at a given time), it cannot be sufficient to accommodate diachronic (cross-time) changes which essentially involve change in those axioms. For example, mathematicians may decide, at a certain point, to add an axiom to Zermelo–Fraenkel set theory (to render the continuum hypothesis decidable, for example). On Field’s account, we would have to change the mathematical ‘story’. But, as Balaguer argues, if we are to pay heed to the objectivity of mathematics—having caveats, first and foremost, with its *ontology*, not its truth, i.e., its success in modeling the physical world, and so on—then this cannot be the right way to accommodate such possible changes. For if these axioms are indeed taken by mathematicians to be true, then, given the purported objectivity of mathematics, we have to have a story which makes the new axiom *true to start with* (perhaps we just never ‘noticed’ the truth, or something like that).

It is not clear that Balaguer’s objection is decisive. In effect, it raises a number of questions: *inter alia*, (i) to what extent is mathematics objective?, (ii) to what extent are pragmatically-influenced decisions in mathematics (by mathematicians) warranted?, (iii) in virtue of the answers to (i)–(ii), how ought the project of giving foundations for mathematics to be construed?

The aim of this paper is to concentrate on the core of fictionalism, understood as a strategy for avoiding ontological commitment to (philosophically, physicalistically, naturalistically, or whatever) dubious entities through a reconstruction of the *semantics* for the problematic statements (e.g. mathematical statements), and through a substitution of fictions for kinds of entities whose nature we find objectionable (e.g. numbers). The goal, then, is to see whether fictionalism can preserve pretty much all there is to a given area of discourse, *modulo* its (purportedly) underlying ontology. Consequently, for the sake of this discussion, I will follow Balaguer in answering (i) affirmatively—mathematics *is* objective, insofar as its applicability to the physical realm is unquestionable—and in claiming, with regard to (ii), that mathematicians (not philosophers) have the ‘last word’ as to which mathematical claims are true. The answer to (iii), then (for the sake of this paper, at any rate), is that we ought to heed the objectivity of mathematics, and heed the way it is actually practiced, in order

to see what can be done to make it—in particular, its semantics and metaphysics—philosophically unproblematic.

Insofar as we answer (i) and (ii) in this way, Field-style reconstructive approaches to mathematics are bound to fall prey to some sort of criticism—either for failing to do justice to actual practice, or intentionally running against its grain.

A serious question persists, though: what kind of fiction is mathematics, if reconstructive fictions are bound, somehow, to fail, for the reasons glossed above? Indeed, the failure of various reconstructive nominalisms/fictionalisms has made philosophers somewhat despondent. As Burgess points out, failures of reconstructive approaches has caused many philosophers to adopt forms of what Balaguer calls ‘theft-over-honest-toil’ fictionalism (TOHTF). For TOHTF, the story of mathematics is simply the one that a naïve, romanticised view of mathematics suggests to us: it is a realm of aspatial, acausal, indestructible, eternal entities or ‘structures’—the Platonic picture we started with. This sort of view is rightfully regarded as underhanded insofar as it does not make an effort to re-construe what mathematicians are talking about. All it says, in essence, is that for any mathematical statement p , p is true iff, according to the story of mathematical Platonism, p . Balaguer argues that TOHTF is the type of fictionalism that does most justice to mathematical practice, once one has told an adequate story about how we think about this story, so to speak. In particular, he brings in talk of our conceptions of mathematical entities and structures—for instance, the natural numbers—which ground our *intentions* to pick out certain structures in the Platonic realm.¹⁷

If, as I shall grant, all of mathematics turns out true according to this Platonic story, then actual mathematics has been preserved—as per our *desiderata* above. Does this succeed in surmounting all the ontological and epistemological problems, though? What *is* the Platonic fiction, after all? Balaguer takes the fiction to be, essentially, our intuitive *conception* of the mathematical realm. But is mathematics more mental than he and others want to let on? I will address these questions in my concluding section. First, however, I need to turn to a more central problem with fictionalism.

Are Fictionalist Semantics Adequate?

Recall that fictionalism is, at root, largely a *semantic* thesis about what mathematical statements say or ought to say. The distinction

¹⁷This allows him to skirt problems raised by the existence of non-standard models for the axioms of arithmetic, i.e., in Platonic terms, objects in the Platonic realm which make the axioms of arithmetic true but which are *not* the natural numbers as we conceive of them (cf. Balaguer 15 and fn. 12, 13).

noted by this disjunction is indeed an important one, for there is a big difference between saying to somebody, for instance, “what you’re really saying is p ,” and “what you should be saying is p .” Correspondingly, there is a distinction to make between what Burgess dubs *hermeneutic fictionalism* (HF) and what he dubs *revolutionary fictionalism* (RF). When applied to mathematical discourse, what the former doctrine holds is that whenever we utter a mathematical statement p , we are *really* saying “according to F , p ” (where F is a name for the mathematical fiction), while the latter has it that what we *ought* to be saying is “according to F , p .” A question to ask, then, is the following: which of these versions of fictionalism is more plausible, if either is at all?

A common critique of RF is that managing mathematical practice and adjudicating issues pertaining to mathematics is best left to the people who know the most about it: mathematicians. At any rate, it should not be left to philosophers—the argument goes, not without a certain bitterness—given the success of mathematicians in managing their practice (compared to how philosophers have managed theirs). Burgess has it that the claim that philosophers ought to counsel mathematicians on such issues as the truth or objectivity of mathematics is, echoing the late David Lewis, “comically immodest” (Burgess 30). But is it really?

One reply to this criticism (to which I am sympathetic) is Balaguer’s (section 4.1). The reply goes as follows. There is surely a difference between, on one hand, revising (or attempting to revise) mathematical *practice* and, on the other hand, commenting on its *philosophical* status—its ontology, epistemology, and so on—and making revisions which pertain to those (and only those) aspects. There is a difference, for instance, between criticizing classical mathematics for its use of the law of excluded middle and suggesting a particular ontology in which to ground mathematics. Of course, the former sort of revision *is* very often dictated by philosophical considerations; however, as the foregoing claims should have made clear, it is of a more drastic kind than the typical sorts of revisions philosophers want to impose on mathematics, which by and large will not make much difference to mathematical practice. (I think we have good reasons to believe that if mathematicians were to discover that numbers do not exist, they would not, as a result, quit their jobs, declare all their work futile, and so on.) Provisionally, then, I suggest we set aside this objection to revolutionary fictionalism.

How about hermeneutic fictionalism? In a sense, HF is a bold doctrine. Query somebody who has just asserted a mathematical statement as to whether his statement is *really* true, and he will (prob-

ably) answer in the affirmative. In contrast, the same query posed to somebody who has just asserted something like “Sam Spade is a great detective” would probably be met with a more hesitant response, given Sam Spade’s fictional status. Moreover, there seems to be a difference at the level of the phenomenology of mathematical discourse. There seems to be a difference, that is, between what it feels like to say “ $2 + 2 = 4$ ” and what it feels like to say “Garfield is a glutton.” Generally, we *feel* the pretence of a fiction behind assertions like the latter, but not behind those like the former. As a descriptive thesis, then, HF seems to fail—blatantly, at that.

Yablo on Existence and Metaphor

Notwithstanding the strong *prima facie* considerations against HF, Stephen Yablo has attempted to defend something like a hermeneutic fictionalist construal of a wide class of statements, particularly statements which have as subject matter entities such as models, possible worlds, functions, and so on.

Yablo is primarily concerned with statements such as ‘an argument is true iff all models which make its premises true make its consequence true’, ‘a statement is necessarily true iff it is true in all possible worlds’, and ‘the number of *X*s = the numbers of *Y*s iff there exists a bijective function from the *X*s to the *Y*s’. He dubs these statements ‘*a priori* bridge principles’ since they serve as a bridge from a certain statement to another describing the former’s (purported) truth-conditions (Yablo 198). Yet the truth-conditions talk of entities (models, possible worlds, etc.) which the original statements are in no way *about*, and which, moreover, we may be inclined to find ontologically suspect. (If I have an apple and a banana in my backpack, and say “the number of apples in my backpack is equal to the number of bananas in my backpack,” I seem to be talking of, and only of, the fruits contained in my backpack, not bijective functions!) What are we to make of this predicament?

Yablo reiterates the observation we made above that we would not suddenly take all mathematical statements to be false if we were to find out that mathematical objects do not, in fact, exist (201). He argues, on the basis of this observation, that there is a sense in which the aforementioned ontological worries are not very grave *because they never come up in the first place* (Yablo 200ff). Platonic objects—such as models, possible worlds, and, in our case, numbers (and perhaps mathematical structures)—do allow us to elucidate or clarify notions; however, elucidation and clarification are not ontologically loaded notions unless interpreted tendentiously (Yablo 203–05). Moreover, it

is unclear that we need to bring in mathematical objects to explain things like why, say, certain theorems hold (Yablo 205–07). Rather, mathematical objects are often brought in as truth-makers for mathematical statements so as to render them more objective. As Yablo notes, a given area of discourse or practice *feels* more objective if it is taken to ‘hook up to’ or to reflect some mind-independent reality (209). It seems to “stiffe[n] the discourse’s spine” (211).

So, if Yablo is right, then we do not need numbers, or it is not clear, at least, that numbers really are that crucial, except perhaps insofar as they secure the objectivity of mathematics. We may wonder whether we really need to ‘stiffen mathematics’s spine’ in this way, given its utility. But, if it is insisted upon, we may defer to a Balaguer-style TOHT fictionalism and ground mathematics in an ontology which is less philosophically problematic. But Yablo does not think we even need to do this: he argues for a version of HF which takes mathematical discourse to be *metaphorical*. He advances several arguments for this thesis which can be divided as follows: (i) metaphors turn out to be the best means of talking about objects which do not exist, since (ii) those objects which do not exist are a great way to make certain statements about things that would be difficult to formulate if restricted to literal talk; finally, (iii) metaphor is in fact ubiquitous in our speech to start with. How, then, are we to deal with the aforementioned phenomenological objection? Yablo thinks that if we make explicit the logical form of the ‘the’ in statements like ‘the number of beers in my fridge is 2’ in order to get ‘there is a number such that the number is the number of beers in my fridge’, then we do feel a pretense-like attitude lurking in the background (222).^{18,19} In other words, under one guise a sentence may seem to be ontologically non-committal, and therefore we would not feel reluctant to answer it affirmatively, but under another guise—namely one which exposes its underlying logical form (in first-order predicate logic, or whatnot)—we *would* feel reluctant (as we would in affirming the *real* truth of “Sam Spade is a great detective”). If this applies to the mathematical case—i.e., if we are reluctant to assent to mathematical sentences under certain guises—then perhaps the phenomenology of mathematical discourse is not that different from fictional discourse after all (*contra* the phe-

¹⁸At any rate, this empirical claim is true in my case.

¹⁹Yablo, moreover, rejects the phenomenological test—he calls it the ‘felt distance test’—because of the existence of some words which are *essentially* fictional, i.e. which originate in fictional contexts, and which, therefore, cannot be phenomenologically divergent from their literal meaning (they do not have any in the first place). Nevertheless, I think that there is still something to be said about the general attitude with which we utter such sentences, notwithstanding the meanings of the constituent terms of the sentences uttered; I therefore take the ‘felt distance test’ to be reliable, generally speaking.

nomenological objection).

Conclusion: Metaphor, Thought, and Mathematics

Thus HF does seem tenable, even in the face of the objections mentioned above. But Yablo points out something which, while not undermining what he's arguing for, hints that there is something *missing* in a fictionalist explanation of mathematics/mathematical discourse. Consider a Platonist, realist construal of mathematics which takes our conceptions of mathematical structures to determine what structure in the objective, Platonic realm we are to be taken as talking about.²⁰ (In other words, our conceptions of what 'the realm of numbers' is allows us to 'pick out' or refer to the appropriate entities in the Platonic realm.) Yablo sees here a dilemma: on the one hand, if we already have a conception rich enough to single out a unique subset of the mathematical realm—i.e., if we have a rich enough conception (as most of us do) of the natural numbers so as to rule out picking out non-standard models of arithmetic—then it seems we already have enough, *in our conceptions*, to secure the objectivity of mathematics; on the other hand, if we do not have a rich enough conception, then it is unclear how the 'right' subset of the mathematical realm is picked out (210f). But do not these remarks apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to fictionalist forms of Platonism (i.e. TOHT fictionalisms) insofar as we rely on our conceptions of mathematics to pick out appropriate parts of the Platonist story (as in Balaguer's account)? For the second horn, if we defer as Balaguer does (12f) to the expert mathematical community to complete or correct our conceptions, then can we not just take mathematical objectivity to be secured by intersubjective agreement governed by the norms of the mathematical community?

The point I'm getting at, in essence, is that if mathematics can go on well enough without mathematical objects being real, thereby allowing, for its vindication, a conception of its ontology as fictional and/or its discourse as metaphorical, then there surely must be something in virtue of which our mathematical practices turn out to be more or less robust—or, if we are daring, 'objective'—notwithstanding its failure to hook up to some distinctly mathematical truth-makers. I take an underlying theme of Yablo's paper, and an underemphasized commitment of Balaguer's paper, to be the centrality of our conceptions of mathematics, and the way in which we use our *conceptions* to talk about the world. Fictionalism cannot be the whole story, then, since for every fiction there must be a maker; presumably, it is in virtue

²⁰In this sense they are like Balaguer's but they are not fictionalist: the entities picked out are real, not fictional.

of the maker's (cognitive) capacities that a fiction takes the shape it has. All this is a (perhaps somewhat roundabout) way of putting the following point: mathematics does often model the world successfully, but *qua* conceptual framework for *thinking* about the world, a natural place to ground it, I think, is the mind.

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Progressive Revelation and the Development of *Geist* Two Views on the History of Religion

Ilya Shodjaee-Zrudlo

THIS paper compares and contrasts Hegel's theory of the development of *Geist* with Bahá'u'lláh's notion of 'progressive revelation'. First, I dwell on Hegel's perspective on religion, his theory of development, his notion of *Aufhebung*, his speculative description of the progress of religion, and his interesting evolution of thought in his description of determinate religion between 1821 and 1831 (evident in Peter C. Hodgson's edition of Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*). The relationship between *Geist* and God, the role of God in history and the possibility of the knowledge of God are then explored. Bahá'u'lláh's description of the historical evolution of religion as progressive revelation is then analyzed for its similarities and resonances with Hegel's concept of religion. Although the two theories are different, they symbiotically enhance one another. Hegel's frustration with the description of *determinate* religion is resolved via Bahá'u'lláh's notion of the Manifestation of God in history and a more explicit notion of 'relative absolute truth'. Moreover, Hegel's use of the term *Aufhebung* sheds light on Bahá'u'lláh's notion of progressive revelation. This paper also proposes a slightly unorthodox reading of Hegel's eschatology, which performs a salvific function in relation to the spirit of Hegel's philosophy and allows for even further convergence between Hegel's concept of religion and progressive revelation.

Hegel's monolithic project subsumes the entirety of history, the evolution of religion and the history of philosophy within the speculative development of *Geist* (Spirit) in history. This elusive *Geist*, the true catalyst, leaven and apex of all of humanity's great achievements, is, in Hegel's philosophy, the underlying spiritual fabric of the universe and the very "substance of reality" (HR 24). Because of the spiritual or even *religious* tone of his description of the evolution of thought, it is interesting to investigate his views on religion and on the relationship of religion to philosophy. Though critical of religion in his earlier works,¹ Hegel said, concerning the relationship between religion and philosophy, that "philosophy is theology, and one's occupation with

¹Hegel' *Early Theological Writings* were published in English in 1949. See Kaufmann 3.

philosophy [...] is of itself the service of God" (PR v. 1 84) Bahá'u'lláh (1817–1892), the Prophet-Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, described the progress of religion in a way that often fascinatingly parallels Hegel's description of the development of philosophy and of religion. Originally from Iran, Bahá'u'lláh was exiled from His native land and made a prisoner of the Ottoman Empire for forty years due to the revolutionary nature of His ideas. Bahá'u'lláh's concept of progressive revelation could free Hegel from the frustration he was experiencing in constructing an adequate picture of the history of determinate religion,² without sacrificing his speculative idealism. Exploring either theory through the lens of the other allows for new avenues of consideration and for fresh insights into the development of religion.³ An exploration of Hegel's concept of *Aufhebung* (sublation) as applied to religion will be followed by an analysis of the knowledge of God, and a summary of Bahá'u'lláh's theory of progressive revelation wherein Hegel and Bahá'u'lláh's writings⁴ will be compared.

To provide the reader with a taste of the tone of Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, it is interesting to reflect on a few of Hegel's definitions of religion. Religion is "not the affair of the single human being; rather it is essentially the highest determination of the absolute idea itself" (PR v. 1 318); "religion is our relation to God" (PR 448); "[r]eligion is a begetting of the divine spirit, not an invention of human beings but an effect of the divine at work, of the divine productive process within humanity" (PR 130). In addition to his equating philosophy and theology (PR 84), Hegel believes the goal of both disciplines to be the same: the knowledge of God, the ultimate purpose and duty of all human beings (RH 16–17).

Before delving into Hegel's speculative development of religion,⁵ it is necessary to expatiate upon Hegel's theory of development and his 'historical epistemology' in general, found in most of his writings, but also exquisitely presented in his *Introduction to the History of Philosophy*. His theory of development addresses the following question:

What is presented in history is mutable, has taken place, was once, and is now past, has sunk into the night of the past, is no longer. Thought, however, is not subject to

²This subject will be expanded below. See Dickey 368–70 and Hodgson.

³This approach is opposed to the incessant dueling concerning whether or not Hegel believed religion to be 'sublated' by philosophy, with so-called right-wing and left-wing interpretations on either side. See Lakeland.

⁴This paper is explicitly limited by the fact that I am working with translations, on the one hand from German, and on the other from Arabic and Persian. This must be kept in mind throughout.

⁵'Speculative development' traces the "movement of the concept itself" (quoted in Hodgson 161).

change, it is not something that has been or is past, it is. The question, then, is: how can what is outside history, since it is not subject to change, still have a history?

Truth is usually considered to be eternal, and thus unchangeable. The issue is: how can such a thing have a history? Hegel revolutionises the concept of truth by harmonising the “unity of truth” with the “multiplicity of philosophies.” In a speculative sense, truth develops from *thought* to *concept* to *idea*: “concrete thought is concept [...] further determined it *is idea*.”

This development is expressed in a number of ways in Hegel’s writings as concretion, determination, sublation (*Aufhebung*), actualization, progression, ascent, manifestation, self-determination, elevation, etc. *Aufhebung* is probably the most interesting of these concepts, since it is such a vast notion. Although it has many definitions, it is usually translated as ‘sublation’ in Hegel’s writings,⁶ and is elegantly captured in the image of the Phoenix (PR 226–27n):

The Spirit, devouring its worldly envelope, not only passes into another envelope, not only arises rejuvenated from the ashes of its embodiment, but it emerges from them exalted, transfigured, a purer Spirit. It is true that it acts against itself, devours its own existence. But in so doing, it elaborates upon this existence; its embodiment becomes material for its work to elevate itself to a new embodiment. (RH 89, my emphasis)

The other image that Hegel frequently uses is that of the seed, organically developing into a tree. The seed needs to sacrifice its own form—to negate itself—to become the tree, but all the details of the form of the tree are initially contained in the seed, and thus *Geist* or absolute idea is always present, even in the first stages of its historical manifestation. Hegel traces the development of the history of religion in much the same way, tracking the process of the manifestation of Spirit and absolute truth in religious history, as religion sublates itself (PR 147). A point of some interest is that the Báb, Bahá’u’lláh’s Prophetic Forerunner, coined the term ‘*irtifáh*’ (an Arabic word) to describe the process by which one religion replaces (*sublates*) another. He used this term instead of the one commonly used in Islam, abrogation, or *naskh*. *Irtifáh*, on the other hand, means *both* to abrogate and to uplift, much like *Aufhebung* (Saiedi 276–77). In a sense, *irtifáh* comes much closer to the precise meaning of *Aufhebung* than the English term ‘sublation’.

⁶*Aufhebung* can have anywhere between eleven and twenty-nine definitions, depending on the dictionary. Almost every definition is applicable.

On a speculative level (Hegel also describes the phenomenological evolution of religion) religion develops from abstract *concept* to *determination* to a *consummation* of the determination (Hodgson, "Hegel's Approach" 162–66). These three stages mirror the three parts of Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, which consist of the 'Concept of Religion', 'Determinate Religion', and 'Consummate Religion'. Determinate religion is simply the succession of the physical manifestations of the concept of religion in existence and time. The more determined and elevated they become, the closer they get to the consummate religion, fully determined and fully realised: Christianity (PR 110–11). This revolutionises the idea of religion (in the same way Hegel unifies the history of philosophy): "religion is conceived of as a result; but as a result that equally sublates itself as a result" (PR 203). Not only is religion seen as a process, but it also becomes evident that every stage in the development of religion (*every* religion) is *necessary*:

When we consider the sequence of determinate religions under the guidance of the concept, as ruled and determined by the concept, the sequence of the historical religions emerges for us from it, and thus we have the history of religions [...] For what is *necessary* from the concept must have *existed*, and the religions, as they have followed one another, have not arisen in a contingent manner [...] It is not the work of chance, and it is absurd to see contingency here. (PR 145–46)⁷

It follows that religions can only be revealed in a specific order in time: "[o]nly when the time had come did spirit become manifest; for the very movement of spirit, this path upon which it alone posits itself as spirit [...] is a path that falls within existence and hence in time" (PR 147, 184).

An interesting result of Hegel's thought is that it is improper to call any stage of religion 'false'. Earlier forms of religion were not misguided, invalid or erroneous; rather, they were earlier stages in the development of the concept of religion into the idea, the full determination of what was already in the concept. Thus, on a speculative

⁷This point is taken up by Hodgson in "Hegel's Approach to Religion," and he makes the claim that Hegel sees determinate religion as "essential though subordinate moments" (171). This is in keeping with the theory of progressive revelation as explored below, but obscures the true meaning of the speculative development of religion as taking place *in history*. From the speculative level (at the level of concept), the 'newest' religion is the most advanced expression of truth, but on the level of history, no religion is subordinate to any other: they are *perfect* for their time and place, since they are *necessary* in history.

level, there is really just the concept of religion, and not a plurality of religions. On the level of concrete history, however, we get multiple manifestations and representations of religion. Also, in relation to a specific moment in history, the most accurate form of religion will be the stage of religion that was most recently revealed: the most recent manifestation of Spirit.

Although Hegel's *concept* of the development of religion remained more or less constant throughout his lectures, his account of the development of *determinate* religion was significantly altered between 1821 and 1831 (Dickey 668–70). The actual text of Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* that we have today is the result of the combination of a number of manuscripts from lectures he gave in 1821, 1824, 1827 and 1831.⁸ This shows the attentive reader a noted evolution of Hegel's thought in certain respects, and even a frustration with regard to the section on determinate religion, which underwent several changes over the years. Notably, Hegel found it difficult to match the gradual, theoretical sublation of the concept of religion to this factual history of religion; his treatment of Judaism evolved considerably and, as a Christian, it was often difficult for him to posit Christianity as the consummation of the development of religion (Dupré).⁹ Even within the first volume of Hegel's lectures on the 'Concept of Religion', one can see discrepancies in the way he treats and categorizes determinate religion between 1821 and 1831.¹⁰ In addition, Hegel's treatment of Christianity as the consummate religion differs from 1821 to 1824 (PR v. 3 73n).

To further explore Hegel's conception of religion, one can probe the relationship between *Geist* and God, the role of God and the knowledge of God. I will make the argument that, for all practical purposes, Hegel uses *Geist* (Spirit), Reason, Truth, Idea, Freedom and God to identify or represent similar ideas, depending on the emphasis in the context. This may be the result of inconsistency on Hegel's part, or fluidity in his definitions, but many other scholars have argued for the close relationship between *Geist* and God, and some have even argued for their complete identity (eg. Hodgson, "Hegel's Approach" 160).¹¹ The following passages shed light on this theme: "[God] signi-

⁸Peter C. Hodgson's edition of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* is uniquely useful in the way it keeps the four different lecture manuscripts separate, revealing the evolution of Hegel's thought.

⁹In addition, Hegel practically ignores Islam (Hodgson).

¹⁰See, for example, page 463 of Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, v. 1, an excerpt from Hegel's 1831 lecture, which marks a significant difference in the treatment of determinate religion in comparison to his earlier lectures. Similar examples of these differences in Hegel's thought can be found in Hodgson.

¹¹This equation may also be due to the translation from the German to the English.

fies *the absolute, all-encompassing fulfillment*, the truth of everything that subsists as this world of finitude and appearance" (PR v. 1 230); "God is the truth, the substance of the universe, not merely an abstract other" (PR v. 1 232); "God is not to be grasped as a being that is enclosed within itself and that does not appear, but rather as *spirit*" (PR v. 1 327); "God and the nature of His will are one and the same; these we call, philosophically, the *Idea*" (RH 21); "[t]he nature of His [God's] own will, His own nature, is what we call the Idea of freedom. Thus we translate the language of religion into that of philosophy" (RH 25); "God is spirit" (PR v. 1 330, PR vol. 3 78); "[t]he definition of God is that he is the *absolute idea*—i.e., that he is *spirit*" (PR v. 3 66). Many other passages in *Reason in History*, as well as in Hegel's other writings, attest to this close correlation between God and the other 'absolutes'. In summary, God and *Geist* are more often related than dissociated or opposed in Hegel's thought.¹²

The development of *Geist* is essentially the self-manifesting of God (PR v. 1 371). Thus, the development of the concept of religion, and also the history of religion, is the progressive manifestation or revelation of God's self. Moreover, the development and self-manifesting of God is the actual, concrete content of all of world history:

God governs the world. The actual working of His government, the carrying out of His plan is the history of the world. Philosophy strives to comprehend this plan, for only that which has been carried out according to it has reality; whatever does not accord with it is but worthless existence. (RH 47)

God also plays the role of Creator: "the internal self-development of God and the development of the universe—are not so absolutely different" (PR v. 1 232). Hegel's discussion of the knowledge of God is an appropriate bridge to the discussion of Bahá'u'lláh's concept of progressive revelation.¹³ Hegel argues extensively and pointedly against the idea that human beings cannot know God.¹⁴ Rather, he sees knowledge of God as an elevation to God. Religion is the mediation between the finite and the infinite: it is the "finite content

¹²For further discussion of this point see Munson's "Hegel as Philosopher of Religion" and Shepherd's "Hegel as Theologian."

¹³This point is also brought up in relation to the apprehension of Truth in the *Introduction to the History of Philosophy*. Thus God and absolute Truth are equated.

¹⁴This discussion is brought up in every series of lectures. For example, see Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, v. 1, 86–89, 162–73 and 311–14. This is connected to his attack on Biblical hermeneutics (see 123, 167, 334 and 398), which also resonates with Bahá'u'lláh's position on religious scripture, giving primacy to a symbolic reading (see Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, ¶283 for example).

from which we pass over to God, from which we relate ourselves to the absolute, infinite content and pass over to it" (PR v. 1 414). Hegel holds that all true religion upholds the commandment to know God, and argues that the possibility of knowing God entails the obligation for humanity to know God (PR v. 1 87).

The teachings of the Bahá'í Faith, expounded by Bahá'u'lláh, likewise resonate with the importance of the knowledge of God: "[t]he beginning of all things is the knowledge of God" (*Gleanings* II).¹⁵ However, Bahá'u'lláh explains that it is *impossible* for human beings to grasp the nature of God and to have a direct relationship with His essence (*Kitáb-i-Íqán* ¶104–06). This paradox is resolved through the nature of the Manifestations of God and the concept of progressive revelation (*Kitáb-i-Íqán* ¶106–07). Bahá'ís use the term 'Manifestation of God' to designate any of the Prophets who have brought a new religion to mankind. Thus, the central messengers of religious history, such as Moses, Christ, Muhammad and Bahá'u'lláh Himself, are all called Manifestations of God (*Kitáb-i-Íqán* ¶20). The concept of Manifestation of God finds its parallel in Hegel's discussion of the nature of Christ as the fullest, most concrete self-determination of God. The full cognition of God, the unity of the divine and human nature, occurs in "a wholly temporal, completely ordinary worldly appearance in a single human being—this one man who is known at the same time as the divine idea, not as a teacher, not merely as a higher being in general, but as the highest idea, as the Son of God" (PR v. 3 110). Christ is at once God, Son of God, manifestation of God, and a stage in the development of God. Bahá'u'lláh argues that all Prophets are similar manifestations of God, at different stages in the development of religion. In one sense, these Manifestations of God *are* all God,¹⁶ one and the same, and in another sense, they are distinct, each bearing a religion that is a step in the concretion of the concept of religion—just as each stage of the development of the seed *is* a tree, though it may be seed, sprout, sapling or full-grown tree. Hegel explains God's relationship to His Son:

God the Father makes himself an object for himself (the Son); then, in this object, God remains the undivided essence within this differentiation of himself within himself, and in this differentiation of himself loves himself, i.e., remains identical with himself—this is God as Spirit. (PR v. 1 126)

¹⁵Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings*, II. See *Gleanings*, III as well as *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, ¶1.

¹⁶The metaphysical notions in this discussion are a little more complicated, since the Manifestations of God are not physical Manifestations of the Essence of God, but rather of the Primal Will. The Báb's writings deal with the subject extensively and an intensive discussion of His metaphysics can be found in Saiedi's *Gate of the Heart*.

The paradox of the duty to know God and the impossibility of knowing God is resolved through Bahá'u'lláh's concept of the Manifestation of God. We can know God through His Manifestations. A Manifestation of God is not a physical embodiment of God Himself, although for all practical purposes (in a speculative sense¹⁷), the Manifestation *is* God in relation to this physical existence. Hegel's emphasis on the knowledge of God can be reconciled with this idea in light of the following passage: "[t]o cognize God means to have a definite, concrete concept of God. As merely having being, God is something abstract; when God is cognized, however, we have a representation with a content" (PR v. 1 127). Thus, when Hegel speaks of the knowledge of God, he has a *representation* of God in mind, which neatly parallels Bahá'u'lláh's concept of the Manifestation of God. To summarise, both Hegel and Bahá'u'lláh write that: (a) there is only one God; (b) the purpose of mankind is to know God; (c) we can know God through His representations or His Manifestations; and (d) these representations unfold themselves successively according to the progressive development of religion in time. Thus for both Hegel and Bahá'u'lláh, the determinate religions, the religions that make up the entire history of religion, are successive and necessary stages in the development of the concept of religion (as *one* religion).

At this point, it is worth considering the following passage from Hegel:

truth's relationship to spirit as *particular* (this people, this age, etc.) is also particular; it is present for spirit only in determinate fashion. Faith therefore is modified from one stage in the development of spirit to another. (PR v. 1 468)

This passage can be compared with Bahá'u'lláh's statement that "faith itself is renewed and regenerated by God" every time a new Manifestation of God appears (*Gems* ¶61). Thus, from age to age, determinate religion undergoes revolutions brought about by unique (and yet multiple) Manifestations of God. The concept of truth is thus similar in both accounts. The Bahá'í Faith holds that religious truth is *relative*, since it is renewed and *sublated* every time a particular age calls for a new message (Shoghi Effendi 58). Likewise, in a Hegelian context, at any particular stage in the development of *Geist*, we cannot

¹⁷This is both a speculative and an ontological point. See Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, v. 1, 231–32, 331–36 and 381. On the ontological level: we have no access to the abstract concept of God, so, in this sense, we have no access to God; on the other hand, when we (re)cognize God, it is in His representation, and therefore, we have direct and personal access to God, since "the representation of God" can just as well be called "the being of God" (336). Relative to our level of cognition, the representation of God *is* God.

say that the current philosophy or religion is incorrect, since every particular relates its identity to the universal, the determination of the concept into the Idea. In the history of religion, then, truth is *relative* to the current determination of the concept of God, and it is impossible to sublimate that concept *at that time*. *Aufhebung* effectively occurs in the age when the next representation of God is revealed and made an object for (re)cognition. The first and foremost duty prescribed for Bahá'ís is *recognition* of the Manifestation of God in the current age, which is effectively a *recognition* of God (*Kitáb-i-Aqdas* ¶1); Hegel writes vehemently about this *recognition*, arguing against his opponents who would maintain that we cannot know God.¹⁸

Despite close similarities, there are also considerable differences between the views of Bahá'u'lláh and Hegel on the development of religion, particularly in their 'epistemological eschatology'. Bahá'u'lláh is very explicit that there is no end to the progressive unfolding of the divine plan, and that the Manifestations of God continually follow one another, like the Sun, which,

though it rise from the "Beginning that hath no beginning" until the "End that knoweth no end," is none the less the same sun. Now, wert thou to say, that this sun is the former sun, thou speakest the truth; and if thou sayest that this sun is the "return" of that sun, thou also speakest the truth. Likewise, from this statement it is made evident that the term "last" is applicable to the "first," and the term "first" applicable to the "last;" inasmuch as both the "first" and the "last" have risen to proclaim one and the same Faith. (*The Kitáb-i-Íqán* ¶171)

However, there is significant dispute about whether or not Hegel saw an end to history, or whether his philosophy (or Christianity) was simply another stage in the development of *Geist*.¹⁹ Berthold-Bond maintains that not only are Hegel's writings ambiguous with regard to the question of an end to history, but Hegel *himself* was undecided, since "an ample supply of passages in Hegel's texts may be found to support either of these basic alternatives" (Berthold-Bond 15). Either Hegel intended an absolute end of history in which no further progress of knowledge was possible (an 'absolutist' interpretation), or an end

¹⁸This is a recurrent theme throughout the lecture series. See, for example, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, v. 1, 86–89, 162–73, and 311–14.

¹⁹I would like to emphasise that I am not wholly committing myself to Berthold-Bond's interpretation. Whether or not he truly reflects Hegel's opinion (which may in fact have been exclusively 'absolutist'), his essay was selected because of his *critique* of the *ramifications* of an absolutist interpretation, and not because I felt that his interpretation truly reflected Hegel's thought.

which marks the fulfillment of a particular age, leaving room for further conceivable progress (an 'epochal' interpretation) (Berthold-Bond 15). Hegel himself is ambivalent, but Berthold-Bond argues that we must *choose* (in the style of Fichte's choice between dogmatism and idealism²⁰) the latter interpretation (epochal) in order to preserve Hegel's metaphysics, which diverges significantly from traditional Christian interpretations of eschatology (Berthold-Bond 14, 20). Hegel believes that the revelation of God not only takes place in history, but that the history of God's self-consciousness *is* history; how could history end in the Christian *eschaton*, which would be a moment *outside* of history? The following passage from Berthold-Bond reflects his choice with regard to Hegel's '*Phoenix*' eschatology:

Spirit is destined to achieve its goal, in the recollective epiphany of Absolute Knowledge, but this achievement is *episodic*, occurring at the culmination of each epoch, where every recollective closure of the circle of an epoch reaches beyond itself [*Aufhebung*] to the opening of a new era, regenerating history at each moment of its temporary fulfillment. (21)

Thus, we can choose to interpret Hegel's 'End' as the end of an epoch, and this interpretation is substantiated by a wealth of quotations from all of Hegel's writings concerning a 'new era' (Berthold-Bond 23-25). Given that "the final *satisfaction* of history would be the final *death* of spirit," Berthold-Bond's interpretation sacrifices less of the essence of Hegel's theory of the development of *Geist* than an absolutist interpretation (25). Therefore, if we choose an interpretation of Hegel that supports the eventual sublation of Christianity, and the further concretion of *Geist* (collapsing his inner ambivalence), Bahá'u'lláh's progressive revelation can resonate with Hegel's eschatology.

The concept of *Aufhebung* is profound, and echoes Bahá'u'lláh's view on the progressive revelation of religion. Shoghi Effendi, the great-grandson of Bahá'u'lláh, writes that

the Revelation identified with Bahá'u'lláh abrogates unconditionally all the Dispensations gone before it, upholds uncompromisingly the eternal verities they enshrine, recognizes firmly and absolutely the Divine origin of their Authors, preserves inviolate the sanctity of their authentic Scriptures, disclaims any intention of lowering the status

²⁰This is also reflected in Berthold-Bond's essay in his characterisation of our present age (17); although the context of the discussion is Freudian and post-WWII in flavour, the tone of this 'choice' is similar to Fichte's in that it has a component of morality and responsibility.

of their Founders or of abating the spiritual ideals they inculcate, clarifies and correlates their functions, reaffirms their common, their unchangeable and fundamental purpose, reconciles their seemingly divergent claims and doctrines, readily and gratefully recognizes their respective contributions to the gradual unfoldment of one Divine Revelation, *unhesitatingly acknowledges itself to be but one link in the chain of continually progressive Revelations*, supplements their teachings with such laws and ordinances as conform to the imperative needs, and are dictated by the growing receptivity, of a fast evolving and constantly changing society, and proclaims its readiness and ability to fuse and incorporate the contending sects and factions into which they have fallen into a universal Fellowship, functioning within the framework, and in accordance with the precepts, of a divinely conceived, a world-unifying, a world-redeeming Order. (*God* 100)

The definition of *Aufhebung* is eloquently captured by Shoghi Effendi in the context of the historical progress of determinate religion, which was Hegel's conundrum (Dickey 368–70). In a sense, religion is consummated *in every stage*, since the development of *Geist* needs to be expressed within the context of history. Thus, *absolute truth*²¹ and consummate religion can be found within a certain religious dispensation, until that religion has 'run its course', and sublates itself through the next Manifestation. The unity of all the Manifestations of God, operating alongside their distinction, is a perfectly typical Hegelian puzzle that is solved by the notion of progressive revelation. The clarification that Bahá'u'lláh brings to the application of the *Aufhebung* to the history of religion helps articulate and address Hegel's quandary.²²

²¹This is the notion of 'relative absolute truth': truth is *relative* to the current religious dispensation, but is *absolutely* found in every revelation as well, since all determinations of the concept are *still the concept* in essence.

²²Hegel never did arrive at a satisfactory arrangement for *Determinate Religion*" (Hodgson 2).

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Photographic Ambiguity

Assigning Responsibility for 'Truth' in Photographs

Wilson Blakley

ARTHUR Danto, while exploring the ethics of photography in general, raises and examines issues surrounding what he calls the 'controlling image' in "The Naked Truth." It is a human characteristic to care about one's appearance; Danto claims that this concern is tied to our sense of identity. Danto starts by establishing that concern for one's appearance is not merely superficial vanity, but is tied to concern for how we are thought of and remembered by others. This concern naturally extends to images such as photographs, through which others are able to recognise and judge us. Danto takes a close look at the nature of photography in an effort to reveal how far a photographer's responsibility extends to respecting the controlling image of the subject. I will examine Danto's account and highlight some of the questions he raises, in particular questions surrounding the 'still' and 'natural drawing' shots of photography and the claim that sometimes photographers assert "artistic authority in the propagation of a falsehood" (Danto 276).

To do this I will draw from various sources including a documentary entitled *The True Meaning of Pictures* which examines the photographic artist Shelby Lee Adams and his work. Also, I will refer to some of the critical writing surrounding the work of Degas and demonstrate how this reveals attitudes that play a role in response to photography. Danto is not the first to express concern about the production of photographic images and their perceived violation of an individual. Susan Sontag's *On Photography* is a critical examination of the ethics of photography and contains some scathing remarks about the practices of certain photographers. In examining Danto's position, it will prove fruitful to look at some of Sontag's claims and critical responses others have made to them.

First, Danto establishes that appearances are vital to "what we are at any given moment" (261). His argument draws on examples which highlight the concern people show for how they might be remembered after death. Apparently, in ancient Greece, during a growing craze for suicide, maidens were deterred from this mania by the threat of having their naked corpses displayed before the community (Danto 265–66). This somewhat dramatic example illustrates the significant degree of concern that people have for their appearance—one which

is not limited to merely the practical concerns of daily life, but also involves concern for the thoughts and remembrances of others. This concern comes to the fore with the realisation that artefacts such as photographs can and likely will outlast a particular life span. Thus, concern over one's image naturally extends to photographic representations. One's appearance has, according to Danto, a "symbolic reality" which correlates with how one thinks or feels about oneself (262). It is this "symbolic reality" that Danto attempts to equate with the "inviolability of the body" as regards the rights of the individual to control their image (261). The controlling image is in turn determined through the mirror image, in the sense of how one composes one's look in front of a mirror. Danto then compares and contrasts the production of images by the camera to those of the mirror. Danto states that both camera and mirror are seen to "always tell the truth, optically speaking" (263). Here, Danto distinguishes two senses of the term 'truth': a photographic/mirror image is *optically* true if it corresponds to something that actually occurred before the camera/mirror, whereas it is *morally* true if it conforms to one's self-image (267). The main thrust of Danto's argument is directed at what he sees as the propensity of photographers to disrespect the subject's controlling image by asserting a 'look' onto that subject which is not morally true.

The mirror is central to Danto's argument. Mirrors simply reflect in a neutral and causal way what is held before them. Mirrors do not interpret or judge the subject. Cameras are thought to be similar to mirrors in this respect. The image produced by a camera is the direct result of what was before it; cameras do not interpret or judge. Because mirrors are used to establish a person's self-image through the strength of the reflected image, the photographic image, as unbiased presenter of reality, is likewise thought to give an objective truth.

Danto raises this issue of the truth of photographic images while refining the overly simple analogy which has been drawn between the truth of images produced by mirrors and images produced by cameras. The moral question around the photographic image pertains to the possible propagation of a false representation of a subject, perhaps an image which degrades the subject. Both these questions raise ethical concerns for the photographer. The priority of an individual's right to control their own image over the photographer's right to control the images they create is Danto's main focus. Essentially, this conflict might be expressed as one between the rights of an individual to control his own image and the rights of an artist to express herself freely.

Danto rightly raises the point that high-speed photography has changed the nature of photography from its early use. He claims that

the technological developments in photography are responsible for the change in the essentially 'collaborative' relationship between subject and artist that exists in painting and earlier photography. Danto elucidates this change in the nature of photography by distinguishing between what he calls a 'still' photograph and a 'natural drawing' photograph. The natural drawing photograph is an image which has been composed through the cooperation of the photographer and the subject to present the look or image of the subject. This is to say that the photo receives the consent of the subject as complying with his or her self-image. A still photograph, on the other hand, is an image pulled from the fluid motion of the subject and is thus able to reveal things that the unaided eye could not see.

Danto suggests that in certain pictorial practices a relationship of identity prevails between the individual and their image; disfiguring or desecrating an image in such a case would be seen as an "attack on the individual" (267). Likewise, producing and displaying a photographic image which the subject holds to be degrading would be seen as a violation of the individual. Danto then proceeds to illuminate this point. Oddly, though, he begins with the case of a poorly received image painted of a local mayor by an art student. The fact that the work was a painting and produced in an artistic context complicates Danto's claims, as does the fact that the portrait was of a public official. Painting, unlike photography, is more consistently thought of as an interpretive activity. Even portraiture and other forms of realistic painting are understood to be the result of artistic skill and thus are to some degree interpretive and not simply the product of causal relationships.

The controlling image points to a correspondence between one's image as presented in a mirror—one's reflection—and how one wants to be seen by others. According to Danto, an individual has the right to maintain control over this image. The violations committed by the photographer, in Danto's account, are in part made possible by the camera's ability to produce images at speeds significantly faster than normal visual ability. This photographic capacity can generate images that are not part of the normal 'visual world'. As such, these images need not conform to an individual's look. This can of course happen, as Danto rightly states, in the case of a passing glance in a mirror. Caught unawares, one's glimpsed mirror-image might reveal embarrassing, even compromising, truths. But the truths of a glimpsed mirror image are still within the field of normal visual capacities: one can adjust and re-compose an embarrassing mirror-image to bring it in line with one's look.

This look is what Danto calls the 'endorsed mirror image' and

to develop his argument Danto must establish a link between the endorsed or controlling image and one's sense of self. Unlike the mirror image, images made possible through photography need not conform to an endorsed image. Further, control of the photographic image is principally in the hands of the photographer whose vision may not match the wishes of the subject. As Danto clearly puts it, the question turns on "where the photographer asserts her authority to show the subject as she sees the subject, rather than the way the subject sees herself" (267).

I am not particularly interested in defending a student work which I have not seen, but I think it important to note that the painting was of a mayor, and not merely of the individual Harold Washington. Though Harold Washington's personal self-image was in part made up by his role as mayor, Mayor Washington had an image which, being public, was composed largely through public means. This includes commendation and condemnation through artistic statement. Those who hold democratically elected office are held responsible to their public. Thus both their position and how they function within that capacity are open to criticism. Though *ad hominem* attacks can be distracting and ugly, art that attempts political statement, as with art in general, ought not to be held to standards of narrow and literal readings. It is true that art which strives to make a political statement traverses a complex and ambiguous path. Danto compares the product of an artistic enterprise to the standards used in journalism in too narrow and literal a way when he states that the "painting in question was essentially pictorial libel, as much so as it would be libel if a newspaper columnist [...] were to print an article claiming that Harold Washington [note the absence of mayoral title] wore women's underwear" (268). That Danto cannot find an obvious metaphorical truth to the work in question is not a strong reason to conclude that there is nothing metaphorical to the work. More importantly, and more pertinent to this discussion, Danto's choice of examples, when properly viewed, establishes that in certain practices the subject must assume responsibility for the decision to put himself in a particular situation. The artist's model, like the politician, cannot claim that image manipulation was not part of the game.

Danto's example is also well chosen because it raises and ties together three related elements essential to his argument. One element is the lasting concern for our image/appearance (as made clear through the Grecian maidens), which ties to the fact that the mayor was deceased at the time. Danto wants to claim that the rights of the individual over his or her controlling image extend beyond death. This is important for Danto to maintain because the link between ap-

pearance and person cannot be limited to the physical. Danto gets leverage for this by linking concern for the opinions of others to one's sense of identity. Identifying a picture of oneself then has the stronger sense of a gesture made which invites public appraisal.

Another issue raised in the Mayor Washington example is the journalistic use of photography. Photography, because of its apparent causal mechanism, has lent itself to reporting and documentary contexts. The photographic image has been a source of some factual knowledge. Practices such as journalism, where compliance between empirical fact and proposition is essential, must be seen as distinct from artistic practices. Yet Danto draws these distant practices together with his choice of example: in effect, Danto holds an artwork up to the standards of journalism.

A third element crucial to Danto's choice of example is his positing the existence of certain established and proper conventions of the 'painterly relationship', namely a 'collaborative' process wherein the artist serves and respects the subject's 'self-image'. All these elements bear further examination.

Danto describes an ideal of cooperation between artist and subject in rendering an image with which the subject can identify: "the controlling factor [is] what the subject wanted to look like, which the artist helped realize" (Danto 274). Photographers who approach their work in this manner are described by Danto as being painterly, yet I cannot help but wonder about Danto's view. The idleness of Danto's position is apparent if one only thinks of a painter such as Francis Bacon who has received the highest of accolades for an oeuvre that has precious little to do with the self-image of the subject.

Degas is another example of a painter whose work does not seem to conform to Danto's demand that the artist comply with a subject's self-image. Degas has been the target of damning personal criticism for his representations of women. It is true that Degas did not conform to the social conventions that dictated the appropriate manner of the presentation of his subject, but there is good reason to be suspicious of the conclusions drawn, in the main, by the art history tradition. I will examine the issues surrounding Degas as they bear heavily on Danto's argument. Danto does raise Degas in connection to the issue of photographic stills (to which I will return), but it will prove fruitful to examine Degas's historical reputation as a misogynist insofar as this bears directly on how I should like to argue for a proper reading of his work.

Presumably, had there been a more obvious metaphorical interpretation, Danto would have had more of a struggle in sanctioning the censure of the painting of Mayor Washington. The weakness of

Danto's claims becomes clear when it is imagined that the case involved Mayor Washington's permission. The objective situation would then seem as benign as (to use another of Danto's examples) going into the beauty salon and giving permission for the 'aesthetikos' to follow their fancy—no style or tint barred, provided the hair does not obstruct vision (for presumably there needs to be some reason for entering the salon in the first place). Danto might argue that this is just a radical tactic in finding a new self-image, but it may equally be that one is just not concerned. In this situation, it is far more plausible that the painting's public exhibition would withstand the actions of those concerned with protecting the mayor's good image. Assuming there is still no literal truth, nor any obvious metaphorical truths, would the burghers of Chicago still have Danto's commendation in removing the painting? Though the instinctual response would be no, the answer in Danto's terms would still appear to be yes; however, it is no longer clear that the painting remains 'merely cruel'. Nor does it appear that the collaborative painterly relationship that Danto describes is essential to painting. Newspapers cannot print just anything. Obtaining permission from people to print falsities pertaining to them does not give editors *carte blanche*. But if an artist/painter is given permission to do whatever they like, is there justification enough to destroy a painting, even if the image was to outlast the life of the subject and thus risk becoming a source of falsities about the subject? This seems unlikely.

But Danto does not explore this possibility. In fact, the strength of his argument relies on the absurdity of such a possibility: of course no self-respecting public official would consent to a portrait of themselves in daring drag lingerie. This fact reinforces the collaborative relationship between subject and artist, which, according to Danto, obtains. If Danto is able to establish a standard of collaborative practice in the arts, then his claim about an artist's obligations to the controlling image of the subject is better established. I aim to show the speciousness of the collaborative relationship described by Danto.

Danto distinguishes between images which correspond to "the image of who the subject thinks he is" and images which show "us things that are not part of the normal visual world" (273). Danto calls images that correspond in this way 'natural drawings' and those that do not correspond in this way 'stills'. In describing how high-speed cameras provide access to images which do not correspond to the normal visual world, Danto separates what he sees as two distinct approaches to photography: one, the painterly "negotiation between artist and subject;" the other, the still, "a kind of invasion into a world in which our eyes have no natural entry point" (274). I would like to argue that the

photographic still, though causally linked to the camera's mechanical process, is better viewed as something similar to the artistic product, which results from a creative and imaginative process.

To this end, I turn to the work of Degas and offer an examination of the discourse which has surrounded his body of work. Precisely because Degas worked as a painter, a comparison with Danto's claims around photography should be rich. For my examination, it is important to keep in the fore Danto's claim that the still offers "a world in which our [unaided] eyes had no natural entry point" (274). Degas, Danto reminds us, painted the legs of horses in motion in a way that complied with what could only be seen through a photographic still. That is to say, Degas painted the galloping horses with "stiff-legged" realism that did not match "the way we *feel* they move" (Danto 272). Danto's argument is that the "visually convincing but locomotively false" image of running horses is the schematic image which "corresponds to the canonical image of the subject" (273). Or, as Danto put it earlier, the morally true image is the image that corresponds to the endorsed or controlling image (266–67). Danto creates the impression that the taking of stills is a form of aggression, an approach to the subject which disregards and "violates the subject's will to his [the artist's] own ends" (270).

Danto's tone is very much in line with the sentiment expressed by Sontag in *On Photography*. Sontag describes the camera as something that "may presume, intrude, trespass, distort, exploit, and at the farthest reach of metaphor, assassinate" (13). Photography, according to Sontag, is likened to a "treacherous form of leaching out of the world" (4). Likewise, Danto gives the impression that the only way to responsibly use such a dangerous tool as the camera is to defer and submerge the "artistic will to that of the subject" (270).

In the art history tradition, Degas has been severely criticised for his representations of women. In her article "Degas' [sic] 'Misogyny'" Norma Broude re-examines this attitude and argues that Degas has been unfairly maligned. Drawing on secondary documentation such as diary entries and letters, Broude shows that Degas's position towards women could be viewed less as a misogynistic stance and more as a consistent rejection and criticism of the conventions and limitations society upheld with regard to women, including, by extension, the conventional way of representing women. By showing women at their toilette, engaged in chores, or employed in prostitution, Degas presented images of women that were then thought not only unworthy of artistic attention, but were also considered downright unpresentable.

In a way, Degas was providing a view into a world not only considered inappropriate, but normally unavailable to the unaided eye. I

am making the claim that there is a similarity between images made available through optical tools like telescopes, microscopes, and cameras and those images produced by artists who hold, at least in part, their artistic project to be the presentation of the novel or of ordinary things in novel ways. Artists have played with—and, to some degree, are expected to play with—the conventions of presentation. It thus seems only natural that a device such as a camera would be put to this use. Degas makes interesting use of the information provided by the photographic process by including it in the imaginative work of his painting, for instance in his representations of moving horses. Similarly, Degas takes the viewer's eye where it normally has no access, for instance, backstage, into rehearsal, or into the loo for a candid peek. Although these images are not in themselves optically invisible, they are made invisible by social convention. This conventional invisibility is the target of Degas's artistic criticism.

With this in mind, a re-examination of Danto's criticism of Degas's non-schematic representations is in order. Danto criticises Degas's images of horses in motion for not complying with the schematic view he claims people hold of them. He maintains that the schematic representations, as seen in the Ardeche paintings, are truer to the way "we feel" horses move, i.e., to the "endorsed image" of horses' motion (Danto 272). Although it seems unlikely that Degas was targeting a particular schematic representation, I think it fair to maintain that Degas was not interested in obeying the limitations of conventional standards, social or schematic. Degas saw that things could be viewed unconventionally, and that there were things worth viewing that conventionally were not considered so. Horses do not run the way we feel they do nor the way they are traditionally 'schematically' painted; this, cameras have taught us. Likewise, women are not merely what they are conventionally represented as being in paintings.

But by not meeting expectations, Degas makes the appreciative task more difficult for the viewer. Works that do not meet expectations will take some time and effort to appreciate. An audience that has learned to appreciate a certain set of precepts for evaluating works may be reluctant to have those values disturbed. Yet not all works that fail to appeal to common sensibilities are properly thought of as challenges to those sensibilities. Certainly some works are simply better executed to meet those aims, others less so. Naturally, images outside the accepted standards risk being received less enthusiastically at first. Initially they may not even be liked; some things are acquired tastes. Opening up to alternative conceptions of aesthetic value requires accepting that there is no fixed notion of beauty. I think Degas's paintings of dancers involved in rehearsal, or occupied

with adjusting a shoe, are an extension of an artistic project aimed at presenting images that do not conform to either canonical values or endorsed images. Danto indicates that technological advancements in the field of photography now make possible a certain disjunction between the subject and the resulting image. This disjunction is not the result of a technological development but has always been a part of painterly practice. The photographic still can have a similar result to that of the imaginative work of artistic activity (whether we are dealing with Degas's socially non-conformist images or a painting of a mayor in lingerie). Though the two processes differ in the causal relationship they have with their products, they both may function as methods of artistic creation.

The documentary *The True Meaning of Pictures* focuses on the work of Shelby Lee Adams and brings many of the issues raised by Danto into relief. Is Adams taking stills or natural drawings? Though Adams obtains consent for the use of his images, are his subjects in a position to understand how the photographs are read? What is Adams's role as a photographer? Is he a documentarist, or an artist, or both? Criticism around Shelby Adams's work includes doubts as to whether the photographs give an honest representation of the lives his subjects are living or whether he is propagating hackneyed and derogatory stereotypes.

The question of Adams's role as a photographic artist/documentarist is crucial to understanding his photographs. How one interprets Danto's claims will bear heavily on this understanding and cannot be understood without a deeper examination of the nature of photography. The causal nature of photography has given rise to the belief that photographs give an honest depiction of reality. Because of this belief, photography has lent itself well to the field of journalism. Journalistic writing and research is putatively a search for facts. News reports are guided by principles of honesty and accuracy. Likewise a documentary film is supposed to be guided by similar principles. By exposing a public to a given reality, a documentary aims to educate that public. Questions regarding the cognitive value of art also pertain to documentary works, but ideally part of the overriding aim of a documentary is correspondence to some empirical fact.

Regarding his photos of the Appalachian region, Adams claims to be "trying to show what is really here" (*The True Meaning of Pictures*). On Adams's account, his work is partly a reaction to earlier media representations of the Eastern Kentucky area: Kentucky "wasn't portrayed correctly and wasn't portrayed honestly." Presumably, Adams is "bringing honour back to Eastern Kentucky" by "trying to make right what the media has done wrong." It is an ironic twist that some

of the criticism Adams levels at the media portrayal of the impoverished region is similar to some of the attacks on Adams's photography. Adams's photographs feature the harshness of the lives of the "hollow dwellers" and display ugliness, poverty, and deformity.

I think a comparison with the critical attack made against Diane Arbus by Susan Sontag is worth conducting here inasmuch as this may reveal some of the assumptions held by critics of photography. One might say that Sontag, in *On Photography*, is not naturally disposed to the medium of photography, characterising it, as she does, as a violation and intrusion. In spite of this bias, Sontag does recognise that photography can be turned to good use. It is with this sort of use in mind that she writes of the Whitemanesque project of the WPA and such things that illuminated a regrettable situation and were instrumental in generating positive change. Sontag charges Arbus for her tendency to photograph her subjects in a way that does not invite pity or compassion for the subjects. Arbus is accused of being cruel towards her subjects in representing them unsympathetically. Similarly, Adams is accused of making his subjects look shameful and frightening. In particular, one commentator states that Adams has "disgraced our family" (*The True Meaning of Pictures*). Elsewhere in the documentary, the sense of anger towards Adams focuses on the manner in which he has represented a region. Eastern Kentucky and its citizens are the victims of Adams's cruel camera work. Yet Adams clearly states that he cares about and loves his subjects and that he maintains ongoing friendly relations with them. As with the Arbus photographs, it is difficult to imagine that the subjects would make themselves so available to a photographer in whom they sensed or suspected duplicitous motivations. As Adams states early in the documentary, "the hollow dwellers [...] accept themselves for who they are and what they are. And they accept me because I accept them." Adams has a certain advantage in that he was born in Hazard County, which is in the region where he photographs his subjects. Although much is made of Adams's being from the area, it is clear that he did not really share their lifestyle and upbringing, nor is he limited by their poverty or lack of education. So Adams's claim that his subjects are his people seems somewhat disingenuous. This is sharply revealed when one notes that the accent with which he speaks when addressing the hollow dwellers is absent when he addresses the documentary film maker.

Danto's criticisms stem more from the fact that photographs retain as much as they do of a normal, unaided, visual image. By thinking that a photograph is somehow a record, a projection of someone's self-image—and not a distinct entity, an image to be considered on its own

terms, separate from vestigial resemblances to some endorsed self-image—Danto is able to tease out an argument of some plausibility. But once the link of identity between one's self and one's symbolic self is understood to be embedded in the context of certain practice, Danto's claims are greatly attenuated in scope. Consenting to the artistic production of images of oneself and deferring to the artist's choice of aesthetic merit is not the only possibility. One may or may not waive the right to veto what is ultimately produced before public presentation.

Adams is attracted to people who are "suffering and who are in pain" (*The True Meaning of Pictures*). Adams claims to be "trying to make right what the media has done wrong. [Make it right] for myself, for the people I photograph." But unlike the media representations which, as Adams states, showed a Kentucky wanting and needing to be pulled out of its misery, Adams's project is not aimed at redressing a social wrong. As Adams states, he has accepted the hollow dwellers for "who and what they are." Adams finds pride and strength in their lives. When referring to the Napier family and their traditional way of life, Adams mentions finding a "spirit and dignity that had an inner strength." Adams wants to preserve, on photographic film and as a living and unique cultural environment, the Appalachian region he photographs.

This is in contrast to much photo-journalism, which often is, as stated above, revealing a social situation that calls for change. Also, Adams's project is in contrast to those photo documentaries wanting to preserve something that is soon to be no more. This sort of collector mentality, a kind of photographic desperation to capture and archive the appearance of things before they disappear, is clearly not on Adams's agenda.

Similarly, though on another level, Adams is criticised by a relative of one of Adams's earlier subjects for having "disgraced our family." In a phrase strikingly reminiscent of Danto, the same commentator explains that the photographs Adams produces, because of his choice of elements, "would not be true to you." Adams defends his work, claiming that it is not an attempt to degrade someone, but to take advantage of "an exciting dramatic lighting event." This comment, as well as his repeated references to structural elements in his photographs, indicates the sort of attention that Adams thinks is appropriate when appreciating his photographs. A distinctly artistic attitude is demanded: attention to the form and visual effects opens up another way to read Adams's photographs.

But do the artistic and the photo-documentary aspects of Adams's work need to be reconciled? Can they be? Or can they live indepen-

dently/distinctly within the same work? It seems to me that Adams's photographs blur the distinction between art photography and photo-documentary. His work cannot be seen as either one or the other. Rather, each aspect informs the other. The artistic content of the photographs is in part constituted by the subjects and their lives. In turn, the journalistic side of the photographs is strongly coloured by Adams's artistic vision. A most notable example is Adams's discussion of a photograph showing a severely handicapped individual in diapers and a mid-aged man holding a knife. This cannot be seen as simply a moment of domestic life for the hollow dwellers. Adams describes the metaphorical meanings the image has for him and the tension of the ambiguity present in the image. The ambiguity of the image is not resolved through an examination of Adams's project. In fact, Adams's project appears highly ambiguous and is all the more powerful as a result.

I think Danto is right to say that the attitude of the photographer determines the nature of the photograph. But Danto creates opposed and seemingly exclusive roles for the photographer, when the reality is far more fluid and blurred than he suggests. The painterly relationship Danto posits is a fiction, and photographers such as Arbus and Adams are able to blur the distinctions between documentary, portraiture, and art. Bearing this in mind, Danto's fear that photographers are involved in the 'propagation of falsehood' can be calmed by the following realisation: the responsibility for any falsehood lies not with the photographer, nor with the photograph itself, but with the spectator who may be looking for or assuming things of a photograph that are inappropriate. Cultural education would probably be the most effective preventative measure against Danto's false images.

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Imaginability and Necessity Helmholtz on Kantian Intuition and Euclidean Geometry*

Markus Prinz

IMMANUEL Kant proposed that the necessary condition for visual perception was a transcendental¹ intuition in the forms of space and time. In particular, the pure form of space was supposed to be characterised by the axioms of Euclidean geometry. Hermann von Helmholtz criticises this claim. His critique leads to the question of whether the *imaginability* of non-Euclidean space is sufficient to undermine Kant's claim about what transcendental intuition is like. Are multiple forms of geometry intuitively imaginable, and is a representation of space in pure mathematical terms sufficient to substantiate this claim? Can geometrical axioms remain *a priori* and could the imaginability of non-Euclidean geometries fit Kant's criteria of pure intuition? I will evaluate Helmholtz in the context of these questions and discuss the merits of the objection of J. P. N. Land as well as Helmholtz's reply to it.

In his critique of Kant, Helmholtz proposes that we can conceive of space in various non-Euclidean forms of geometry, which undermines the *necessity* of Euclidean geometry that Kant implicitly stipulates. It should be noted that Kant's precise commitment to a particular system of geometry may be debated. Very likely he would have been most comfortable with Euclidean geometry, as an understanding of non-Euclidean geometry was still developing during his time and indeed, prior to Riemann and Beltrami, was hardly conceivable. It remains to be asked whether Kant himself believed that Euclidean space was the only possible form of intuition, or whether it is simply an inference made by later readers of his works. Thus, it is not essential to this paper to illustrate Kant's commitment to Euclidean geometry and to show how it can be refuted, but rather to determine whether his theory is committed to any particular geometry as necessary given Helmholtz's analysis of imaginability. Helmholtz himself, in the works I am analysing, does not explicitly claim that Kant accepted only

*Excerpt from BA thesis supervised by Dirk Schlimm.

¹Kant defines 'transcendental' in the *Critique of Pure Reason*: "I call all cognition transcendental that is occupied not so much with objects but rather with our mode of cognition of objects insofar as this is to be possible *a priori*" (A11/B25).

Euclidean forms of space. Rather, Helmholtz rejects the broader notion that *any* particular type of space is necessarily *a priori*. It is Helmholtz's claim that neither Euclidean nor non-Euclidean intuition is necessary, but that it can be discovered empirically which geometry is true of the world we live in.

The main portion of my discussion will be a detailed presentation of Helmholtz's main claims as described above: Kant's transcendental intuition is not necessarily Euclidean and, moreover, an attempt to determine the true representation of space must be the result of empirical investigation. To work through these claims I will mainly consider Helmholtz's "The Origin and Meaning of Geometrical Axioms (I)" (1876) and "The Origin and Meaning of Geometrical Axioms (II)" (1878). The latter contains a reply to a criticism by Professor Land, who accuses Helmholtz of abandoning the whole theory of pure intuition that underlies perception. After looking at these arguments, I will be ready to analyse Helmholtz's main claim that particular geometrical axioms are not necessary to *a priori* transcendental intuition.

The Origin and Meaning of Geometrical Axioms (I) (1876)

In his first paper on the foundations of geometry aimed at non-mathematicians, Helmholtz argues that non-Euclidian forms of space are imaginable and that it is only through empirical testing that we can find out to what kind of geometry our space conforms. Given this, Euclid's axioms—or, indeed, any axioms—cannot be necessary to the pure form of intuition. Here, Helmholtz is not rejecting Kant's system, but only criticising one aspect of it, namely the *a priori* origins of geometrical axioms. Perhaps he was even trying to prevent future readers of Kant from drawing the wrong conclusions from his theory, since he did not want to refute the whole of Kant's project, but simply eliminate those elements that made it less plausible.

To start, Helmholtz proposes axioms of his own (different from Euclid's), which are sufficient to characterize the general notion of space, but which also admit more systems of geometry than just Euclid's. He introduces Bernhard Riemann, who proposes a method for scientifically capturing space relations in analytic or pure geometry. Helmholtz believes this is the way to make non-Euclidian geometries imaginable.

Helmholtz believes that perceptions in common experience lead to conclusions about space that are not supported by purely logical reasons. For this reason, he praises Riemann for developing a method that uses magnitudes to measure space relations more rigorously. This analytic geometry allows for a description of space that surpasses

the field of perception. A system of coordinates facilitates reasoning about spatial relations and picks up the slack where our power to represent space is limited “by the structure of our organs and the experience obtained through them” (“Origin (I)” 308). In experience we only ever have access to a limited amount of space, whereas in analytic geometry we can establish measurements that could not readily be experienced with the senses.

It would be a presupposition to think that the translation of fixed figures works in the whole of space just as it does within our limited practical experience. Helmholtz writes:

The foundation of all proof by Euclid’s method consists in establishing the congruence of lines, angles, plane figures, solids, &c. [...] [G]eometric figures are supposed to be applied to one another, of course without changing their form and dimensions. (“Origin (I)” 303)

Using several illustrations, Helmholtz demonstrates that the geometrical axioms underlying these proofs are dependent on the kind of space that is being described (“Origin (I)” 306). A space where the translation of shapes preserves lines and angles is a special case and this is not a property inherited by every kind of surface; indeed, only surfaces with zero curvature (Euclidian flat space) have this property.

To make non-Euclidian forms of space clearer, Helmholtz uses several illustrations. One of his thought experiments involves a person living in a convex mirror. It goes as follows. If you were standing in front of a convex mirror you would see that everything in your world corresponds to something in the world of the man looking back out through the mirror—to something on the surface of the convex mirror. As things move farther away from you, they move towards the outside of the mirror and become smaller. However, if you take a ruler and measure the object that is at the edge of the mirror you would find that it measures the same amount of units in your world as in the world of the man in the mirror, even though in comparison it may look smaller. Helmholtz takes it as a self-evident fact that “if all the linear dimensions of other bodies and our own were at the same time diminished or increased in like proportion [...] we should [...] be utterly unaware of the change” (“Origin (I)” 315). Similarly, this man in the mirror, with a ‘shrunk’ ruler would count out the same distance between two points as you standing in front of the mirror in Euclidean space. Helmholtz goes so far as to say that neither you nor the man in the mirror would be convinced of the other’s conception of space being the one with curvature. From your perspective, the man in the mirror lives in a spherical space. On the other hand, from the perspective of the man in the mirror, you live in a pseudospherical space.

Finally, Helmholtz advocates the inclusion of mechanical behaviour in a complete picture of spatial relations. In three dimensional space, the only property that will be helpful for gaining any objective knowledge about space through experience is what Helmholtz calls the *mechanical axiom*, which states that the “mechanical and physical properties of bodies and their mutual reactions are, other circumstances remaining the same, independent of place” (“Origin (I)” 320). This mechanical axiom assumes a space with constant curvature. Based on this assumption empirical testing can determine if the system of geometry proposed actually corresponds to the real objects it represents and analyses. If the mechanical axiom does not hold then it would be impossible to measure spatial relations, since any ‘ruler’ used for measurement would vary in size inconsistently as the person measuring moves it through space.

Helmholtz seeks to explain the origin of the special characteristics of our ‘flat’ space (with constant zero curvature) because it seems that these characteristics are not implied merely by an extension of three dimensions and free mobility of rigid objects. He reasons that if we assume that these characteristics find their origins in experience and we are able to “represent to ourselves connected series of facts indicating a different value for the measure of curvature from that of Euclid’s flat space,” then the axioms of geometry cannot be the “necessary consequences of an *à* [sic] *priori* transcendental form of intuition, as Kant thought” (“Origin (I)” 314). Helmholtz rests on this final point. However, Professor Land puts Helmholtz’s paper under the microscope and criticises it. Next, I present Land’s critique, which focuses on epistemological concerns.

Professor Land’s Critique

Professor Land sets up his critique of Helmholtz by distinguishing two ways of approaching the topic of the possibility of different types of space. He emphasises the distinction between science and philosophy and says that the nature of the problem changes depending on which of the two disciplines is used to approach it. Consequently, the methodology used to solve the problem must also change. The primary conflation of terms that occurs if the two disciplines are not rigorously separated is between the ‘real’ and the ‘objective’ (Land 38–39). In science, says Land, they must be assumed to be the same, whereas in philosophy, the relationship between them is precisely the subject of investigation. Equating them would make vacuous many questions raised in philosophy and would be evidence of unwarranted assumptions.

In Land's paper, there are many questions concerning the relationship between reality and the sense-perceiver from a philosophical standpoint. He is concerned about the nature of perception. He believes it is an assumption to state that the representation of space that we have as subjects is a 'copy' of an externally existing real space on which perceptions completely depend. The philosophically *objective* is contrasted with the *subjective*, but whether the objective corresponds with what is real is uncertain. Land says,

perception may be, for aught I know, wholly dissimilar in nature from both the impulse and that which produced the impulse, as the perception of red or blue is believed to be the effect of certain undulations in the optic nerve, produced in their turn by the waves termed light, and yet not to be compared with either. (42)

On this point, as will be seen later, Helmholtz has different inclinations than Land.

Land also believes that Helmholtz uses an unconventional notion of imaginability when the latter claims that non-Euclidian space is 'imaginable'. The ability to *think* of space as infinitely extended in pseudospherical space, for example with the help of analytic geometry, is not the same as *imagining* it in a meaningful way. Moreover, as Land writes,

even admitting for a moment that our mind is capable of *imagining* different sorts of space, it might still be maintained that the only possible form of *actual intuition* for a mind like ours, as affected by real things outside of it, is Euclidean space. (42)

That is to say, even if these non-Euclidean types of space were imaginable, this does not require that our *actual* intuition admit non-Euclidean representations. Pure geometry is supposed to settle this question, by revealing that non-Euclidean geometry is just as 'representable' as Euclidean geometry. Of this Land says there are two possibilities for the status of pure geometry. Either it is an abstraction from sense experience (hence, empirical), or it results from the necessity of thought and is unassisted by the senses (*a priori*). He maintains that space may be empirical without there being any real space that corresponds to sense experience. However, there can still be some reality that causes our minds to represent space. These two beliefs held together describe a transcendental *a priori* intuition. Since Land believes that the geometrical axioms cannot be deduced by pure logic, they must be synthetic propositions (45). He says,

[t]o demand logical proof for genuine geometrical axioms is a mistake, because every proof must proceed from some ultimate premisses, which in this case must concern space. There are no data about space either in logic or arithmetic, but only in our sense-intuition, and precisely the data expressed in those axioms. (39)

This is the crux of Land's argument. Since sense intuition is required for synthetic propositions, eliminating what is, in Land's view, the only sensible form of space—that is, Euclidean space—precludes a transcendental component of intuition. Thus, he accuses Helmholtz, so to speak, of throwing the baby out with the bath water. Land maintains that Helmholtz, by removing the requirement of Euclidean characterisation of space as necessary, is also committed to denying the transcendental nature of perception. Is this indeed what Helmholtz does, or is Land picking at details that are inconsequential? In the following section, I look at Helmholtz's reply.

The Origin and Meaning of Geometrical Axioms (II) (1878)

A few years after writing "The Origin and Meaning of Geometrical Axioms," Helmholtz published a second version that served as a response to Professor Land's criticisms. The criticisms include the allegation that Helmholtz wished to deny the *a priori* transcendental nature of space. Helmholtz responds that this is a misinterpretation of his claims. Helmholtz explains that it is not his intention to raise an objection to space as a necessary *a priori* form of intuition. Rather, it is the relation between the transcendental form and reality that he criticises. He does not commit himself to a type of geometry as a form of intuition; indeed, he identifies as a weakness in Kant's theory the assumption that any geometrical axioms at all are necessary.

Kant's argument for the transcendental *a priori* origin of the Euclidean characteristic of spatial perception is incomplete, says Helmholtz. Nonetheless, Helmholtz assumes the hypothesis of the transcendental origin of the Euclidian axioms for the purpose of proving it wrong. He builds this argument by distinguishing between pure geometry (the knowledge of which is gained through pure intuition) and physical geometry (in which equivalence is determined empirically by measurement using physical instruments). It is possible to have intuition of pure geometry, but how can it be determined if the magnitudes that appear in this transcendental intuition actually correspond to those of the real world? Pure intuition of space does not help solve this problem, says Helmholtz, because even if physical laws were found that correspond to the transcendental axioms this would only show that

both sets do not lead to a contradiction, not that they are somehow causally related. It is for this reason that Helmholtz says that “the physical geometry and the supposed transcendental geometry need not be in correspondence” (“Origin (II)” 220). This means that non-Euclidean space can be perceived² just as consistently as Euclidean space.

Thus, a geometry derived from pure intuition might be conceivable, but the question would always remain as to whether the pure (analytic) and physical geometries are causally related. If these two systems are connected then there must be, as Helmholtz claims in both papers, a “pre-established harmony between intuition and the real world” (“Origin (II)” 225; “Origin (I)” 321). However, this harmony would preclude any synthetic judgment, since we could arrive at the truth by pure reflection alone without any empirical analysis. Thus, we have seen that if the axioms that describe space are necessary, then this form of intuition cannot give us any new information: geometry would consist only of analytic truths. This state of affairs would preclude the possibility of transcendental intuition. But, as noted above, Helmholtz does *not* wish to deny the transcendental nature of intuition, and so he argues that the axioms cannot be *a priori*.

To support the conceivability of different (non-Euclidean) axioms for the intuition of space, Helmholtz further develops his notion of imaginability. For Helmholtz, it is possible to imagine an object that we have never seen. This kind of imaginability is a bit too liberal for Land, who maintains that a ‘Kantian’ notion of imaginability must be stretched to accommodate Helmholtz’s view. Now that I have given a relatively detailed account of Helmholtz’s response to Land concerning pure intuition, I will shift the focus to his notion of imaginability. Indeed, Helmholtz’s argument importantly depends on his view of imaginability: upon it rests his claim that different forms of space can be conceived of, even with a system of transcendental *a priori* intuition in place.

Imaginability

In considering objects that have never actually been perceived, Helmholtz says that the only recourse is to a notion of imaginability. For the origin of the axioms of geometry to be *a priori*, it must be impossible to have mental representations of space relations that differ from the one ‘true’ geometrical space. Land defends a limited notion of imaginability under which only Euclidian space (or, at least, only one kind of space) is imaginable, and thus upholds Kant’s belief that

²That is, an experience in this physical space can be represented to the mind.

the axioms of geometry are *a priori*. For something to be imaginable, Land says, it must only require us to use bodies that we can indeed represent to ourselves and from which we can construct other representations. Helmholtz disagrees that the standard for imaginability requires things that can be constructed by a model of existing bodies. This, he maintains, would undermine the search for the origin of the axioms ("Origin (II)" 216); the bodies we experience are Euclidian, and so to state that all that is imaginable is what can be constructed from these is to state that all that is imaginable is Euclidian, thus begging the question of whether pure intuition necessarily conforms to a particular form of geometry.

In an analogy similar to a science fiction episode of the once popular TV series *The Outer Limits*, Helmholtz takes us on an adventure of the mind with the aim of illustrating the imaginability of non-Euclidian space. He describes how we can wear lenses of varying curvatures that will simulate spatial perception as it may be experienced in either pseudospherical or spherical space. At first this new visual experience would seem foreign, but after some time we would learn the new rules for the sequence of sense impressions in this new world and be able to act efficiently in it. Since we are able to have sense perceptions in these derivative forms of space, it cannot be that "the axioms of our geometry depend on the native form of our perceptive faculty or are in any way connected with it" (Helmholtz, "Origin (I)" 318). This, he argues, is different from trying to imagine four-dimensional space. Indeed, the latter "we find ourselves by reason of our bodily organization quite unable to represent" ("Origin (I)" 319). Now I turn to a discussion of the notion of imaginability in the context of Helmholtz's refutation of Kant.

If non-Euclidean space is imaginable, and Kant maintained that it is not, then Helmholtz's refutation stands. But what is the limit of imaginability? Such a limit is to be found within a model of perception. Kant presented such a model, namely, the necessary *a priori* transcendental intuition. For the moment, I will assume this model. Now the question is, does Helmholtz's concept of imaginability, which allows for the imaginability of non-Euclidian space, fit within Kant's notion of imaginability—compatible with pure intuition? And, if so, has Helmholtz still refuted a necessary Euclidean intuition of space?

Imaginability: Strict or Liberal?

Can Helmholtz defend a concept of imaginability such that perception remains grounded in transcendental intuition and geometrical axioms can be discovered empirically? I will approach this question

first in the context of epistemology in general. Then, in the next section, I will return to more rigorous Kantian terminology. Let us consider, then, what implication the relationship between the *knowable* and the *imaginable* has on the imaginability of non-Euclidean space.

Many current theories of epistemology hold that we cannot have knowledge of something without having had some prior intentional attitude (e.g. belief, desire) towards it. If there is a similar prerequisite for imaginability then what can be imagined will be limited to what can be experienced. For intentional attitudes cannot be towards what cannot be experienced. In this case, perhaps the limits of imagination are the limits of perception. This raises the following questions: Is the imaginable always possibly perceivable? Does *a priori* necessary intuition preclude the possible empirical enquiry of *a posteriori* necessary₁ knowledge?

My use of the word 'necessary' must be clarified. First, something may be necessary in the sense of a logical necessity. This is how I have used the term thus far. There is, however, another notion of necessary₁, that of a fact which excludes all other possibilities, a fact that can be discovered empirically, but is also necessary. For example, if it is discovered that physical space conforms to non-Euclidean geometry, then it cannot also conform to Euclidean geometry. In this sense, it can be said that non-Euclidean geometry is *a posteriori* necessary₁. Again, the question is: can Helmholtz get away with both *a priori* necessary intuition and the possibility of empirical enquiry into *a posteriori* necessary₁ knowledge (which precludes the necessity of the Euclidian axioms, since this empirical enquiry might reveal the world to be non-Euclidian)?

For recall: Kant believes that the framework of the mental faculty is such that we can only represent space as Euclidean. This is the case because it is innate (*a priori* intuition), in that it is derivative of the structure of our mental framework, and transcendental, in that it provides a bridge between the observer and the world of objects. Helmholtz, in "The Origin and Meaning of Geometrical Axioms (II)," does not wish to do away with intuition nor with the transcendence of this framework; rather, he questions the necessity of the geometrical axioms.

I now consider the independence of the factual world from the perception of it. Immanuel Kant's transcendental idealism includes a separation between the observer and the world-in-itself. The practical consequence for the current topic—the investigation of the nature of our spatial perception—is that two questions rather than just one are needed. Originally, the only question would be, what are the axioms that characterise the necessary *a priori* form of intuition? Follow-

ers of Kant argue that Euclidean axioms should assume this position. However, we must ask not only the question of which geometrical axioms can characterise the necessary *a priori* form of intuition, but whether any geometrical axioms are *a priori*. Helmholtz's argument against Kant is that there is no room for geometrical axioms in a description of *a priori* pure intuition. On Helmholtz's view, perception and the world-in-itself are independent. That is, the geometrical axioms true of perception do not impose a necessity on the axioms true of the factual world, and vice versa. It is possible that the geometrical axioms that describe the real world are different from those that describe perception or pure intuition. Helmholtz's example of the man in the mirror, which simulates experience in non-Euclidean space, not only illustrates the plausibility of imagining geometries other than Euclid's, but also suggests that a Euclidean perception of a non-Euclidean world is possible. In other words, if Euclidean axioms indeed describe our pure intuition, then a person placed in a non-Euclidean world would not be precluded from perception.

Perhaps an analogy will clarify this point. A computer with the aid of a camera has a limited experience of the world—perception in a very loose sense. We can ask whether the world the computer observes is Euclidean or non-Euclidean. However, the computer's 'perception' at the most fundamental level would seem, in either case, to be just a sequence of 0s and 1s. Two experiences, one Euclidean and the other non-Euclidean, would be represented by two different stories of 0s and 1s, but they are both still accounts in 0s and 1s: the most basic form of 'experience' for a computer is binary code. If the analogous case holds for human experience—namely, that geometrical axioms constitute the basic form of experience—then it would appear that such axioms must be *a priori*, as Kant held. However, Helmholtz illustrates that different forms of geometry are imaginable, thus showing that the axioms are not the necessary framework in which experience must be described. In keeping with the example, this would mean that the account of the computer's 'experience' could also be given in terms other than 0s and 1s.

Thus it has been shown that if the necessity of the Euclidean axiom rests on 'imaginability' in the strict sense (that is, if it requires a prior intentional attitude) then imaginability is bound by sense experience. Certainly, human experience of space is Euclidean. However, this does not appear to be sufficient to make the Euclidian axioms *necessary*, as Kant claims. They may be a necessary₁ property of the world, but not a necessary part of a theory of spatial perception.

However, it is not clear that the conditions for imaginability are the same as those for knowledge. Prior intentional attitudes might

indeed be required for knowledge. But it is not clear that they are prerequisites for imaginability. For, indeed, knowledge must be about something, whereas imagination seems simply to be a mental activity. Thus, the limits of imaginability might be beyond those of knowledge. If we take 'imaginability' in this more liberal sense, we may free ourselves from sense experience and be bound only by the limits of our mental faculties. I believe that it was in fact Kant's purpose to present a model of the limits of these faculties with the goal of discovering what lies at the foundation of sense experience. Do the limits of our mental faculties preclude non-Euclidian space from being imagined? It does not seem that Kant can claim this without further restricting the liberal notion of imaginability by some addition axiom. In other words, it is not self-evident that imaginability allows only for Euclidean space; some fact independent of imaginability is required to reach this conclusion.

It must be said at this point that Helmholtz himself provides a limitation to imaginability. He maintains that experience in four dimensions is not imaginable. Is this an objection to the present argument? I believe not, since it is not Helmholtz's point to illustrate that *everything* is imaginable, but simply to show that if any other type of three-dimensional space is imaginable then specific geometrical axioms are not a necessary part of pure intuition. So why should other types of three-dimensional space fit into the notion of imaginability, and not four-dimensional space? Since it is Helmholtz's objective to illustrate the contingency of the Euclidean axiom, and not to debunk transcendental intuition altogether, this question may be addressed while keeping the other parts of Kant's framework intact. If Kant is right about the transcendental intuition then it follows that four dimensions cannot be conceived of or imagined, because, by hypothesis, time—the fourth dimension—does not cause sense experience like spatial objects do. However, our current mental faculties can indeed imagine non-Euclidean space and further, if Helmholtz's thought experiments are convincing, even experience it.

What is imaginable within Kant's theory is bound only by pure intuition, from which the Euclidean axiom must remain independent, because it does not follow that the mental faculties must be Euclidean only from the fact that they are *a priori* or even transcendental as Land claims. Thus, imaginability in the liberal sense—as equated with the limits of our mental faculties—is not necessarily Euclidean.

To further motivate the 'liberal' notion of imaginability, I will consider an example in which it is assumed that someone's mental faculties are limited by a Euclidean *a priori* transcendental intuition. What would this person experience if he were placed in a non-Euclidean

world? Would he still have sensory perception? It would not be a stretch to say he would. In fact, many of Helmholtz's examples assume this. What would this perception be like? Again, Helmholtz provides examples with the man in the mirror to give us a sense of this.

Arguably, and most sympathetic to Kant's theory, this non-Euclidean world may be 'represented' to the observer in a Euclidean way; however, it would surely be different than it would be if he were in a Euclidean world. Either way, this 'representation' of the non-Euclidean world couched in Euclidean mental faculties is included in the notion of what it means to be imaginable.

Returning to Kant's Language

Does space exist or is it simply the form of intuition within which we interpret the world? If one kind of space is necessary it is either 1) a property of the world and its objects (necessary₁), or it is 2) the 'language' in which sense experience must be represented (necessary). These two possibilities are not mutually exclusive, and they are independent of each other. That is, there could be a necessary₁ form of space as a property of the world and there can also be a necessary form of space in terms of pure intuition; and both of these could be characterised by different axioms of geometry. This may sound odd, because *necessary* implies that something is fixed and not subject to change or new possibilities. This discrepancy is possible due to the epistemological disconnection between the world and our subjective experience of it.

If we take a sceptical stance toward this problem of the disconnection between the world and the observer, we are at a loss to judge on what to base our epistemological theory: the world or experience. Kant's answer is unique because he proposes that the truth about this is found in the synthesis of the outside (the world-in-itself) with the inside (the observer).³ Thus, he grants existence to both the mind and the world. This conceptual duality seems to be an acceptable compromise, but presents its own unique problem. I like to compare this problem with the cliché that asks which came first, the chicken or the egg. Kant's answer: intuition in the form of a particular (probably Euclidean) type of geometry is the condition for representing the existing world of that form. The other possibility is that the world-in-itself lays out the conditions for the type of geometry true of intuition.

However, this does not settle whether anything particular is true

³This of course simplifies the whole of Kant's theory; however it captures the essential element relevant to this discussion.

of the world. Is the world 'built' in the same form as pure intuition? This is where the independence of the two realms becomes clearer. Is it not possible for the world to conform to the system of hyperbolic or pseudospherical space, while pure intuition represents this world to us in a way that corresponds to the system of Euclidean space? Is it not the case that we find common sense justification for believing that the world is Euclidean, but, should we look toward the horizon down a set of train tracks, see these 'parallel' lines meet?⁴ Assuming, as Kant does, that pure intuition precedes experience of the world is not by itself the problem. Rather, the problem arises conceptually because of the attribution of necessity to Euclidian geometry. If we say that Euclidean geometry is a *necessary* form of pure intuition have we thereby expressed a (necessary₁) fact of the world? Kant would answer in the negative: for indeed this is simply a fact about our judgement *about* the world; the world-in-itself remains obscure to us.

Helmholtz diverges from Kant concerning the necessity of any particular type of geometry for intuition. The imaginability of more than one type of geometry makes it possible for the world to conform to any one of a number of geometries. To be clear, this is not the claim that the world can be both Euclidean and non-Euclidean at the same time, but that there is no type of geometry that is necessarily true of the world. Only experience will determine which geometry describes the world accurately. Kant's claim that this intuition is synthetic is thus very plausible; however, the fact that a particular form of space is also *a priori* is problematic. If it is indeed *a priori* there are two options: 1) only one type of geometry can be represented by the intuition, however, the world may independently conform to some different geometry, or 2) a logically consistent system of geometry, which can properly be conceived *a priori*, does not at the same time indicate a *necessary*₁ system. Thus, constructible, imaginable, conceivable, and consistent systems are not automatically necessary (in either sense of necessity).

In both of the above options concerning the *a priori* nature of the form of intuition, empirical investigations can be helpful in revealing truth about our experience. First, though we may only ever 'see' the world as Euclidean, we can empirically investigate the nature of space true of the world.⁵ Second, to make experience possible we may require a form of intuition that precedes experience, but the form of this intuition may be described in various ways. Since both Euclidean

⁴Thanks to a discussion with Dirk Schlimm on November 18, 2008 for this particular example.

⁵This is done by using analytic geometry and by assuming the mechanical axiom holds.

and the two forms of non-Euclidean geometry are consistent, each can provide an adequate framework in which to represent the world. Only a fact about the world, discovered empirically and synthetically, will inform us about the true nature of space. Both non-Euclidean and Euclidean geometry can thus be imaginable without causing a problem in the remainder of a theory of transcendental intuition.

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Essence and Difference (Disciplining) Universality in the Hegelian Nation-State

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Introduction

THIS essay will critically examine the Hegelian state in its ideal rational form as developed in *The Philosophy of Right* in order to demonstrate that the state—as the highest level of freedom, the maximal actualisation of reason—implicitly relies on what Michel Foucault would call a disciplinary paradigm. The mutual recognition that Hegel espouses between state and citizenry is, I suggest, not the ‘glue’ that keeps the state whole; rather, this purported reciprocal recognition disguises an asymmetrical relationship of un-reflexive dependence and disciplinary subjugation. More specifically, in the context of *representation*, I will argue that as the primary points of contact in Hegel’s account between state and citizenry, sites such as sectorial assemblies and public opinion are highly mediated and amount to little more than arenas of normalisation—a reductive tendency that can be found in the very ontology of Hegel’s organic state. Further, in the context of *ideology*, I will suggest that the organicism of Hegel’s state forecloses its own potential radicality by conservatively guarding against a radical loss of self, by relying on a habituated patriotism that implicitly displaces the purely *political* character of the rational State onto the *nation*-state of a specific *Volk*. By way of conclusion, I will draw upon the preceding analysis and take up the issue of multiculturalism as a case study, employing Frantz Fanon’s colonizer/colonized relationship to inform this issue and highlight a dangerous tendency that places the ‘ethnic’ subject in a similar situation to Fanon’s (de)colonized subject—the position of an irreducible Other who is asked to perform the impossible: to demonstrate through mimicry her status as a subsumable particular under the universality of the nation-state.

Trust the Ethical Individual

“What characterises the state as such,” asserts Hegel, “is that the universal is willed, as universal” by its citizens who “will at the same time within the universal and for the sake of the universal” (PR §257S, §260). As both the final moment of the dialectic of ethicality and

the end of the *Philosophy of Right*, the Hegelian state is the logical result of the dialectic that begins in the family—the ‘natural’ living unity wherein a person is both free and a member—and makes its way through civil society—a realm permeated by the free play of distinct individuals with no necessary commonality. It is at the level of the state that the interests of particular individuals become united with the universal agenda of the community as a whole. This is the progression of reason: the dialectical synthesis through which the union of the universal and the particular—the very actualisation of rationality itself—becomes manifest as/in the concrete Idea of freedom that finds expression in the ethical individuality of the state. Ethicality here is taken as “the idea of freedom as the living good that has its knowing, willing, and [...] its actuality, in self-consciousness, but that has its foundation [...] in ethical being” (PR §142). As a will in and of itself, ethicality, conceived of as the free “universal essence of human individuals,” is actualised *both* as “a present world *and* the nature of self-consciousness” (PR §145R, §142, emphasis added). Considering that Hegel views the state as “a great architectonic structure, as a hieroglyph of the reason that exhibits itself in actuality,” it is only at the level of the state that freedom *qua* ethicality finds its maximally rational expression on both subjective and objective levels (PR §279S). Indeed, the “ideal state (the state as Idea) is reason and freedom in their objective dimensions just as the individual’s legitimation of the state is reason and freedom in their subjective moments” (Cheah 148).

The Hegelian state, then, is at once the highest expression of an actualised rationality and the best political (and spiritual) manifestation of ethical freedom for all involved. The state is therefore “the rational in and as itself” as an “actuality of the substantial will,” an actuality “it attains in the particular self-consciousness that is elevated to its universality” (PR §258). In other words, the rationality of the state is given a concrete reality by being grounded in the will of its individual citizens—insofar as each self-consciousness wills the universal as universal, aligns his particular interests with those of the state, and recognises his ‘concrete’ freedom as the freedom available under the state, each self-consciousness functions, not as an individual, but as a *citizen*, upholding and actualising the objective, rational universality that is constitutive of the state. For the state to exist in a rational, meaningful way—for it to have a concrete reality—Hegel thinks it necessary that individuals voluntarily and consciously transcend their subjective viewpoints and recognise in the objective nature of the state a universal expression common to their particular interests. What this recognition entails is that, in their capacity as political subjects possessing a political identity under the state, citizens

extend a certain *trust* to the ethical state and its makeup, depending on it as the vehicle through which their “innermost projects and interests [are] also confirmed at the concrete level of social participation” (Howard 238). In return, the responsibility of the state which emerges from this trust and voluntarism of its citizens—a responsibility to which it could be held accountable—is to generate an ethical space that acknowledges “the multiple ways in which subjects appropriate the fact of their own individuality,” allowing “conscious subjects [to develop] fuller possibilities as *self-conscious* agents” (Howard 236). Consequently, the ideal expression of the Hegelian state is a vertical mutual interdependence between state and citizenry, where the former is grounded upon an active, critical, reflexive citizenry that voluntarily upholds state-universality—a citizenry that could hold the state accountable, and, in case of state misbehaviour, could threaten its universality by withdrawing its support and rendering both the state and its universality baseless.

In effect, this ideal vertical interdependence between citizenry and state would be based on the relations wherein the willing trust of the former would solidify the foundations of the latter, wherein the concerns and expectations of the former would become concretised in various ways by the policies and governmentality of the latter. As Hegel asserts, the state can only be “regarded as articulated and truly organized” when both particular and universal moments align as an *ethical individuality*, in which the “universal must be activated, but subjectivity [...] must attain its full and living development” (PR §260E). In other words, only those states are rational—are full expressions of ethical freedom—in which particularity is “released, given free scope, and brought back to universality” (PR §260E).

Of interest to this essay is that last gesture: a gesture that, I argue, is indicative of the rationality of Hegel’s ideal state, a gesture that implies the necessity for ‘released’ particularity to be ‘brought back’ *as opposed to being ‘free’*.

The Disciplines of Civil Society

As the realm wherein particularity is allowed full rein, civil society is that step in the Hegelian dialectic wherein the system of “ethicality is lost in its extremes,” wherein particularity divorces itself from universality, even as the two are “reciprocally bound together and conditioned,” and “each still has the other as its condition” (PR §184E). The members of civil society are particular individuals with their contingent desires and arbitrary ends. In the absence of an over-arching universality, such particularity is left to languish in pure

contingency, making civil society an atomistic realm housing the random play of self-interested individuals. Yet it is also in civil society that an individual member comes to recognise that the actualisation of his or her ends is accomplished best through a dependence on others, by using others as means to various ends. This interdependence is somewhat capricious, however, and the overall unity of civil society somewhat tenuous; at best, civil society is a realm of a *merely formal* universality.

For Hegel, it is only by presupposing the state as “the self-sufficiency over against which alone it can subsist” that civil society constitutes “the domain of mediation” in the dialectic of reason (PR §182E). Conceived as such, civil society allows particular interests room to develop but also ensures the universal conditioning of these particularities. It is this mediation of relations in civil society that allows particularity to ascend to ‘concrete’ universality: ethical life only manifests itself completely rationally by passing through this interdependent realm of capricious reciprocity. To actualise the union between particularity and universality and to raise the dialectic to the next logical level, the state appears as the final step in *The Philosophy of Right* as an ‘ethical individuality’, a system of governance wherein particular subjects become aligned with, and echo, the universality of their community, wherein the “I that is the We” is also “the We that is the I.”

In advancing a system of governance that is interdependent with its citizens, Hegel seems to have parted company with those conceptions of statehood which (ab)use coercion, marginalisation or absolute sovereignty, for he seems to recognise that the rational actualisation of freedom would be a state grounded upon a universality that is voluntarily and actively upheld by its self-reflexive citizens. Since the state erodes its own foundations if the “subjective aims [of the citizen] are not satisfied [and] if they do not find that the state as such is the means to their satisfaction,” it becomes extremely important for the very stability of the state that “the law of reason and the law of particular freedom should permeate each other, and that my particular aim should become identified with the universal” (PR §265E). Ideally, then, particular individuals voluntarily subsume themselves into the universal of the state via the corporations and representatives that ensure that the voices of the people are heard in the higher strata of the community—the ensuing dialogue between citizenry and state is what cements their mutual interdependence, and is most indicative of the rational nature of the state.

By implementing policies whose universal agendas reflect the particular demands of the governed citizenry, the ideal Hegelian state strives for a synchronicity between particularity and universality. Con-

sidering the logic of this synchronicity, it seems that Hegel is largely concerned with the process in which the “integration of the individuals in a community or in a totality results from a constant correlation between an increasing individualization and the reinforcement of this totality” (Foucault, PTI 162). This description, however, is not Hegel’s own prescription for mutual interdependence but actually Michel Foucault’s critique of the processes employed by a normalising governmentality seeking to solidify the (illegitimate/irrational) foundations of the state through insidious forms of discipline disseminated via the institutions of civil society. In gridding the very space of everyday life, it is the prescribed universality of these disciplines that are internalised by the subjects of civil society, subjects who (mis)take this universality as their own. The issue, then, is not one of regarding the mutual interplay between state and citizenry, but one of disciplining subjects to affirm *voluntarily* the universality of the state; subjects must normalise their desires in relation to the pre-established institutional norms that are constitutive of that universality; they must strive for a recognition of their citizenship through labour deemed productive; and they must legitimise their subjectivities through performances deemed intelligible.

Read through the Foucauldian lens, then, the synchronistic logic of the Hegelian universe reveals a disciplinary underbelly. Indeed, disciplinary normalisation can be detected in the emphasis placed on the education and instruction that seeks to ‘cultivate’ and, more importantly, to *habituate* the individual. For Hegel, “[p]edagogy is the art of *making* human beings ethical”; habituation to this education is what ensures that “*the struggle of the subject is broken off,*” wherein she can “be born again,” her original “nature” being transformed—or *disciplined*—into the spiritual nature best echoing the prescribed contours of the ethical universality of the state (PR §151E, emphasis added). Somewhat paradoxically, it is this “process of cultivating subjectivity in its particularity” that allows the cultivated subject a “liberation, and labor in service of a yet higher liberation,” where “an infinitely subjective substantiality [is] elevated to the shape of universality” (PR §187, §187R, §187R). This cultivation of the subject via such studious labour ensures “against a merely subjective demeanor, against the immediacy of desire, the subjective vanity of feeling, and the willfulness of whims”—a cultivation that “smooths particularity so that it behaves in accordance with the nature of the matter at hand” (PR §187R, §187E). It is only the power of the state, then, that keeps the infinite, measureless excesses of particular desires in check. The labour of the individual is thus regulated under a *regime of performance*, wherein the state imposes on the individual not just any kind

of labour but what Foucault describes as the normalised mechanisms that regulate *exercise*:

[T]echnique[s] by which one imposes on the body tasks that are both repetitive and different but always graduated. By bending behaviour towards a terminal state, *exercise makes possible a perpetual characterization of the individual* either in relation to this term, in relation to other individuals, or in relation to a type of itinerary. It thus assures, in the form of continuity and constraint, a growth, an observation, a qualification [...The performance of exercise], having become an element in the political technology of the body [...] does not culminate in a beyond, but *tends towards a subjection that has never reached its limit*. (D&P 161–62, emphasis added)

Under a network of normative ideals, then, an individual labours continuously. He exercises in an attempt to embody the normative ideal set up by this discipline, for it is only through this performativity, measured against a pre-established (and regulated) yardstick, that he stands to garner *intelligibility*. The perpetuity of this economy of exercise is ensured when this disciplinary imposition is internalised by the subject as a form of panoptic self-discipline, wherein the subject *objectifies itself*, quantifying and qualifying its own movements and attitudes, *voluntarily* performing, exercising, and repeatedly, perpetually, *self-disciplining*. Indeed, Hegel recommends that a citizen must work at “subduing one’s opinions through the labor of study, and subjecting one’s will to discipline and so elevating it to *free obedience*” (PR §270R, emphasis added). The regulated action of this obedient labour is essential for the ‘activation’ of the rationality of the state: “rationality is actually present in the state, while action in conformity with these institutions gives rationality its practical activation” (PR §268). This ‘productivistic’ economy of ethical power has a clear strategy: “once in effect in the habituated activity of the ethical subject, the mediating institutions of ethical life must no longer intervene ever anew into the field of human practice in order to guarantee an essentially tenuous legal order” (Durst 235). Via the institutions that structure civil society, beyond the parameters of the law, state-discipline ensures the functional and/or ethical development of individuals so as to generate a mass of efficient labour.

Reconceived along Foucauldian lines, then, Hegel’s ethical universality operates through the dissemination of normative ideals (such as membership, efficiency, ethicality) that have the panoptic capacity to function via internalisation at the subjective level, with no need for external supervision or explicit imposition. *Ethicalised* subjects,

in voluntarily upholding the universality of the state, *willingly consent to actualising the agenda of the state through their disciplined labour*. Coercion is unnecessary in this “political economization of ‘life’” for the state and its organs advance their agenda by *factoring into their governing calculus the subjective happiness of its citizens* (Durst 229). Happiness here is not to be taken as the satisfaction of the arbitrary desires of a given individual, but rather, conceived of as the satisfaction of *only* those particular desires that become increasingly aligned with the universal. Indeed, the efficient labour prescribed to the citizen by the state is apparently not only a measure of his worth but also the vehicle through which he can reach ‘happiness’. In effect, such happiness becomes one pre-established ideal or norm amongst the many others that constitute state-universality, ideals to which all particular desires are normalised, against which all new desires are deemed un/intelligible, and in relation to which all activity and labour is categorised as useful or inutile.

The recognition that Hegel deems so essential to individual subjectivity, self-consciousness, and, indeed, subjective happiness, is only extended to the individual through the normalised axes of discipline that catalogue his or her useful labour and efficient activity. To be a citizen *of* the state, a person has to demonstrate her efficient labour—has to *perform her intelligibility as a member* in relation to a universal (norm)—before being ‘recognised’ as a particular subject that is subsumable under universality. In other words, to be deemed as a legitimate part of the citizenry, one has to participate in the pre-established, normalised networks of the *lateral* economy of mutual ‘recognition’. Here, the very criteria of recognition that allows individuals to distinguish themselves from others, that allows each to ‘develop’ his or her own particular subjectivity and ‘actualise its full possibilities’, are normalised by the categories of utility, intelligibility and normalcy, criteria which structure the networks of civil society in such a way as to channel all labour and performativity along ‘prescribed’ civic paths and reinforce the totality of the whole by regulating the normalcy of its parts. In sum: continuously labouring under a governing calculus that checks any form of social instability normalises any abnormalities and reduces all particularities to a hegemonic state-universality; self-disciplining individuals undergo perpetual exercise in an attempt to approximate the ideals disseminated by the institutions of discipline—a regime under which the *only* path to recognition (and its concomitant worth) is through these demonstrations of ‘efficient’ labour and performances of ‘intelligible’ membership.

Re(-)presentation

Comparing the initial account of active, critical voluntarism with that of a disciplined, re-educated, pedagogic habituation, what one clearly notices in the latter is the lack of self-reflexivity present in the disciplined subjects upon whose trust the universality and concrete reality of the state is purportedly erected. In other words, if it is the state that is educating the individuals as it sees fit, how can these habituated individuals be a critical conscience of state hegemony? If the Hegelian state is the most rational expression of freedom between particular individuals and universality, why does this framework of rational freedom entail disciplining individuals to reinforce a universal supposedly upheld by voluntarism? More specifically, how can 'born again' citizens who undergo the labours of 're-education', who have had their natures transformed and are perpetually trapped in a regime of performance, constitute the necessary critical presence that ensures that the vertical recognition between state and citizenry does not transform into the asymmetry between ruler and subjects? The concept of a free, responsible, reflexive, critical 'people'—the civic realm of particularity that could hold its universal accountable, the condition that is supposed to infuse into the Hegelian account a democratic element that keeps the ruling monarchy in check—cannot play a role here. Indeed, *political* docility is characteristic of the disciplined subjects whose activity is exhausted in exercising, performing, and subjecting themselves to the contours of an ideal:

Discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies. Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience). In short, it dissociates power from the body; on the one hand, it turns it into an 'aptitude', a 'capacity', which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection. (Foucault, D&P 138)

Therefore, the insidious neutralisation of any civic challenge is primarily accomplished by the disciplinary institutions of civil society, which normalise the realm of particularity so that it is readily subsumable to universality, and ensure the normative channeling of individual activity to make it serve the shoring up and reinforcing of state *power*. The relation between the disciplinary micro-power structures gridding civil society and a meta-power structure like the state is as follows: the latter "can only take hold and secure its footing where it

is rooted in [the former, for they are] a whole series of multiple and indefinite power relations that *supply the necessary basis* for the great negative forms of power" (Foucault, T&P 122, emphasis added). Far from its purported basis in a relation of mutual recognition involving a critical, reflexive, voluntary citizenry, the Hegelian state solidifies its foundations and legitimises its power through insidious relations of *disciplinary interdependence*. On the one hand, Hegel's state 'liberates' individuals from the chaos of an unorganised multitude into a disciplined dependency on the existent yardsticks of intelligibility; on the other, its power depends on the success of the proliferation and internalisation of this very habituation.

Against this critique, a Hegelian might retort that there are, in fact, democratic channels of interdependence that testify to the mutual recognition between state and citizen. Sectorial assemblies, for example, can be seen to be indicative of this reciprocity, for they are the primary point through which "the state enters the subjective consciousness of the people and [...] the people begin to participate in the state" (Hegel, PR §301E). However, the possibility for a critical dialogue in such assemblies that would emerge from a politics of accountability build upon a mutual recognition between state and citizenry is quickly squelched. In Hegel's explication, these assemblies have a mediating role between state and people, a role that can *only* be functional if these assemblies have their roots in corporations—the very corporations which "must fall under the higher supervision of the state, because otherwise they would ossify, build themselves in, and decline into a miserable system of guilds"; the very corporations wherein individuals are *supplied* "with occupations and activities directed to universal aims," in which they *come to recognise* "that aspect of their particular interests that is universal in itself" (PR §255E, §264, §264). Indeed, it is *only* within the spheres of corporations that individuals "attain their actual and living determinations for universality," thereby being transformed from an atom in a multitude to a citizen of the state (PR §308). Echoing the logic of pedagogic 'cultivation' above, an individual 'essential' self-consciousness can only come about via these functional, corporate sectorial assemblies—'essential' and 'functional' here already being (normatively) conceived *in terms of state universality*.

Consequently, in the feedback loop between state and citizenry, the path from the latter to the former is heavily mediated by the organs of the former, as the citizenry can only organise in the frameworks allowed it by the state. First, the multitude undergoes segmentation: only individuals clustered into corporations are deemed (politically) intelligible. Second, the representatives of these groups are delegates

elected only by members of the corporation, i.e., by intelligible, useful, citizens who have already actualised their 'universal determinations'. Third, it is only this delegate *qua* people's representative that speaks on the political level.

Since, for Hegel, "representation can no longer be taken to mean that one individual stands in the place of another," the Hegelian delegate "represents not individuals or a conglomeration of them, but *one of the essential spheres of society and its large-scale interests*" (PR §311R, emphasis added). Here, one can make use of Gayatri Spivak's distinction between 'representation' as the act of speaking in place of someone else—'in someone else's shoes', so to speak—and *re*-presentation as proxy, as *portraying* someone else (70). Thus conceived, the delegate does not speak *in place* of, or *for*, the people—he does not (politically) 'represent' them. The delegate speaks in terms of parts in relation to the whole: his language is *already* overdetermined along the categorical axes of essentiality, reducibility, functionality—all categories, again, being conceived in terms of a normative state universality. For "[t]he concrete state is the whole, articulated into its particular circles. Members of a state are members of such sectors; *only in this their objective determination do they come under consideration with respect to the state*" (Hegel, PR §308, emphasis added). In effect, the only *political* voice in which individuals are (indirectly, ambiguously) spoken *of*, re-presents them—*portrays* them—as sector populations that are already codified into spheres relating to a larger whole. Such 'spatial' language is part and parcel of a disciplinary paradigm that functions

on the principle of elementary location or *partitioning*. Each individual has his own place; and each place its individual. Avoid distributions in groups; break up collective dispositions; analyze confused, massive or transient pluralities [...] One must eliminate the effects of imprecise distributions, the uncontrolled disappearance of individuals, their diffuse circulation, their unusable and dangerous coagulation. [...] Discipline is] a procedure, therefore, aimed at knowing, mastering and using. Discipline organizes an analytical space. (Foucault, D&P 143)

In Hegel's account, then, sectorial assemblies, as the primary points of potential contact between state and citizenry, turn out not to be the arenas for the political voice of the people, but heavily normalised arenas whose function is to provide an "excellent *education* for the citizens [so that] the people *become best acquainted with their true interests*" (PR §315E, emphasis added). Hegel goes on to insinuate that there is also no *need* to speak *for* individuals either, for speaking

in the place of the multitude, or allowing it to speak *for* itself—to represent itself—is a pointless, and somewhat “tasteless notion” (PR §308R). A people that is “separated from the government [...] does not know what it wills,” for to know, one would have to possess the “deep insight [and] practical education” that is characteristic of the intellectual elite (PR §301S). Indeed, in a very Machiavellian gesture, Hegel emphasises the *need* for sectorial assemblies and an arena for public opinion, but his derision of both areas of public discourse implies that these exist not for the sake of the state, and its conscientious awareness of the needs of its citizenry, but more as a safety-valve that would be dangerous to do without.¹ These assemblies and arenas amount to organs of (dead-ended) argumentation that are nothing but “an outlet and a measure of satisfaction”—for “once one has had one’s say and so one’s share of responsibility, one’s subjectivity has been satisfied and *one puts up with a lot*” (PR §317E, emphasis added). More often than not, the state need not pay attention to the ‘gripping’ of the people, because it “often does not lead in the direction of what is better, so the government must examine the wishes of the people and give in only when it is convinced. [...] It] must wait until the people’s thought has developed fully and has become the good thought of the entire people” (PR §274E). Put otherwise: either (i) the state ‘hears’ the multitude through the heavily mediated—and thus normalised—channels of corporatised sectorial assemblies organised under the governmental order; or (ii) in considering ‘public opinion’, the state chooses whether or not to be deaf towards what it deems the contradictory, petulant, trivial and ultimately unessential ramblings of a wild multitude lacking the organisation fit for politics—an organisation that only the channels of governmentality ensure.² In other words, when it comes to a political voice in the Hegelian state, the people cannot speak.

In sum: instead of a vertical mutual recognition—wherein the state is grounded upon the voluntary trust of the citizenry that holds it accountable, and wherein the latter simply has to withdraw that trust to destabilise the moorings of the former—what is revealed is a disciplinary interdependence re/generated by a political system with an implicit network of normalising institutional mechanisms that regulate civil society, manufacture consent, install glass ceilings in the realm of representation and public opinion, neutralise and/or normalise all

¹After all, Hegel does suggest that individuals die a metaphorical death from extreme habituation, leading completely passive existences; this ‘safety-valve’ might be one way of regulating habituation itself, increasing its efficiency by incorporating ‘individual expression’ and ‘public opinion’ into its discipline (PR §151E).

²Indeed, “to be independent of public opinion is the first formulaic condition of achieving anything great or rational whether in actuality or in science” (PR §318).

truly 'civic' voices, and, by thoroughly marginalising the majority of the people through various mechanisms of distancing, ultimately shore up all political power into the hands of an intellectual, monarchical elite.

Organic Logic

Methodologically speaking, one could try to defend Hegel by suggesting that *The Philosophy of Right* is developing the idea of the state; his is an attempt to conceptually grasp only the state's 'affirmative nature', to understand the essential rational makeup of the state *per se* instead of dwelling on the errors of present, particular states and institutions. As Hegel asserts: "The state is not a work of art; it stands within the world and thus within the sphere of willfulness, contingency, and error. [...] But the ugliest human being, the criminal, an invalid, or a cripple, is still a living human being; the affirmative—life—subsists despite their defects, and this affirmative is what concerns us here" (§258S). There are strong parallels here between Hegel's philosophy of right and what he considers to be the task of philosophy as developing a science of nature. For since nature "is rational within itself," it is understood "that philosophy must know it as it is," that "knowing must investigate and then grasp conceptually, as nature's immanent law and essence, this rationality that is present and actual within it [...] its eternal harmony" (PR 3). Philosophy can develop a science of nature by immersing itself in it, and by discerning the underlying rationality of nature that unites its contingency; speculative philosophy can be similarly deployed on a political level to develop a *science of freedom*.

Arguably, one can conceive of an ideal(ised) Hegelian scenario where the health of the state would be dependent on the degree to which individuals can identify their particular interests with its universal agenda, where each "subjectivity willingly takes its content from state institutions," and where the very success of internalised discipline would ensure the negation of its own hegemony (Cheah 154). But the likelihood of this scenario becoming manifest is slight, for it would have to involve something like the simultaneous homogenisation of an entire mass of people, a maneuver that would undoubtedly involve exorbitant amounts of violence. In other words, a disciplineless scenario is extremely implausible. To see why, one must take up Hegel's conception of the state as an *organic* totality.

Hegel asserts that "[t]he nature of the organism is such that unless all of its parts become an identity—if any one of them posits itself as self-sufficient—all must perish" (PR §269E). In light of the discussion

above, it seems that to allow the parts of civil society to become disjointed, self-sufficient, and discontinuous would mean the death of the organic whole that is the state. Such is the justification for the state to intervene and transform this chaotic atomism of parts into an organised totality *in the very interest of the totality*—it would, in effect, have to reduce (*all*) *difference to identity*. As Cheah points out, this reductive logic is part and parcel of Hegel's ontological structure of *all* operations of reason, be it in the workings of self-consciousness or in developing a framework of the state:

Reason's actualization is its necessary passage through otherness, its becoming an external object to itself, but with the crucial qualification that reason directs this entire process and *recognizes* itself in this other, thereby *returning to* and *becoming united* with itself even as it becomes objective existence. (143)

What is essential to note here is that alterity is not a stumbling block for reason, an obstacle without which reason could finally be itself in an uncontaminated purity. Rather, it is *only* through being open to alterity that reason can become manifest, can develop, can actualise itself. The first gesture of reason, then, is this openness that is “the condition of possibility for its actuality and self-possession” (Cheah 143). Importantly, however, reason is not radically open to any alterity; reason *must* find in alterity an image of itself. Its logic dictates that the otherness it encounters—the negativity that it carries with—is simply a ‘stop’ on reason's way back (in)to itself—otherness cannot be anything more than a foil that mirrors reason back to itself. It is this logical negation of a negation, this assimilation of an *always reducible* difference, this perpetual reduction of alterity to identity that lies at the very crux of reason's actualisation; particularity *qua* reducible difference must always be so that it is reducible, subsumable, and ultimately *identifiable*. The logical progression of this movement would engender the conception that *no* difference is irreducible, since *all* difference has to be reducible to expressions of the same—a dangerous conception, especially on the political level, for if all difference is (must be) reducible, there remains a very real possibility that reductive means, violent or otherwise, become legitimised due to their perceived necessity.

Similarly, the state *qua* organism “is a process within itself [...] articulates itself within itself, posits distinctions within itself, and thereby completes its cycle” (Hegel, PR §267E). Echoing the logic of reason, the state perpetualises itself through this self-diremption and normalised completion, sustaining its universality *as long as it repeats this procedure*: the logic of the state dictates that for it to

sustain its universality, it must perpetually both open itself up to and reduce an *always-already subsumable* particularity. Put otherwise, it is not that state-universality has to continuously endure alterity and prevent the contamination of its purity, or that it could just be itself if alterity could be permanently fended off. Rather, like reason, *it is its continual 'opening up' to and subsequent appropriation of alterity that allows the movement of universality*, a progression that it undergoes to perpetually sustain itself by becoming actualised via negated particularity. This sustaining movement parallels the self-perpetuating nature of disciplinary power, wherein the mechanisms of the latter ensure that discipline does not tend towards a goal, a limit, or a 'culmination'. Rather, its perpetual regime is ensured by the fact that the individual *is never fully disciplined*: there are always parts to be disciplined, edges to be smoothed, abnormalities to be normalised. Otherwise put, discipline re/generates an irreducible excess which functions as the condition of possibility for its perpetual imposition. Similarly, Hegel's conception of the organicism underlying the rational state, wherein state universality perpetually actualises itself via always-already reducible particularity, means that there are always particularities to be subsumed, alterity to be reduced, and difference to be made identical—it means that as the maximal expression of rational, ethical freedom, the state is *never fully actualised*. In effect, as Judith Butler notes, what is involved here is a Hegelian

universality that is inseparable from its founding negations. The all-encompassing trajectory of the term is necessarily undone by the exclusion of particularity on which it rests. There is no way to bring the excluded particularity into the universal without first negating that particularity. And that negation would only confirm once again *that universality cannot proceed without destroying that which it purports to include*. (24, emphasis added)

Mapping this schema onto the political space of the *Philosophy of Right* sheds light onto the *necessity of a disciplinary paradigm* in the self-sustaining logic of Hegel's state, wherein its rational universality is sustained through the subsumption of particularity. This process finds expression in the perpetual normalising mechanisms of the disciplinary institutions gridding the 'allowed' chaos of civil society, where particularity is continually 'brought back' to (reinforce) universality after being 'set free', where the perpetual economy of exercise carried out within a pre-established set of 'useful' parameters serves to simultaneously *order* the chaotic multitude as well as uphold the norm of 'order' and where the continuous normalisation of 'free' citizens al-

lows disciplinary reason to move to a subjective level of particularity and be subsumed by a self-perpetuating state-universality.

Consequently, the above cases of disciplinary intervention and habituation are not the result of rational steps taken against some mundane contingency of the everyday, a contingency that can just as easily be excluded from philosophical reflection. These cases are not superficial hindrances to the proliferation of rationality, nor are they exceptions to the rules of Hegel's political science. Rather, such instances (and there are numerous others³) are *essential components* of the very self-perpetuating nature of the disciplinary logic of Hegelian state-universality. By *endlessly deferring* the maximal expression of a *fully* ethical state, such disciplinary measures perpetually reconstitute themselves as *the conditions of (im)possibility* for the actualisation of the 'science of freedom'.

The Patriots of Universality

In tarrying with and returning from particularity, Hegelian universality reinforces its totality and ensures its perpetuity, undergoing a process of assimilation wherein particularity is *pre-identified* as reducible difference. This movement of universality *presupposes* that, in its adventures, it will only encounter its other as that which will allow reason to return to itself. In effect, universality presupposes an essence to which it will inevitably return, an essence that forms the irreducible backdrop for this tarrying with the negative. Yet one must ask: why must all difference that reason encounters simply be a mirror that projects back reason's own essence? Why can this movement out of self not encounter irreducible aporias of absolute otherness? More specifically, why can a journey not result in something *radically other* than its original, self-same essence?

The tendency of reason to inevitably 'fall back' on to itself is, as I have shown, reflected in Hegel's account of the state, where it employs

³A few examples just from the realm of the *family* (and its extensions): Hegel's policing authority can intervene in the private realm of the family because this authority has "the right and duty of superintending and influencing child-rearing insofar as it bears upon the *child's capacity to become a member of society*" (PR §239, emphasis added). Insofar as "parents constitute what is universal and essential" to which "children must be obedient," it follows that "one of the chief elements in child-rearing is discipline," the purpose of which is to "break down the child's self-will"—since "the individual becomes a son of civil society" after leaving the family, similar authoritative measures can be employed in that realm to generate obedience (PR §174, §238). And, in regard to the poor, universal "authority takes the place of the family in regard not only to what they lack immediately, but also to laziness of disposition, malignity, and the other vices that arise out of their plight and their feeling of wrong" (PR §241). Add to that the outright rejection of the mere thought of women possessing anything other than "familial piety" (PR §164–67).

certain forms of discipline that serve as normalising mechanisms to order the chaos of civil society and ensure the perpetuity of its universality. Indeed, as Hegel asserts,

these distinct aspects of the state are its various powers with their functions and operations, *through which the universal continuously produces itself in a necessary way, and maintains its identity because it is presupposed by its own production.* (PR §269E, emphasis added)

Investigating this last clause, the crucial question arises: what is the nature of this presupposition, and of the identity that must be sustained through this (re)production?

Remaining on a purely logical level, one can argue that it should not be impossible for universality to morph due to its immersion into alterity, to become something other than itself because of its encounter with difference, undergoing a loss of self and reconfiguring the 'old' universality as this radically new 'other-than-itself'. In other words, there seems no reason that Hegelian political logic cannot allow a *transformation* of universality, as long as this transformed universality constitutes the new backdrop against which all particularity be subsumed. For "the state is actual," Hegel asserts, and

[t]rue actuality is necessity; what is actual is necessary within itself. Necessity consists in this, that the whole dirempt itself into conceptual distinctions and that this dirempted whole yield a firm and persistent determinacy, *though one that is not dead set, but perpetually recreates itself in its dissolution.* (PR §270E, emphasis added)

Rephrasing the above question, one can ask: what exactly in Hegel's account negates the potential radicality inherent in this 'perpetual recreation', *always* ensuring the return of state-universality to an irreducible identity that anchors this universality so as to prevent its dissolution into something radically other than itself? To answer this question, one must move from the purely political logic at work in the rational state to Hegel's explication of the state's historico-cultural essence that is the spirit of the *Volk*.

For Hegel, the organism of the state in its objective substantiality can be divided into two parts, the strictly political state and its constitution (PR §267). State-universality, then, is composed of two aspects: the purely political state, and the constitution that is particular to an individual spirit of a *nation*, a constitution that reflects the self-sufficient individuality of a 'people' and distinguishes it from all others (PR §274, §330). For every 'people' has its "determinate,

anthropological principle that develops in its history; this makes the people a *nation*" (PR §330S). Therefore, in addition to the politico-logical aspect of this state-universality, Hegel espouses an *irreducible* historico-cultural aspect as well—irreducible because this constitution is in no way artificial or revocable: "it must be treated rather as something that is simply in and as itself, therefore as divine and enduring, and so as *above the sphere of all things that are made* (PR §273R, emphasis added). The constitution might be 'altered' but only "in ways that accord with [its pre-existent] order" (PR §273R). For Hegel, it is this 'order' of the constitution that reflects the *sedimentation* and progressive actualisation of a (quasi)transcendental *essence*, a 'spirit of the nation' that continuously actualises itself through particular political frameworks but nonetheless retains its self-sameness, a spirit that permeates each and every one of its members regardless of "whether the individual knows it or not, opposes it or not, or simply ignores it [...]. In individuals' particular aspects, in their action, that spirit is what moves them; it is the *unmoved mover*" (PR §274S, emphasis added). As the inherited sedimentation of the various actualisations of the distinct national spirit into past political frameworks, the irreducible essence of Hegelian political logic is this political constitution, the *organic identity* "produced perpetually by the state [...]. through [which] the state maintains itself" in its self-sameness (PR §269E).

On a material level, what sustains state-universality, in both its political and historico-cultural aspects, is a 'political disposition,' a '*subjective substantiality*' that, for Hegel, is a *patriotism* based on a "willing that has become *habitual* [and that is] simply *a product of the institutions subsisting in the state*" (PR §268, emphasis added). The "secret of the citizens' patriotism" Hegel continues, lies in the *corporations*, through which the citizenry comes to "know the state as their substance"; "because the spirit of the corporation immediately contains the rooting of the particular in the universal, *that is where the depth and strength the state possesses in [patriotic] disposition is seated*" (PR §289R, emphasis added). Yet one can see that this 'habituated patriotism' is easily reducible to a form of pedagogic institutional discipline, being an un-reflexive 'product of institutions' as well as being grounded in these corporations of civil society whose normative arenas serve to fuel the basis of state power. Any appeals made to this political disposition that constitute some sort of spontaneous 'will of the people,' or a patriotism originating of its own accord in the people as a whole, or a continually emergent commonality of the multitudes that is "the fundamental feeling of order possessed by all," are simply unsubstantiated, in that they ignore the disciplined nature

of this very 'patriotism'. Neither can one somehow 'naturalise' this patriotic disposition by evoking a quasi-transcendental spirit which somehow 'glues' the 'people' together, for even the realm of the spirit is not free of discipline. For when Hegel insists upon the need for an intellectual elite to be the sole possessor and caretaker of the spirit of the people, he implies that this national spirit that is irreducibly essential to an *entire* people can *only* be actualised *by an intellectual elite who govern and discipline* an ignorant multitude:

The spirit of a people is something necessary; it need merely be known, but knowing it cannot be the business of the whole people, but only of the best educated, the wise. To leave the formation of the constitution to what is actually called 'the people' is a mistake, because the people does not contain within itself a ripened consciousness of the spirit of the people. (PR §274S)

As I have stressed before, it is the disciplinary habituation of the multitude into efficient, intelligible citizens by a governing monarchical elite that ensures the perpetuity of the universality of the Hegelian state. In addition to the politico-logical aspect to this state-universality, it is the irreducible historico-cultural aspect that constitutes the *internal consistency* underlying the rationale for *all* the purely political expressions of state-universality. In other words, the *anchor* that grounds the purely political logic of the state-universality and prevents its dissolution into a radical otherness—that sets up all Others as sharply distinct from itself—is the (quasi-)transcendental 'spirit' of the constitutional order that every political infrastructure of a certain 'people' must reiterate, a reiteration that must be performed by an intellectual elite on behalf of an ignorant people.

It is this 'anchoring' gesture, I argue, that betrays the conservatism of Hegel's political logic. For this anchoring is nothing other than Hegel's neutralisation of any potentially radical permutation of the purely *political* universality of the state into the sedimented stasis of a historico-cultural universality that is unique to a *nation*-state. Put otherwise, it is this gesture that inserts into universality an identity that is not simply the result of its purely logico-political actualisations, but is an irreducible historico-cultural essence in the sole possession of an elite. It is this gesture that allows the governing elite to *presuppose* this irreducible, spiritual essence in their political logic, a 'natural' presupposition that guides and governs—indeed *normalises*—the regeneration of state universality *along nationalist lines*. It is this gesture that forecloses the potentially radical mutability of state-universality by presupposing a national *spirit*, an essentialisation that prevents any 'radical contaminations' of the state-universality

by 'foreign', 'irreducible', or 'inassimilable' Others. It is also this gesture in which the un-finalisable—and potentially unstable—nature of the purely political aspect of state-universality is (temporarily) coalesced through the continuous evocations of an essential national spirit, wherein each evocation falsely finalises the organicism of the political state into a static, homogeneous nation-state. Most importantly, it is this gesture that is indicative of the proper danger of the conservative mechanisms already at work in Hegel's political logic: it reveals that the perpetuity of state power depends *not only* upon a habituated, un-reflexive, highly normalised citizenry herded into sector populations, *but is also legitimised through the dissemination of a nationalist ideology that fuses together all (supervised) parts of a whole into (a national) identity*. This gesture, then, acts as the condition of possibility for displacing the political logic of the rational state onto the *exclusive* historico-cultural nationalism of a specific Volk.

Multicultural Implications: C/c instead of M/s

Having demonstrated the Hegelian political state as a form of nationalist absolutism legitimised by its disciplined and habituated 'patriotic' citizenry, I wish to conclude by sketching out the implications that this analysis might have in contemporary issues of multiculturalism.

The concept of 'mutual recognition' at the heart of contemporary debates on multiculturalism finds its genesis in the account of the master and slave that Hegel outlines in the chapter "Lordship and Bondage" in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. The reciprocity at the heart of mutual recognition both constitutes and sustains the subjectivities of the recognisers who engage in this relationship: one is only a subject in so far as one is recognised by another subject, and vice versa. Indeed, for the Hegelian subject "self-consciousness exists in and for itself, when, and by the fact that, it exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged" (PS §198). *Intersubjectivity* is therefore the fundamental and irreducible ground for individual subjectivity. Transposing this intersubjective ground to the highly dramatised parable of the master and the slave, the initial intersubjective encounter generates a fight to the death. An individual self-consciousness, upon encountering another, desires recognition from the Other to cement its own self-certainty, and it is this almost feverish desire of each to extract self-certainty from the Other that initiates the fight. The one who is willing to risk his life emerges victorious over the Other self-consciousness, which surrenders because of its fear of death—the former ascends to the status of the mas-

ter, the latter becomes his slave. Yet the master does not achieve 'true' self-certainty, for he is only recognised as master by an 'inferior being'. His self-certainty, therefore, is not echoed back to him by a free, *independent* self-consciousness, but by the *dependent* self-consciousness of the slave—such recognition is of no value. On the other hand, it is the labouring slave who, in shaping objects through his will, stands to *achieve partial recognition through work*, for in the absence of an Other self-consciousness granting the slave recognition, it is "through work [that the slave] becomes conscious of what he truly is." This work is "desire held in check, fleetingness staved off," a "formative activity" that demonstrates to the self-consciousness of the slave his "*own independence* [...] in the independent being [of the object]" (PS §195). In other words: the *disciplined slave stands to achieve partial recognition through the economy of exercise that is dictated by his master*. For Hegel, the flawed recognition in the master/slave scenario, and its outright exploitative relationship, is remedied by the actualisation of the ethical community in the state, wherein individuals recognise each other through the mediation of their common institutions operating under state-universality.

Frantz Fanon's account of the colonizer/colonized relationship is both an extension and a rejection of the Hegelian master/slave dialectic. Fanon translates the face-to-face subjection of the latter dialectic to the arena of a subjected population labouring under an institutionalised universality under colonial domination. However, this translation problematises the Hegelian m/s dialectic and raises some crucial questions, namely: what if the master *qua* colonizer simply does not *care* about being recognised by the slave? What if the colonizer does not *need* the recognition of the colonized subject and, indeed, "laughs at the consciousness of the slave"? (Fanon 220f) What if all he wants is the disciplined labour of the slave? What if the exploitative nature of this relationship reiterates the inferior, particular status of slave and the universal status of the master, thereby perpetuating the colonizer's universality? And, crucially, what if it is the *colonized subject*—the object of the "epidermalization [...] of this inferiority"—who turns away from her normalised work, who comes to view the master as the only subject worth recognising and the *only subject that can gain recognition*, and strives to ascend to the (impossible) status of the master-colonizer (Fanon 11)?

For Fanon, then, the slave *qua* colonized subject is caught in a double bind. On the one hand, under the master-discourse of colonial universality, she cannot stop attempting to gain recognition: to prevent herself from being reduced to, or being continuously kept at, the level of a subaltern, she must mimic the norms and values of the colo-

nizer, hoping to transcend her status *by performing* the universality of the master-discourse. On other hand, the colonized subject finds herself constantly denied *equal* recognition, constantly denied the status of a worthy peer of the master-colonizer: through various dead-ended attempts to echo universality, the colonized subjectivity emerges as the “effect of a flawed colonial mimesis, in which to be Anglicised, is *emphatically* not to be English,” in which to be a civilised Negro, is *emphatically* not to be a white man (Bhabha 125; Fanon 113–18). It is this double bind that keeps the colonized subject in a perpetual subjugation under the master-discourse of the colonizer’s universality, continuously denying her access to the level of the colonizer, but making it impossible for the colonized subject to stop trying to embody the ideal. One can draw a parallel here between the mechanisms governing this scenario of outright subjugation and exploitation and the more insidious disciplinary mechanisms that allow for a *perpetual characterisation of the subject*, ensuring that she is never fully disciplined, normalised, Anglicised, Europeanised, or recognised. In other words, the disciplinary state-universality of the colonizer ensures its perpetuity through *ambivalence*, simultaneously hinting at the *possibility* of authentic recognition while disavowing its actualisation—an ambivalence that ensures that the colonized native is kept in the perpetual state of *almost but not quite/white*⁴ (Bhabha 122).

Keeping the analysis of the normalising nature of Hegelian universality in the background here, what I want to argue is that such mechanisms of ambivalent distancing can significantly inform the present debates surrounding liberal multiculturalism which take as their backdrop a state-universality that employs a logic analogous to the one at work in Hegel’s account.⁵ Heeding Fanon’s warning, one must first recognise that ‘extending recognition’ to the Other is often a patronising gesture that stems from, and serves to reinforce, the power of the privileged recogniser as the (supposedly) *neutral subject of an unracialised universality*.⁶ Indeed, Žižek’s explication of multiculturalism unveils a similar logic:

[M]ulticulturalism is a disavowed, inverted, self-referential form of racism, a ‘racism with a distance’—it ‘respects’ the

⁴Fanon’s Antillean subject finds himself in an analogously hybrid position between black and white poles, distancing himself from the racialized Other (he ‘used to be’) and striving for the (impossible) status of a *white* master (Fanon, BSWM, 211–12).

⁵Space prevents me from going into full detail regarding discipline and habituation. Consequently, I will primarily focus on the ideological consequences of the Hegelian logic of universality at work in the issues of multiculturalism.

⁶More often than not, this gesture does little to change the nature of the power relations at work, often simply disguising them—*legitimising* them—through another ideology.

Other's identity, conceiving the Other as a self-enclosed 'authentic' community towards which he, the multiculturalist, maintains a distance rendered possible by his privileged universal position. Multiculturalism is a racism which empties its own position of all positive content (the multiculturalist is not a direct racist, he doesn't oppose to the Other the *particular* values of his own culture), but nonetheless retains this position as the privileged *empty point of universality* from which one is able to appreciate (and depreciate) properly other particular cultures—the multiculturalist respect for the Other's specificity is the very form of asserting one's own superiority. (Žižek 44, emphasis added)

Secondly, one must recognise that the recognition granted to the decolonized *subject inherits as its backdrop the master-discourse of the colonizer*. Which means that the very universality that excluded the colonized subject as an inferior object is now the universality that extends her 'recognition' as a member, that assesses her in its terms, and that considers whether she constitutes a subsumable particularity under its (purportedly) neutral state-universality that is (supposedly) upheld by the patriotic members of *its* citizenry. Hegel himself uses the same sort of language in describing various religious sects as being active, useful members of civil society alone in that they do not fully embody, internalise, and perform their "direct duties to the state"—these sects, then, are the *reducible difference* a "strong" state can "tolerate" (§270n). For

[o]nly if the state is otherwise strong can it overlook and suffer such *anomalies*, because it can then rely principally on the *power of its ethos and the inner rationality of its institutions to diminish and close the gap* between such anomalies and the full assertion of its own strict rights. (PR §270n, emphasis added)

One can recognise in most of the debates surrounding multiculturalism (and immigration) the same rationality of *reducible difference*—of *reasonable* accommodation—to an existent, neutral state-universality. In effect, the issue is to judge the Other, to assess his reducibility, his usability, his intelligible performativity; the Other of difference, the immigrant, the 'ethnic subject', must therefore perform the status of a reducible Other if he is to prevent the slide into the subaltern state of irreducible difference and risk the danger of being violently reduced or systematically marginalised.

Finally, one must recognise the universality against which the Other is judged. The state-universality that adopts 'multiculturalism', as a 'neutral' universality purportedly free from racial, cultural, and ethnic coding,⁷ is, in fact, *irreducibly conditioned by the historico-cultural dimension of state-universality that echoes the 'spirit' of the people and the values of the nation*. It is the very disavowal of this historico-cultural dimension that places on the Other the burden of being the sole 'cultural' stain on the universal of 'human' neutrality, implying the possibility of assimilation if the Other is to shed his cultural skin. But, by the same token, it is also characteristic of the mechanisms of ambivalence that this disavowal is inverted at crucial junctures to reiterate some static identity or essence that is purportedly endangered by the Other, thereby insinuating that this essence can *only* be possessed by the Self and forever keeping the Other at bay.

In the colonizer/colonized scenario, this glass ceiling for the colonized subject was a racial-ideological barrier: it was a universality to which the colonized subject could simply not belong, no matter how authentic his mimicry, how persuasive his performativity, how effective his distancing of himself from all that was Other. Translating this into the Hegelian language of universality, the colonizer's universality had a 'spiritual' component that was the sole possession of a certain (colonizing) 'people'. If it was simply a question of labour, of efficiency and productivity, then the colonized subject's exercise in accordance with the disciplinary institutions of the purely politico-*logical* universality of the rational state could have given her the same possibilities of intelligibility and membership as the (disciplined) citizen-subjects of the colonizing 'people'. But her mimetic performativity could not grant her admission, and instead served to keep her in a perpetual subjection, rearticulating in her the inferiority of a "crushing objecthood" (Fanon 109). I have already stressed that the very disavowal of *any* cultural coding in the realm of the Self places on the Other the burden of culture; it is a disavowal which demands that the Other shed her cultural baggage, and implies the (im)possibility of the Other becoming a particular, subsumable member of a supposedly neutral universality. But if the state that adopts multiculturalism upholds, implicitly or explicitly, an irreducible 'spiritual' dimension of a 'people' in its universality, if it generates a national fantasy that implies the

⁷I am deliberately considering the paradigm of liberal multiculturalism wherein the 'neutral' host country/state is usually portrayed as having to assimilate various other cultures. Nevertheless, this analysis can be extended to, for example, Muslim integration in Sweden, except for the fact that that scenario might involve a Swiss universality; if Swiss national universality is disguised as a 'humanistic' universality, this scenario would echo the framework of neutral liberal multiculturalism.

exclusive membership of a *Volk* and, against this backdrop, demands of 'difference' that it reduce itself into a truly subsumable particular for this politico-*national* universality—to perform intelligibly as a *patriot*-citizen—then the immigrant, the ethnic subject, the Other, will perpetually be *partially excluded*. Her difference might be 'reducible' and her Otherness might be identifiable to the point where she might be partially *included* under the purely politico-logical universality of the state (its law, its economy, its efficiency and productivity). But as far as ideology goes, as far as the spirit of a 'people' is concerned, she will continue to be a non-member. For under the national-spiritual aspect of universality from which she is continually excluded, no mimesis of hers will be enough to satisfy, once and for all, the disciplinary mechanisms that perpetually characterise her as difference, that seek to normalise her Otherness—no performance of hers will be enough to *garner her recognition as a proper patriot*. At best, her partial inclusion would legitimise her purely *political* citizenship, not as a (habituated) patriot-by-birth but as a 'naturalised' Other. Performing under such a multicultural (national) universality, the 'cultural' subject marked with 'ethnicity' will thus be perpetually normalised, left to stagnate in the disciplined state of being *almost but not quite/neutral enough* to be granted the status of a patriot-citizen of the nation-state.

As I have suggested above, to rely on a static, ideal 'essence' in the logic of Hegelian universality is to draw limits and erect barriers, to posit difference and legitimise discipline. It is to foreclose the radical possibilities of self-loss that a truly empty universality could possibly undergo. One example of this foreclosure is the displacement of a purely political state onto a nation-state through the use of an exclusive 'spiritual universality', or a nationalist ideology. A similar move is the displacement of the burden of culture onto the Other so as to imply, by negation, a 'neutral', 'universal' space for the Self—a space that continually disavows its own historico-cultural coding, but, at crucial junctures, in the face of radical, 'irreducible' difference, prevents a radical loss of Self by (implicitly or explicitly) evoking a static identity or essence.

By way of conclusion, then, I wish to stress the need for an attempt to reject this sort of phantasmic foreclosure, to discard the reliance on the collective fantasy of a spiritual nationality whose function is to smooth over the cracks and fissures of the political sphere. It would be an attempt to recognise the contingent historico-cultural dimensions of the 'multicultural neutrality' supposedly characteristic of the Self, to relieve the Other of the burden of being the sole 'cultural' stain on neutrality and to recognise the fluid, porous and *interdependent* nature of 'cultural differences' and 'national essences'. It would be an

attempt to 'unlearn privilege',⁸ to engage in a politics of acknowledgement,⁹ to adopt a paradigm of self-recognition and self-reflexivity, and to encourage radical losses of this self through a continuous dialogue with difference. In effect, it would constitute nothing less than the attempt to inaugurate the project of actualising the radical potentialities of truly dynamic universalities.

⁸See Spivak 35–66.

⁹See Markell.

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