

# Idealism from Kant to Hegel

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For human reason, impelled by its own need rather than moved by the mere vanity of gaining a lot of knowledge, proceeds irresistibly to such questions as cannot be answered by any experiential use of reason and any principles taken from such use. And thus all human beings, once their reason has expanded to [the point where it can] speculate, actually have always had in them, and always will have in them, some metaphysics.<sup>1</sup>

—Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*

## *Abstract*

Within his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant endeavored on a project that replied to epistemological issues that were endemic to the period, with special attention paid to the relationship of cognition to objects. In the process of explaining this relationship between cognition and objects, Kant develops a novel philosophical trajectory through which to understand how knowledge of objects is possible. This trajectory resides on a bifurcation of the appearance that is spatio-temporally filtered and categorically determined, versus the object considered in-itself. Furthermore, Kant posits a two-fold constitution of knowledge by the two faculties of understanding and sensibility, and thereby, rejects the hypothesis of an intuitive understanding. With these two stances in mind, Hegel—within the *Science of Logic*—is critical of Kant insofar as he sees these above positions by Kant as detrimental to the project of idealism. Detrimental in the sense that Hegel thinks that Kant's position is self-contradictory to the extent that concepts exist only in relation to appearance (i.e. illusory being) and, hence, concepts do not have any actual 'truth' to them insofar as they only apply haphazardly. So, from the perspective of Hegel, for Kant, concepts are derivative and hold no actual traction beyond that which appears. This, therefore, leads to Hegel's attempt to critique and overcome these Kantian assumptions within the *Science of Logic*.

## **Introduction**

Hegel begins the work by conceiving of his logic as a presuppositionless science. Consequently, Hegel starts with wholly indeterminate being insofar as this is a 'proper' beginning for a presuppositionless science. Hegel strives to demonstrate that indeterminate being unfolds through a series of determinations, e.g. being as quality, magnitude, and quantity. And so, through a series of determinations, being 'becomes' essence. This section of the text sets the stage for Hegel's criticism of Kant, and, by extension, any theory that resides on a dichotomy

between appearance and reality (or, for Kant, appearance and the thing-in-itself), e.g. skepticism, empirical realism, etc. With this being the basis for Hegel's critique of Kant, the following paper will attempt to explicate this relationship between Kant and Hegel. This task, therefore, requires an explication of Kant's methodology in order to show how the thing-in-itself develops as an issue at all from the *Transcendental Aesthetic* to the *Transcendental Logic*, with emphasis paid to the *B. Deduction*. It thereby situates Hegel's interpretation and critique of Kant's method. This requires situating

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<sup>1</sup>Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar, B22

Hegel's criticism in order to demonstrate why he thinks of Kant's dichotomies as problematic. First, this means delineating Hegel's criticism of appearance within *The Doctrine of Essence*, along with his dissolution of the dichotomy between appearance and reality within *The Doctrine of the Concept*. So, this paper will argue that Hegel dissolves these above dichotomies through an idealism that posits a sensible understanding, i.e. what Kant labels an understanding that intuitively. That is, a conception of cognition where concepts are not limited to mere appearance, and so, gives traction to the claim that the *Idea* alone is *being*, imperishable *life*, *self-knowing truth*, and is all *truth*, i.e. reality. With this, Hegel elevates the concept to the status of the *Idea* by dissolving the bifurcations of appearance-reality and sensibility-understanding. And thus, the task of this paper is to trace this critique by Hegel in order to explicate the historico-philosophical development of German idealism.

### **Idealism in the Aesthetic: The Bounds of Sensibility**

The philosophical strategy that Kant develops within his critique resides on several axioms by which he posits his transcendental idealism. Thus, in order to contextualize Hegel's critique of transcendental idealism, an explication of these axioms is required. The first axiom that Kant thematically emphasizes within the transcendental aesthetic is the distinction between appearance and the thing-in-itself. So, Kant attempts to maintain throughout the aesthetic the dichotomy of the thing for the subject and the thing as it is prior to the subject's organizational capacities acting on it. These capacities, insofar as the aesthetic is concerned, are the forms of space and time. Space and time function as organizational filters that subject the manifold of intuition to spatio-temporal relations. This is strategically asserted by Kant in order to forward his Copernican revolution as a legitimate thesis. Kant claims, "Let us try to find out by experiment whether we shall not make

better progress in the problems of metaphysics if we assume that objects must conform to our cognition."<sup>2</sup> What is at stake here is the scope of Kant's project, i.e. transcendental idealism. For space and time are not actually existent in the sense of being independent entities, but are rather a priori forms by which the subject organizes the manifold of sensible data. So, space and time forward the idea that objects conform to cognition. And thus, the very possibility of objectivity rests upon the subjective forms of space and time. In other words, objects necessarily appear as spatio-temporal due to the particular way in which the subject receives the manifold of intuition. And so, if we abstract the subject, we also abstract space and time as forms by which the sensible is organized.

However, in order to explain this relationship between the sensible and the subject's organizational capacities, Kant posits a dichotomy between matter, i.e. the sensible, and form. This logic of matter and form resides on Kant's assumed axiom that there is that which appears and 'something behind that which appears,' so to speak. That is, both matter and form are applicable to that which appears, but do not hold for the supersensible, i.e. the 'thing,' prior to any determinations by the subject whatsoever. The matter-form distinction operates as follows: matter is given exteriorly from the undetermined manifold, and form functions as that by which the unorganized manifold becomes spatio-temporally related by the subject. As Kant claims, "Whatever in an appearance corresponds to sensation I call its *matter*; but whatever in an appearance brings about the fact that the manifold of the appearance can be ordered in certain relations I call the *form* of appearance."<sup>3</sup> So, for example, in the perceptual act of seeing the color red, there is the sensorial content given, but this content is organized such that the appearance of a red table is possible at all. The sensorial content is organized into relations such that the red table appears to the subject with certain geometric relations, e.g. square, rectangles, etc., along with being placed into

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid, B XVII

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, B35

temporal relations of succession and simultaneity, i.e. such that the subject recognizes a permanent object that is contextualized by a before and after. And so, again, the very possibility of objectivity, i.e. of an object appearing for a subject, depends on these relations produced by form.

With this conclusion regarding the possibility of objectivity, Kant is attempting to forward his thesis regarding the relation between cognition and objects. However, Kant is also maintaining his critical attitude towards reason, i.e. determining the limits of reason. So, Kant is also de-limiting reason within the aesthetic, as “the transcendental object remains unknown to us.”<sup>4</sup> This claim functions as a de-limitation of reason, as reason cannot determine whether or not the transcendental object *is* the appearing object. All reason can definitively state, especially in light of the space and time, is that the object *is* always an object for a subject, and moreover, that this object is based upon a logic of appearance. Insofar as any given object is an object for a subject that has been related, determined, and subsumed into a paradigm of knowing, the object is an appearance. This logic of appearance allows for the possibility of foundational knowledge. That is, Kant de-limits reason such that he bifurcates the subject and object in the above fashion, and thereby, creates the space for indubitable knowledge that the subject has in regard to the object. However, in the process of securing the space for this type of knowledge, Kant necessarily creates a distinction between that appearing object and the transcendental object. And thus, the philosophical cost of this type of knowledge is the unknowability of the transcendental object.

Lastly, Kant’s critique of reason within the aesthetic depends on a logic of finitude in regard to the subject. That is, Kant makes the claim that what is given in sensibility is not itself originary with regard to objects. In other words, sensibility

does not produce the object. And so, the human subject, as finite, is dependent upon on an exteriority in order to be given intuitions. As Kant states, “our kind of intuition is called sensible because it is not original.”<sup>5</sup> For the human subject is “dependent as regards both its existence and its intuition.”<sup>6</sup> In other words, because the subject is finite in regard to reason, it does not have access to an originary intuition that could intellectually produce objects. So, the human subject is dependent in its existence insofar as it is not a necessary being, i.e. God, and also dependent upon ‘objects’<sup>7</sup> to be given sensations. Kant calls this hypothetical regarding an originary intuition that which would belong to an intellectual intuition, i.e. a productive intuition that is not dependent upon objects in order to have sensations.

#### **Idealism in the *B. Deduction*: The Function of Understanding**

Now having laid out Kant’s methodology within the aesthetic, the next task entails an explication of his method within his *B. Deduction*. Kant’s trajectory within the *B. Deduction* opens up a philosophical avenue through which to better understand the relationship between sensibility and understanding. This will be necessary in contextualizing Hegel’s critique of the dichotomy of sensibility and understanding. So, Kant’s method within the *B. Deduction* heavily privileges the role of the understanding in relation to sensibility, but he still attempts to maintain a separation by arguing against pivotal hypotheticals. In particular, Kant argues against the hypothesis of an intuitive understanding through multiple differing examples within the *B. Deduction*<sup>8</sup>. So, Kant attempts to maintain his thoroughgoing criticality regarding the limits of reason, especially in relation to how the understanding functions with sensibility in the constitution of experience. That is, Kant

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid, A46

<sup>5</sup>Ibid, B72

<sup>6</sup>Ibid

<sup>7</sup>I.e. the human being is dependent upon being given sensations from the undetermined in order to organize that

given-ness via relations. However, whatever that undetermined *is*, cannot be legitimately determined within the bounds of reason.

<sup>8</sup>See B135, B139, and B146

necessarily makes certain claims regarding the bounds of the understanding in order to forward his claim about the finitude of the subject. However, Kant's main aim within the *B. Deduction* is to demonstrate the function of the understanding in relation to experience. In other words, to demonstrate that "the understanding itself is nothing more than the power to combine a priori and to bring the manifold of given intuitions under the unity of apperception—the principle of this unity being the supreme principle in all of human cognition."<sup>9</sup> Thus, Kant's thesis is that, in demonstrating this definition of the understanding, he will legitimize the categories in regard to experience, and thereby circumscribe a thoroughgoing delineation of sensibility and understanding such that experience is possible.

Apperception will be Kant's methodological access point through which to legitimize the categories in regard to experience. This legitimization will show the necessity of the categories and their fundamental role in relation to sensibility. So, Kant will attempt to show that the unity of consciousness is possible only on the basis of the unifying principles of thought, which are the categories. In other words, Kant will demonstrate how the unity of consciousness is tied up with the categories, and so, if experience is necessarily subject to the unity of consciousness, i.e. apperception, then experience is equally subject to the categories.

Kant engages this thesis by first claiming that every intuition that is given in sensibility is subject necessarily to the presentation of the *I think*. For Kant asserts, "everything manifold in intuition has a necessary reference to the *I think* in the same subject in whom this manifold is found. But this presentation, [i.e., the *I think*] is an act of spontaneity; i.e., it cannot be regarded as belonging to sensibility. I call it *pure apperception*."<sup>10</sup> Kant's methodological idealism is expressed within this passage insofar as anything that is found within the manifold of

intuition must have reference to the *I think*. That is, any intuition must have the capacity to be a representation that *I think*. This presentation of *I think* is a presentation that is produced by the unity of consciousness, i.e. pure apperception. It is produced, therefore, by the understanding and not sensibility. For example, if I sense a black cat, this representation must have the capacity to be represented as *I think* the black cat. Therefore, everything that is given in sensibility is necessarily subject to the understanding insofar as all intuitions must have a necessary reference to the *I think*. And so, any intuition that is not subject to the *I think* has no significance *for me*.

By demonstrating the applicability of pure apperception in relation to intuition, Kant has created an avenue through which to introduce the necessity of the categories, and thereby, legitimize the categories in regard to experience. Kant claims, "The act of understanding whereby the manifold of given presentations are brought under one apperception as such is the logical function of judgments."<sup>11</sup> Moreover, this application of judgments in terms of logical functionality is precisely what Kant conceives of as the categories. In other words, the act of bringing the manifold of intuition to the unity of apperception is the application of the *I think* as a judgment. However, this process is merely another way of describing the function of judgments in relation to the categories. For example, when I make the judgment that I see a red chair, I am judging the chair and subjecting the chair to the unity of apperception insofar as this is an object *for me*. The red chair is an object that *I think*. This judgment also entails subjecting the manifold of the 'chair' to the categories insofar as I determine the chair's quality, modality, etc. Hence, my experience of chair is predicated on the legitimacy of the categories insofar as I subject this chair to the unity of apperception.

Insofar as the manifold is subject to the categories, the understanding determines sensibility in relation to the categories. In order

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid, pg. B135

<sup>10</sup>Ibid, pg. B132

<sup>11</sup>Ibid, pg. B143

to explain this determinative relationship between sensibility and understanding, Kant introduces the function of imagination as synthesis. Moreover, Kant names the special relationship between imagination, understanding and sensibility, as regarding a figurative synthesis. This places the imagination between sensibility, insofar as it concerns the manifold of sensible intuition, and the understanding, insofar as it concerns transcendental synthesis. To the extent that imagination concerns transcendental synthesis, "imagination is an exercise of spontaneity, [i.e. an exercise by the understanding.]"<sup>12</sup> To the extent that we are concerned with synthetic imagination, this is an a priori determination by the understanding upon sensibility. The argument is, thus: one, the manifold of given presentations being brought under one apperception is the function of judging. Two, this act of judgment is equivalent to saying that the sensible manifold is subject to the categories. Three, the imagination supplies the understanding with the sensible manifold given in sensibility. Four, the synthetic imagination demarcates that act by the understanding that a priori determines sensibility. This a priori determinative aspect is why Kant calls this synthetic act figurative. That is, figurative synthesis is the structure-bestowing act enacted by the understanding upon sensibility in accordance to the categories. And hence, Kant names this entire process the transcendental synthesis of imagination. Thus, productive imagination, as figurative synthesis, is productive not in the sense of literally producing objects, for this would be what he calls an intuitive understanding. Rather, productive imagination names the act of producing structures that a priori determine sensibility in accordance with the categories, and, thereby, is the possibility of objectivity.

This determinative act by the understanding upon the sensibility is why there is a privilege placed upon the understanding in comparison to sensibility. So, in an effort to maintain his

dualism, Kant actively argues against an intuitive understanding. First, Kant argues that nothing manifold is given within the presentation of *I think*, i.e. apperception. The subject is dependent upon an exteriority to be supplied the manifold of intuition, and thus, does not already have a manifold within itself. In other words, the understanding does not have an unmediated access to the manifold of intuition, and therefore, must be supplied the manifold via sensibility and imagination. It is supplied by sensibility insofar as the manifold is given in receptivity and via the imagination insofar as it "can give to the concepts of understanding a corresponding intuition."<sup>13</sup> Second, Kant argues against an intuitive understanding insofar as he argues that the manifold of intuition is synthetically combined under one apperception by the presentation of *I think*. That is, Kant states that an intuitive understanding would not require such a synthetic act, for the manifold would be originally given in such a subject. Hence, Kant states, "for if I were to think of an understanding that itself intuited, then in regard to such cognition the categories would have no signification whatever."<sup>14</sup> So, the whole process by which we subject the manifold to the unity of apperception via the categories would be null. In this sort of understanding, the manifold would simply be given without having to subject them to the categories. And hence, the categories would have no "signification whatever" for such an understanding.

In line with his critique of reason, Kant delimits the understanding such that it is finite in relation to sensibility. The categories have signification in regard to experience precisely due to the finitude of the subject. Moreover, Kant's strategy of utilizing the empirical as an access point through which to posit the transcendental as grounding the empirical is also expressive of this point. In the case of the unity of apperception, Kant begins with the givenness of the manifold of intuition to thereby posit the unity of consciousness. In other words, Kant

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid, pg. B152

<sup>13</sup>Ibid

<sup>14</sup>Ibid, pg. B146

begins with the finite subject that is constrained such that it receives the manifold of intuition exteriorly. And from this point, Kant derives the unity of consciousness and proceeds to demonstrate the legitimacy of the categories. It is from the manifold of intuition that Kant shows the necessity of apperception. From there, Kant shows that this whole process is another way of describing the process of subjecting the manifold to the categories, and so, if the unity of consciousness is necessary in regard to the manifold, *a fortiori* so are the categories. As with the aesthetic, Kant's philosophical gain is also not without consequence. In the case of the aesthetic, Kant secures the possibility of a priori knowledge via the forms, but at the cost of bifurcating the transcendental object and the appearing object. In the case of the *B. Deduction*, Kant is forced into stating things such as, "why our understanding has this peculiarity that it a priori brings about the unity of apperception only by means of the categories... for this no further reason can be given."<sup>15</sup> Kant is forced into such a statement because he is dedicated to a project that circumscribes the limits of a finite subject's reason; which is why he emphatically argues against an intuitive understanding, for this is beyond the bounds of what he thinks is given to the human subject. And thus, idealism, for Kant, is predicated on the separation between sensibility and understanding and the separation between the appearing object and the transcendental object.

### **Hegel's Critique of Kant's Thing-in-itself**

With the derivation of this conclusion, Hegel offers a critique of Kant's idealism precisely at these vital juncture points. First, throughout the *Logic* Hegel offers several differing critiques of the thing-in-itself. In part, Hegel's project can be seen as unfolding the relationship between thought and being such that the thing-in-itself is merely a philosophical abstraction; an abstraction that arises out of a false dichotomy. For Hegel states, "things are called 'in

themselves' insofar as abstraction is made from all being-for-other, which means simply, insofar as they are thought devoid of all determination, as nothings. What is *in* these things-in-themselves, therefore, we know quite well; they are as such nothing but truthless empty abstractions."<sup>16</sup> Given Kant's position regarding the thing-in-itself, e.g. the transcendental object remains unknown to us, he determines the thing-in-itself in terms of negation. That is, Hegel attempts to show the operative logic within Kant such that the question of, "what *is* a thing-in-itself," is absurd. For what a thing-in-itself *is*, is nothing at all insofar as the thing-in-itself is defined in terms of an absolute nullity. The question regarding what a thing-in-itself is, presupposes a determination be assigned to the thing in question. However, the thing in question is precisely beyond the scope of any sort of determination. Hence, Hegel's comment regarding the thing-in-itself as merely an abstraction based upon nullity.

Moreover, Hegel's criticism is bent on teasing out the contradiction nested in Kant's bifurcation of appearance and reality. As Hegel states, "In [transcendental idealism], the thing-in-itself was not supposed to enter into knowledge...as the Kantian appearance is a given content of perception; it presupposes affections, determinations of the subject, which are immediate relatively to themselves and to the subject."<sup>17</sup> As stated within the section regarding the aesthetic, Kant conceives of a subject that is dependent on an exteriority in order to be affected, and to thereby generate a representation, i.e. an appearance. This presupposes a determination of the thing-in-itself in its capacity to affect the subject, and also in the relationship between the subject that immediately determines the thing in question. In other words, the thing-in-itself is supposed to be unknowable, i.e. undeterminable. However, the logic of appearance and reality do not function at all with that in mind. What Hegel is stating is that we do 'know' the thing-in-itself in terms of a

<sup>15</sup>Ibid

<sup>16</sup>G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. A.V. Miller, pg. 121

<sup>17</sup>Ibid, pg. 396-397

negation, and in terms of its capacity to affect the subject. Hence, Hegel names this aspect of appearance “illusory being,” for it *essentially* takes the role of being, but is mere appearance, i.e. illusory. That is, the determinations applied to being are now in application with regard to mere appearance, and are not in regard to reality as such, i.e. the thing-in-itself.

As with any dichotomy, Hegel’s method is to unfold the various premises and show how they interrelate between one another beyond being defined by a difference. That is, Hegel argues such that all dichotomies are false, and hence, Hegel’s critique of the appearance-reality, sensible-understanding dichotomies. As per above, Hegel’s critical attitude is based upon creating tension such that the dichotomy collapses upon itself. In the case of the appearance-reality dichotomy, the thing-in-itself was supposed to be unknowable, but it turns out that there are knowledge-determinations made in regard to the thing-in-itself in terms of negation. And so, given Hegel’s echo of Spinoza, “Determinateness is negation posited as affirmative and is the proposition of Spinoza: all determination is negation.”<sup>18</sup> So, for Hegel, by definition determination implies negation. For example, when I make the most abstract judgement of S is P, I determine S by a negation. In other words, I negate in order to specifically designate S as the issue of my claim. Moreover, I determine, and therefore, negate S by a predication of P. In this way, S is P entails a double determination or a double negation. In the case of the thing-in-itself, insofar as I determine the thing-in-itself as indeterminable, I am still nevertheless making the initial determination of the thing-in-itself being indeterminable.

Insofar as Kant conceives of transcendental idealism, there is an exteriority that is required to affect the subject. This claim in itself, however, imposes a knowledge-determination in regard to that exteriority, i.e. the thing-in-itself. The thing-in-itself, in this sense, is in possession of what Hegel calls an “external reflection”<sup>19</sup>. That is, Kant situates himself as external to the thing-in-

itself, (insofar as what appears to the subject is the representation, but not the thing-in-itself), and thus, reflects upon the thing-in-itself as unknowable insofar as it is external to thought, i.e. indeterminable. However, as demonstrated above, the thing-in-itself is a ‘thing’ with ‘properties’ insofar as it is determined. And hence, is something actual akin to something found within mere appearance. So, insofar as Hegel interprets Kant, he dissolves the dichotomy of appearance and reality.

### **An Intuitive Understanding: The Elevation of the Concept to the Idea**

In Hegel’s critique of the separation between appearance and reality, he forwards his own thesis regarding—what one may call from a Kantian perspective—an intuitive understanding. That is, an understanding where there is a unity to concepts and reality, and therefore, a dissolution of the appearance-reality distinction. This is what Hegel calls the *Idea* and it is posited on the basis of a critique of Kant’s method of approach regarding the logical function of concepts, apperception, the categories, and therefore, the understanding. So, Hegel situates his critique of appearance-reality dichotomy as a precursor to the further critique of Kant’s *B. Deduction*, and thus, how Kant conceives of the function of the understanding. So, the appearance-reality critique is an access point through which to criticize Kant’s project of transcendental idealism.

Hegel begins by attempting to show the empty formalism Kant offers in regard to his interpretation of concepts. That is, concepts are deprived from reality insofar as there is a bifurcation of appearance and reality. Moreover, concepts do not have truth to the extent that Kant attempts to maintain his axiomatic dualism of sensibility and understanding. So, Hegel states, “in general, the Concept and the logical element are declared to be something merely formal which, since it abstracts from the content, does

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid, pg. 113

<sup>19</sup>Ibid, pg. 490

not contain truth.”<sup>20</sup> Within this passage, Hegel is arguing that concepts within the Kantian framework are only logical functions without any actual truth-content. That is, given that there is a bifurcation of sensibility and understanding, sensuous existence is given in sensibility and not in the understanding. And so, concepts do not have any immanent connection with sensuous existence. Furthermore, as the above interpretation of Kant attempted to show, the understanding functions in relation to sensibility in terms of a formal determination. That is, the understanding a priori determines sensibility. However, understanding is still necessarily dependent upon sensibility to be given intuitions. So, Hegel’s criticism is bent on demonstrating the bifurcation of sensibility and understanding results in concepts that lack any *reality*, i.e. lack any truth-content.

Hegel furthers his critique by stating that Kant’s conception of self-consciousness equally lacks truth-content. That is, Hegel continues his critique by examining Kant’s conception of the transcendental unity of apperception. As Hegel asserts, “Consequently, on this [Kantian] view, nothing is left but the simple representation, 'I', a representation devoid of any content of its own, of which we cannot even say that it is a concept but a mere consciousness that accompanies every concept.”<sup>21</sup> In other words, Hegel is attempting to show, given Kant’s dichotomy of sensuous existence and thought, that his derivation of apperception is contradictory or at least produces a circular argument. That is, Kant begins with the manifold of intuition, but abstracts and posits a presentation that accompanies all representations, i.e. the *I think*. However, insofar as all concepts lack content within the understanding, apperception, too, lacks content. And moreover, insofar as the manifold of intuition is required to incite the relationship of sensibility and understanding, a circle is created insofar as Hegel considers the issue of apperception; for the I cannot be thought without the I thinking it.<sup>22</sup> In other words, insofar as the *I*

*think* is devoid of any content whatsoever, it depends on sensibility to be given something manifold. However, if we are to think the *I*, the *I* must already be thinking it. And so, a circle is created to the extent that Kant conceives of the *I think* in terms of being deprived of reality, i.e. sensuous existence.

Hegel’s critique extends to Kant’s delimitation of reason as finite. That is, Hegel criticizes Kant for creating limitations upon the categories, and therefore the understanding, in the name of the finitude of reason. In the case of Kant, the deduction of the categories is based upon the logical form of judgements. However, for Hegel, he argues that if logic is to be concerned with form, then the form must be the pure truth itself. In other words, this form must possess a content adequate to its form. In contrast to this type of logic, Hegel states in evaluation of Kant, “what is impossible and absurd is to attempt to grasp the truth in such forms as the positive judgement and the judgement generally. Just as the Kantian philosophy did not consider the categories in and for themselves but declared them to be finite determinations incapable of containing truth, on the wrong ground that they are subjective forms of self-consciousness.”<sup>23</sup> In other words, because Kant de-limits the categories to mere form, and only attempts to legitimize the categories insofar as the understanding a priori determines sensibility, sensuous existence is wholly abstracted. The truth of the categories, from the perspective of Hegel, completely goes unexamined philosophically. Again, Hegel critiques Kant for an empty formalism with regard to the function of the understanding and, therefore, implicitly argues for an intuitive understanding, a logic that would immanently have the adequate content appropriate to its logistical form.

So, all these criticisms thus far have been in regard to the empty formalism found within Kant. However, this empty formalism arguably stems from the separation between sensibility and understanding. And so, in accordance with

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid, pg. 585-586

<sup>21</sup>Ibid, pg. 776

<sup>22</sup>Ibid, pg. 778

<sup>23</sup>Ibid, pg. 595



the outset of the work, Hegel subtly points towards the possibility of an intuitive understanding via his critique. That is, in the process of criticizing Kant at these various junctures about the appearance-reality distinction, and the issue of Kant's empty formalism, Hegel implicitly argues for a unison of sensibility and the understanding. As stated by Hegel,

“It will always stand out as a marvel how the Kantian philosophy recognised the relation of thought to sensuous reality, beyond which it did not advance, as only a relative relation of mere Appearance, and perfectly well recognised and enunciated a higher unity of both in the Idea in general and, for example, in the Idea of an intuitive understanding, and yet stopped short at this relative relation and the assertion that the Concept is and remains utterly separate from reality thus asserting as truth what it declared to be finite cognition, and denouncing as an unjustified extravagance and a figment of thought what it recognised as truth and of which it established the specific concept.”<sup>24</sup>

In this sense, Kant entertained the possibility of an intuitive understanding insofar as he argued against it; his argument being largely based upon his assumption regarding the finitude of reason. However, from the perspective of Hegel, Kant's de-limitation of reason is precisely that, a barrier to fully coming to bear with the stakes found within the Concept, reality, and the *Idea*. So, from the perspective of Hegel, Kant entertained the possibility of intertwining sensuous existence and thought, but disregarded it insofar as his axioms conflicted with such theses. Hence, Hegel's comments regarding the relationship of mere appearance and reality, and thus, the possibility of a “higher unity” in the *Idea*, which Kant wholly neglected to entertain given his axioms.

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid, pg. 592

The move from Kant to Hegel thus takes place precisely at these vital juncture points explicated. For one, the appearance-reality distinction takes precedence insofar as it is the foundational precursor to other critiques. Second, the critique of the sensibility-understanding is relevant insofar as Hegel considers Kant's position with regard to the understanding as an abstract formalism. And thirdly, a critique of Kant's axiom regarding the de-limitation of reason insofar as it is finite. Through these juncture points, Hegel posits an idealism that captures the reality of the rational. In other words, reason does have access to the real insofar as that *is what appears*. Furthermore, concepts have truth-content insofar as they are Concepts, and are not merely logical forms by which to judge. Truth is the agreement of the Concept and the object.<sup>25</sup> And so, what is proper to Hegel's conception of the logic are concepts with truth-content, i.e. concepts that refer to reality, and not just empty formalism that only applies haphazardly to mere appearance.

### **The Outcome of Kant and Hegel**

The outset of the work began with a quote by Kant that situates both these thinkers in one equal regard. That is, the quote captures the speculative orientation that is shared by both Kant and Hegel insofar as they are both idealists, (speculative in the sense that Kant, within this passage, describes the impetus found within reason to speculate). In regard to Kant, he posits this claim while at the same time attempting to critic reason via a de-limitation. In the case of Hegel, he is much more interested in giving concepts, the idea, etc., an expression in terms of their reality. Kant's idealism is predicated upon a formal orientation that posits the functions of the understanding as merely logical and lacking a manifold by itself. So, the understanding, insofar as Hegel interprets Kant, is dependent upon the givenness of the manifold of intuition in sensibility. However, for Hegel, these limitations function as barriers to the initial trajectory set forth by Kant. Moreover, they are detrimental to

<sup>25</sup>Ibid, pg. 595

the idea that concepts should say something *true* about *reality*, i.e. concepts should have *truthful* content. So, for Hegel, what appears *is reality*, and the rational expresses itself in terms of the real. Moreover, Kant's dichotomies are unnecessary abstractions that assume contradictory theses. In the case of the thing-in-itself, we are forced to posit a determined indeterminable. In the case of sensibility and understanding, we are forced to posit concepts that lack any content, and therefore, do not have any actual *reality* to extract from them. Hence, Hegel sees himself as eliminating these unnecessary limitations placed upon the subject, so as to capture the impulse of reason that is born

out of its own need to express itself as *real*. Kant opens up the possibility of this trajectory, however, Hegel can be seen as taking this speculative orientation to the full extent of its gravity. So, in the spirit of Hegel, "All the rest is error, confusion, opinion, striving, arbitrariness, and transitoriness; the absolute idea alone is *being*, imperishable *life*, *self-knowing truth*, and is *all truth*." Reality is appearance. Concepts are not void of content, but are rather unified with reality in the *Idea*, and thus, sensibility and understanding are unified insofar as there is a unity in the *Idea* of thought in relation to sensuous existence, i.e. the dissolution of the dichotomy between appearance and reality.