

of beneficence requires me to keep showering my benefactor with gifts and services, but that I must preserve an ‘ongoing esteem for the benefactor’ (p. 255).

Chapters 9 and 10 discuss Kant's account of moral evil and vice. Chapter 9, ‘Love of Honor, Emulation, and the Psychology of the Devilish Vices’ (also co-written with Houston Smit), discusses the origin of the devilish vices, envy, ingratitude and *Schadenfreude*. Although the basis of our self-esteem is our dignity (recognition self-esteem) and a comparison of our actions and character with what the moral law requires (appraisal self-esteem), a natural tendency to compare ourselves with others is essential to our pursuit of self-perfection. Striving to emulate those who ‘make manifest by example the kinds of behavior and attitudes that one should strive to acquire’ is an essential element of our moral development. However, in doing so we often fall into the mistake of taking self-esteem to be comparative: I take my worth to be measured in comparison with the worth of another agent. This error gives rise to a tendency of wishing (and acting) against the well-being and moral development of others. Timmons is careful to point out that not all instances of envy, ingratitude and *Schadenfreude* are devilish and he provides a compelling account of when they are devilish. Chapter 10, ‘The Good, the Bad, and the Badass’, provides a systematic account of Kant's doctrine of radical evil and the degrees of evil in the famous discussion of these topics in the *Religion*. By insisting that the rigorist views apply primarily to transcendental, rather than empirical, psychology, the chapter admirably tries to show how Kant's rigorism can be made compatible with various aspects of our common experience of evil, such as (1) that evil comes in degrees; (2) that it is not necessarily the expression of a stable disposition; and (3) that it is often found in agents who are also partly good. The chapter shows how Kant's denial of the possibility of a diabolical will can be made compatible with cases in which agents seem to be pursuing evil for its own sake.

In sum, this is an outstanding collection that will be immensely valuable to anyone interested in Kant, Kant's ethics or any aspect of practical philosophy discussed in the book.

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Alfredo Ferrarin, *Thinking and the I: Hegel and the Critique of Kant*

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Alfredo Ferrarin begins his ambitious new book, *Thinking and the I: Hegel and the Critique of Kant*, by reminding the reader of that somewhat uncanny experience when thoughts ‘escape us, dominate us, exceed our control’ (p. 4). In such moments, thoughts seem to be governed ‘by a logic of their own’; they appear free and independent of our will, animated by a ‘spontaneity’ that is ‘irreducible to the will of the subject who thinks them’ (p. 4). But if thoughts ‘are not the product of a self-transparent I who controls and dominates them’, then how can they be one’s own (p. 4)? If thoughts are free insofar as they ‘cannot be subjected to the thinker’, what then of my own freedom of thought? If thoughts are determined by something other than myself, what of the seemingly foundational first-person epistemic perspective?

Ferrarin’s target throughout the book is ‘the ordinary conception of thought’ that proves woefully inadequate to address such questions. The familiar, ‘common sense’ view ‘believes that thought occurs when *I think something determinate*’ (p. 5). On this model, thinking is the property of an I, of an individuated and embodied subject, whose consciousness is directed toward a world of objects. The mind strives to cognize reality by forming representations of those objects, judging its effort successful to the extent that it attains an adequate correspondence between its representation and the object. Truth as the value of formal judgements is, then, the measure of the correspondence achieved by the mind’s concept to something essentially other than itself, to a mind-independent reality. While this epistemic orientation (which Hegel calls ‘natural consciousness’) appears in a variety of different forms, every form exhibits the structure of the ‘opposition of consciousness’ and presupposes a fundamental distinction ‘between consciousness, understood as the seat of the concept, and the real, understood as the given’ (pp. 51, 181; cf. *PbG*, §§77–84).¹

According to Ferrarin, modern philosophy since Descartes has tended to adopt some version of this model, reducing ‘thought to the formal and subjective activity of an “I-think”’ (p. 7). Even Kant, who develops a far more sophisticated account of reason, presupposes ‘the identification of subjectivity and the I-think’ and therefore fails to question adequately ‘the relation between thinking and thoughts’ (p. 9). Accordingly, the relation between thinking, thought and the I-think, appears externally determined – a brute fact or simply contingent given from which thought necessarily begins. Thinking is subject to inviolable constraints that appear as the predetermined rules of the game, and no reason is offered for why such rules govern rational activity (cf. pp. 142–50). This perspective, however, makes a host of assumptions ‘from the externality between thinking and thought and the impossibility of transcending the finite to the derivation of thought from the object’ (p. 9).

Hegel proposes an alternative: What if thinking animates all things, and is at work in the orbits of planets, the self-maintenance of living beings, and our own unconscious acts? If so, then the conscious thinking of an individual subject is one mode of thinking and its task is ‘to highlight the unconscious logic of the world’ (p. 12). If thinking is polymorphic, however, any unitary examination of thought (i.e. any properly scientific one) ‘must focus on the difference among its forms, and in particular and most fundamentally on the difference between the unconscious life of reason that asserts itself instinctively in the world and its self-conscious life in its knowledge of itself’ (p. 12). The *Science of Logic* is accordingly the exhibition of the logic of ‘the concept over which nothing external and given can exercise any authority that determines and divides itself’ (p. 13). For Hegel, *the* concept is ‘the substantial foundation’ of the whole; it is ‘the subject matter, the product and the content of *thought*, the fact that exists in and for itself, the *logos*, the reason of that which is, the truth of what we call things’ (WL 5: 30). Thus, it is the concept, as the source of its own determinations, that ‘divides itself into being and subjective concept, namely, into thinking as it is and thinking as it knows itself’ (p. 13).

According to Ferrarin, if we are to grasp thinking as it is in itself and thinking as it knows itself (i.e. thinking as it is *in* and *for* us), we must jettison the epistemic model of the I as ‘the hidden director that monitors, overviews, and manages every thought we have’ and understand the I as ‘but one of the modes that thinking gives itself for its self-actualization’ (p. 15). We must ask, what if ‘thought thinks itself when it makes itself I’ (p. 82)?

Ferrarin undertakes this *periaōgē* in five tightly argued chapters. Beginning his deconstruction of the egological perspective so dominant in modernity with a careful reading of the *Phenomenology*'s famous discussion of the struggle for recognition, Ferrarin shows in ‘Hegel on Recognition: Self-Consciousness, Individuality, and Intersubjectivity’ that philosophy cannot accept the I as a primary datum; for ‘as long as we start from a theoretical I, the world ‘is not really shared’ (p. 32). Unless it can account for the genesis of self-consciousness, philosophy has no way of explaining how we have a common intelligible world. Arguing that ‘subjectivity and I are distinct concepts’ and that the concept of recognition is ‘not sufficient to ground self-consciousness’, Ferrarin presents the overarching goal of the *Phenomenology* as concomitantly the liberation from the ‘opposition of consciousness’ and the recognition that the concept ‘has a self-like form’ (pp. 18, 51). In coming to see that ‘thought is the very activity of substance’ and that ‘knowledge – the concept, science – coincides with the self because substance is subject’, we see that ‘self-consciousness is the substance's self-consciousness’ (pp. 51–2).

Having established that ‘individual self-consciousness is derivative’, chapter 2 (‘Nonhuman Thinking?’), explores thinking that ‘unfolds according to a spontaneity that is alien to any will or design we may impose on it’ (p. 53). Ferrarin pursues this thesis by illustrating how thought is not something human subjectivity brings to bear on the world of determinate objects, but that human thinking can grasp the rational structure of things because thought is always already active in them, becoming objective in concrete particulars. ‘Reason that knows itself is the same that moves the world, exists in things as their intelligible core, purpose, and essence’ (p. 77).

For this view to be fully persuasive, however, Ferrarin must grapple with Hegel’s all-too-often dismissed thesis that there is ‘a concept that as an original and first principle proceeds to become concrete in the world’ (p. 53). Lest this sound like a return to Neoplatonist readings of Hegel, Ferrarin distinguishes his account from ‘realist’ and ‘foundationalist’ interpretations by emphasizing that ‘the absolute idea is not a metaphysical entity, separate and a priori’ (p. 77). Just as the primacy of the concept does not amount to causal efficacy, the primacy of the absolute idea is not that of agency, nor is it something over and above ‘the exposition of the logic and the system’; rather we arrive at ‘the absolute idea when all the previous determinations become a systematic totality’ in the thinking of an individual I (p. 77). Thus, the derivative status of individual self-consciousness does not render subjective thought extraneous, gratuitous or incidental with respect to the whole (cf. pp. 81–3).

Philosophic thinking attempts to recapitulate that spontaneity of thought which animates all objectivity, a spontaneity defined by a dual capacity for fluidity and determinate stability, for motion and rest. In ‘The Movement of Thought: Spontaneity and Reification’ (chapter 3), Ferrarin explores this doubleness of thought, paying particular attention to ‘the productivity of thinking’ or how ‘the abstract ... becomes concrete and fills itself with determinate content’ (pp. 18–19, 87). The self-determining activity of thought in reification is the moment of identity, which the understanding cognizes in a static representation, believing its propositional logic adequate for comprehending being’s heterogeneity. But as Ferrarin demonstrates in ‘On Transforming Representations into Concepts’ (chapter 4), the fixity of the understanding’s determinations – whether expressed in the rarefied language of the sciences or our everyday speech – are inadequate to articulate the activity of thought at work in the world. Thus, whereas the understanding rests content with ‘the ready-made truths of representation’, speculative thought continually circles back and reexamines what appeared definitive, not because the understanding was simply wrong but because its truth was partial and reason longs for the whole (p. 136).

Though such efforts appear peculiar, if not simply quixotic, from the perspective of ‘the ordinary conception of thought’, for Hegel ‘the speculative element is the revolution that dialectical reason brings to the familiar, the corrosive bath in which it melts it’ (p. 136). For Ferrarin’s Hegel, philosophy must first disorient us, ‘so as to reorient us’ (p. 136). One might be blinded on returning to the cave, but soon what was once thought real and substantial is recognized as the play of shadows cast by the partial truths of the understanding. Ferrarin’s work in these first four chapters could be summarized as a Socratic effort to free us from the chains of the ordinary conception of thinking, to critique the pretences of the understanding and to provoke aporia in order to awaken us to an alternative, and, thereby, free us from the familiar, which, in Hegel’s words, ‘is not really known for the very reason that it is familiar and well known’ (*PbG*, §31).

In the final culminating chapter, ‘Kant’s and Hegel’s Reason’, Ferrarin presents an extraordinary *philosophische Auseinandersetzung*. This apparently well-worn debate between Kant and Hegel receives a fresh and vivid presentation in large part because Ferrarin does not uncritically accept Hegel’s often ‘dismissive, schematic, and instrumental’ presentation of Kant (p. 137). Rather, building on his earlier book, which presented Kant’s conception of reason as ‘a legislative, end-setting, self-organizing, architectonic, unifying and autonomous power’ (Ferrarin 2015: 292), Ferrarin argues that Kant cannot be so easily dismissed as the philosopher of the finite and the understanding.

Ferrarin identifies three premises informing ‘Hegel’s reading: (1) the reduction of Kant’s philosophy to a dichotomic way of proceeding, (2) the acknowledgment of experience as the only sense of knowledge, and (3) the thesis of subjective idealism’ (p. 155). Consequently, Hegel incorrectly concludes that Kant simply reduces ‘self-consciousness to a finite I, failing to acknowledge that Kant is profoundly aware not only of ‘the problem of the double I (the original synthetic unity of apperception as opposed to the empirical I, consciousness, and inner sense)’ and the ‘difference between the identity of the I in its apperceptive functions and personal identity’, but also that while ‘reason is . . . unconditioned and acts upon itself’, ‘consciousness is finite, in relation to the manifold of experience and acts upon appearances’ (pp. 151–2). In contrast to such reductive readings, Ferrarin suggests that we ought to read the three *Critiques* not ‘as three works concerning different topics’ but as ‘three different discussions of one and the same underlying theme: reason in its unity’ (p. 169). Thus, although epistemic questions receive the bulk of scholarly attention, Ferrarin emphasizes that the *Critique of Pure Reason* culminates in an account of reason as ‘an organism that grows internally and not by addition, so that reason has a force and a life of its own’ and that for Kant, ‘reason is autarchic, self-contained, . . .

[operating] as a system and not an aggregate', and is, moreover, teleological, 'the source of ideas which, though not having a corresponding object, are the guide for every use of reason' (p. 169).

Although Hegel overlooks the significance of the architectonic structure of Kant's reason, in particular, that the relation between reason's faculties is one of 'immanence and reciprocal reference, inner distinction within a unity', and therefore does not see that different faculties 'can be activated and have effects only through collaboration and reciprocal mediation', the criticism that Kant fails to 'deduce the forms of thinking' nevertheless points to something fundamental (pp. 192, 194). For Hegel, 'thought is not the production of ever new syntheses, but rather movement and an ongoing power of formation that is intrinsically dialectical, unstable, active', whereas 'in Kant reason does not have any being, however autarchic and self-determining it is' (p. 194).

Ferrarin highlights the difference by recalling that Hegel's interpretation of Aristotelian *energeia*, as 'the movement of the concept that becomes real and is therefore called subjectivity', informs a conception of reason that connects the self-differentiation and self-relation of subjectivity to the activity that maintains beings in their identity (p. 196). Hegel's reason is the *logos* present 'in nature, tradition, language, and history' (p. 196). Philosophy's task is to raise what is implicit to the level of self-consciousness, transforming the unconscious activity of thinking 'spontaneously at work in the world as well as in us' into the conscious thought of thinking, which at its philosophic peak grasps 'that each determinate concept is the self-determination of thought' and that 'every determinacy must be understood as one of the ways in which reason makes itself world', and thereby comprehends 'the substance that is equally subject' (p. 197).

As Hegel's remarks on the 'speculative proposition' in the *Phenomenology* acknowledge, the difficulty of this task is compounded by the challenge of expressing in propositional form the truth of self-determining reason (pp. 16–17, 130–6). Yet the limits of ordinary language should not deter us from our endeavour to understand the whole. If Hegel stretches (some would say, tortures) traditional philosophical speech, it is because 'language fixates its objects, whereas speculative logic must be able to show their contradictoriness, their becoming, their dialectical movement, their fluidity' (p. 131). For Hegel, there is no self-identical truth in-itself. Rather, 'truth consists in its exposition, and this must be concrete, developed, and take the shape of a circle wherein each determination is retrieved and exposed as a necessary moment of the totality' (p. 78). In Hegel's playful metaphor, 'truth is a Bacchanalian revel' (*PbG*, §42).

Thus, rather than search for an unconditioned, indubitable foundation, philosophy ought to attend to the immanent movement at work in all things, a movement that preserves the negated moment in the present actualization. Hegel's account of the absolute idea precludes any 'instantaneous grasp

of the oneness of the whole and its parts' (p. 110). There is 'no mystical union at the expense of difference' – what Hegel mocks as 'the night in which all cows are black' (*PhG*, §16) – because the *archē* of Hegel's system is 'Heraclitus's *to hen diapheron heautōi* (the self-differentiating One)' (p. 110). If we focus on univocity to the exclusion of multiplicity, we cannot grasp the 'self-consciousness of substance' or that the concept 'represents the most fundamental form of self' (p. 18).

If Hegel succeeds in transforming philosophy from 'the love of knowing into actual knowing' it is by demonstrating that 'thought is life and inner force, and at the same time also absolute self-consciousness, the knowledge of its own self-realization in the world' (*PhG*, §5, p. 22). For Hegel the dialectic is an 'objective force' and reason is more than 'discursive knowledge' (pp. 199, 197). If we are willing to jettison our ordinary conception of thinking and adopt Hegel's philosophic perspective, we discover that 'rationality is in the world, not in our sciences alone' (p. 199).

Ferrarin's remarkable book is thus ultimately in service of that quintessentially Hegelian aim of being-at-home in the world. Yet, as Ferrarin reminds us, to comprehend that there is, in fact, nothing 'thoroughly other', nothing wholly alien to mind requires ascending to the heights of absolute spirit, to the thought of thought thinking itself (*ENZ*, §§377, 577).

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Note

1 Parenthetical references to Hegel's texts employ the following abbreviations: *Phänomenologie des Geistes* = *PhG*, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* = *ENZ*, *Wissenschaft der Logik* = *WL*. Reference are to section number for *ENZ*, paragraph number for *PhG*, and to volume: page number, in *Werke in Zwanzig Bände* for *WL*.

Reference

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