

Comments on Jim Kreines, 'Reason in the World'

Clinton Tolley

University of California, San Diego
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§1. Summary of Jim's book

Jim's book takes its place in a very fine line of books on Hegel – by Marcuse, Findlay, Pippin, Pinkard, Longuenesse, Redding, Stern, Bristow, Sedgwick, Bowman, Yeomans, among others – which are distinctive in their successful combination of readability and philosophical richness – despite being about Hegel. Jim's book aims to provide a unified overview of Hegel's metaphysics. As Jim sees it, for Hegel, metaphysics 'addresses the most general and direct questions about *why* or *because* of things; it concerns what Hegel calls 'reason' (Vernunft) or 'the rational' (das Vernünftige) 'in the world' (3; with reference to EL §24 and WL 5:45). For Hegel – and, as Jim reads him, for Kant, too – reason is something that is 'not at base epistemological' in the sense that it is *not* first and foremost about '*justifications* for beliefs or actions' (3; cf. 8); rather, the reason at issue in metaphysics is 'in the world' because it consists in 'the *explanatory* reasons why things do what they do, or are as they are' (3; my ital.).

In fact, the main difference Jim sees between Kant and Hegel turns out to be Hegel's further insistence, allegedly against Kant, that, though it is a metaphysical (world-involving) relation, being an *explanatory* reason for something must in turn be distinguished from the very different kind of metaphysical relation of merely being a *foundation* for something (5), in the sense of being a '*substratum*' on which another thing 'depends' (24).

I will return to the question of whether this is an apt point on which to differentiate the two thinkers. For now let me simply note that one of the strengths of Jim's book is the extent to which it aims to demonstrate that Hegel squarely faces up to

Kant's challenge to any possible metaphysics (so understood) in the first *Critique's* Dialectic, especially its Antinomy.¹ More specifically, Jim argues that Hegel accepts Kant's view that, if it itself is to be fully rational, metaphysics will 'demand the *unconditioned or complete* explainers' (148; my ital.). Jim sees Hegel's own metaphysics (as exemplified in his *Logics*) as responding to precisely this demand. What Hegel rejects is Kant's alleged demonstration that 'the objects of our knowledge ('appearances') *always fall short of* the unconditioned objects of interest to reason' (144; my ital.). Jim views 'Hegel's basic goal' as therefore 'to re-execute Kant's Dialectic account of reason and its objects in a way that overcomes the Kantian limitation' (144; citing EL §45, should be EL §45Z). Hegel will do this by giving 'an argument that complete explainers, properly understood, *can* be known and comprehended by us' after all (151; my ital.).

Presenting the argument for this 'optimistic' conclusion is Jim's goal in the last Part of the book, and comprises two main stages. First, Jim reconstructs what he sees as Hegel's initial 'deflationary' response to Kant's challenge in the Dialectic, with Hegel arguing that Kant has misdescribed the 'complete explainers' that reason is interested in. This is because, according to Jim's Hegel, Kant assumes that what is absolute or unconditioned, in the sense of being a complete explainer, is something that must 'correspond to the subject of the subject-predicate judgment', and serve as the 'bare substrate' of the properties being predicated in the judgment (155), yet itself be 'independent of all of the properties' (157). Hegel's response to this assumption is to show that, even if there were such absolute substrates, they would not be of ultimate interest to reason because they could play only an 'indifferent' role in the explanation of their

¹ In Chapter 3 Jim also discusses Hegel's response to Kant's critique of teleological judgment as unable to demonstrate theoretically its objective validity.

properties. This is because, if they are truly ‘independent’ of their properties, then the properties are ultimately in some sense ‘external’ to the substrates; the substrates in themselves are actually ‘indifferent to any determinacy’ and so can provide no reason (explanation) on their own for why any one property (determination) pertains to it rather than another (155; 158; 161).

Because this idea of a substrate for properties is closely associated in traditional early modern metaphysics (and in Kant as well) with the nature of *substance* (and accidents), what Jim calls Hegel’s ‘judgment argument’ about the indifference of absolute subject-concept correlates, from the point of view of reason, is thereby an argument for a reconception of substance itself, if substance is to be of genuine metaphysical (i.e., rational-explanatory) interest. More generally, however, the judgment argument exemplifies the standard which must be met for anything to be of genuine metaphysical interest: it is not sufficient for A in some sense to ‘depend on’ B; ultimately, on Jim’s account, it will even turn out not to be *necessary* that B be something that A depends on. What must be true is that B must ‘explain’ why A is the way it is (cf. 194). And if it is to be an absolute or complete (in Kant’s sense of being rationally ‘unconditioned’), B must be something that is able to ‘carry explanatory import of [its] own’ (199) – presumably in a way that B itself does not require *anything further* to explain why B is the way it is. I will call this status being ‘*self-explanatory*’.

After this deflationary stage of Kant-critique, Jim then turns to what he sees as the positive ‘inflationary’ moment of Hegel’s metaphysics, which consists in arguing that there is something *else* which fills this role of absolute complete (unconditioned) explainer – namely, what Hegel calls ‘*spirit* [Geist]’, which Jim identifies with ‘*our* own species, kind, or concept’ (220). To prepare the way to understand what Hegel means by ‘spirit’, and

how it differs from the traditional substance, Jim retraces part of the progression from the *Logics*' treatment of substance, to its introduction of 'the logical idea of spirit' that Hegel gives at the end of his *Logics*. Hegel's discussion of substance takes place near the end of what he calls 'the doctrine of essence', which is followed by 'the doctrine of the concept'. Within the doctrine of the concept, Hegel discusses, first, 'the subjective concept', and then 'the object' of the concept, before finally turning to the unity of concept and object in what Hegel calls 'the idea', which is where spirit itself is finally, if briefly, introduced (cf. EL §213 Anm, §222, etc.).

Jim's own presentation draws primarily on the sub-progression within the second part of the general doctrine of the concept, i.e., within Hegel's discussion of 'the object' of the concept, in which Hegel treats mechanical objects, chemical objects, and finally teleological objects. Jim then aims to show how the rational development of thought-determinations of 'the object' ultimately give rise to contradictions if 'the object' is thought of as what is absolutely self-explanatory. These contradictions point determinately for the need of a transition from the focus on 'the object' of the concept to the consideration of what Hegel calls 'the subject-object', or 'the unity of concept and objectivity', i.e., 'the *idea*' as 'absolute truth' (EL §162). Jim then elucidates what Hegel means by 'the idea', first in terms of its determination as 'life', and then in its final determination as 'spirit'. For the latter, Jim supplements the brief and merely logical treatment of spirit in the *Logics* under the heading of 'the idea' with the more elaborate discussion of spirit from the *Encyclopedia Philosophy of Spirit*.

Concerning the transition from the mechanical to the chemical, Jim's discussion aims to illustrate the compatibility of a loss of the '*substantiality*' of subject-matter (in the traditional sense of 'substance'), vis-à-vis the domain of the mechanical, with a gain in

explanatory sufficiency. The domain of the chemical (e.g., acids, bases) is insubstantial because, in it, ‘the *what it is* of such objects cannot be comprehended without thinking of other things’; an object ‘is what it is only in its relation with other things’ (183). Even so, chemical explanation takes a step beyond mere mechanical explanation insofar as it explains the ‘interaction’ between things in such a way that is *not external* to each of the things, since each thing at issue is essentially ‘in’ the other (cf. 182).

Yet Hegel recognizes that the ‘insubstantial’ domain of the chemical is not itself ultimately *self-explanatory*, since ‘objects here (or the ‘chemical object’) can be reasons only in a sense that merely *depends* on others, and so on’, and even ‘the whole can similarly be a reason only in a sense that is *dependent* on its differentiation’ (192; my ital.).² Neither the parts nor the whole provide an ‘*independent* form of reason’, which implies that, from the point of view of metaphysics, there is something ‘incomplete’ about the chemical (192; my ital.).

In order to find something that would provide such an ‘independent form of reason’, Jim now finally presses forward to Hegel’s culminating section on ‘the idea’, which Jim takes to present Hegel’s own ‘defense of the reality and knowability of...*complete reasons*’, i.e., complete metaphysical-explanatory reasons (27). The goal here is to show how what Hegel calls ‘the idea’ is an explanatory form which is not only, in an important respect, *more* complete than the merely teleological form, but which is *absolutely* complete, at least in the sense of being *self-explanatory* – even if, on Jim’s reading, ‘the idea’ is not *universally* explanatory, in the sense of providing the explanation or reason *for everything*. Rather, for Jim, Hegel rejects *all* forms of metaphysical monism, whether built upon the

² More specifically: ‘the whole itself merely presupposes the differentiated kinds, or depends on their differentiation as a kind of positedness; it depends on but does not explain there being distinct elements entering into relations’ (194).

traditional (Spinozist) understanding of substance, or even on the Kant-Hegel conception of metaphysics as focused instead on explanation. For Jim, ‘Hegel denies the metaphysics on which there is a complete explanation for everything’ (262) – including one on which the idea, and absolute spirit in particular, is the complete explanation for everything.

To spell out what ‘the idea’ itself is, and in what sense it is still a ‘complete explainer’, Jim turns to Hegel’s discussion of *life* at the outset of the section on ‘the idea’. Unlike the domain of the chemical, the domain of the living is structured around an ‘immanent end’ or ‘purpose’ – namely, the ‘self-preservation’ of each of the various species or kinds of living beings (199-200; my ital.). As Jim puts it, ‘there is a kind of stopping point’ in the explanation of why a living being, e.g., a tiger, is the way it is, a point we come to by ‘referring to the tiger *itself* (its *kind*)’, and more specifically, ‘the tiger’s own immanent end or telos of self-preservation’ (201; my ital.).

The provision of an end or telos to the individual by its kind (‘concept’, species, genus) is an instance of the relational structure that Hegel calls ‘the idea’. In Jim’s words, the idea is ‘a reciprocal process of concept and individual instances sufficient to establish the inner purposiveness of an end’ in each individual (200). The idea as this relational structure or process therefore consists in ‘the unity of the concept and objectivity’ (WL 6:464). There is no way to explain why an individual living being is the way that it is but for referring to its kind, and more generally to its status as living and self-preserving in its kind. This is so, even though living things are ‘dependent on their being some underlying lawful stuff as realizer’ (207). This is because the dependence in question is ‘dependence on something merely *indifferent* ...to ends’ of species; it is a dependence on ‘stuff’ that ‘does not determine *anything* about an end or telos’ (207; my ital.; cf. 213). In fact, as Jim sees it, Hegel is committed to the striking claim that though the concept is *dependent on*

‘stuff’ to be realized, *nothing* about this stuff *explains* why the resulting individual realization of the concept (individual living being) is the way that it is (213). The *only* thing which ‘determines’ – in the sense of ‘explains’ – the end or telos of a living being is its concept (kind, species).

For this reason, Hegel proposes that it is the *concept* (kind, species) of the living thing (understood in the context of the idea structure) – rather than the ‘stuff’ in which an individual living being is ‘realized’ – which is *more truly* ‘the ‘permanent and substantial’ (WL 5:26-27; cf. 212). ‘Substantiality’ here is now understood in the genuinely rational-metaphysical-explanatory sense of ‘substance’, rather than the traditional sense of mere substrate. For rather than being the underlying material *sub*-strate (stuff) for properties, Hegel proposes that we rethink genuine substantiality as more of an ideal organizational *super*-strate – in other words, something ‘ideal’ (232).

Still, even the concepts of *living* individuals, and the ideas (concept-object structures) in which they are realized, are not fully *self*-explanatory, since they do not carry fully sufficient explanatory import on their own. There are ‘limits to [the] explanatory completeness’ of the idea-structure of life, in terms of the general notion of ‘the immanent end of self-preservation’, since, for example, this general structure cannot on its own explain the fact that ‘there are many *different* ways in which *different* species could seek this end’, and ‘does nothing to explain why *multiple* forms or species should all be actually realized in the world’ (219-20; my ital.).

The goal, then, is to find something that also has the structure of ‘the idea’ but which is also equipped with something that *could* explain this sort of differentiation – and everything else about itself. For this, Jim argues, Hegel holds we need not just ‘the idea’, but ‘the *absolute* idea’. Accordingly, Jim now finally moves on to consider what

additionally is involved in the ‘absolute’ version of the idea exemplified by what Hegel calls ‘*spirit* [Geist]’, which (to repeat) Jim identifies with ‘our own species, kind, or concept’ (220).

As Jim sees it, we can get to spirit from mere life if we ‘take the idea as life, add a form of *thinking* or reflection, and thereby substitute a kind of *freedom* for life’s immanent end of self-preservation’ (i.e., setting freedom as the end determined by its ‘concept’), such that ‘thinking or reflection *establishes* freedom as [the] immanent purpose’ of the kind of being at issue (220; my ital.). By adding a power of thinking (reflection) aimed at freedom, the resulting idea-structure can now go beyond mere life and actually ‘*explain* diversity *out of itself*’ (221; my ital.). Though Jim does not go in to details here, presumably this is possible because whatever diversity pertains to the instances of spirit can be explained specifically as the result of the exercise of thinking and reflection in the service of bringing about freedom. But since freedom just is the ‘concept’ of spirit (that which sets the purpose for the individual instances of our species or kind), this allows for the idea-structure of spirit to more fully explain *itself*, its realization. Hence, we ‘get the notion of a kind or concept that would explain from itself the emergence of diversity and explain from itself a direction of development or movement’, which shows spirit’s freely differentiating activity to be ‘a *self*-determining process, with explanatory import all its own’ (228; my ital.; cf. 253). This last point is apparently what entitles spirit to be counted as ‘a *complete* form of reason’ (221; my ital.) – even if, to repeat, on Jim’s account, the absolute idea itself cannot explain whatever ‘stuff’ it is ‘realized’ in.

Yet even here, in the realm of spirit, Jim notes that there is the possibility of a gap in explanation, since it is conceivable that, though spirit is ‘in itself’ oriented toward freedom by its concept, it would be so in such a way that mirrored the case of life, in

which ‘what is important’ to the individual – there: self-preservation; now: freedom – ‘goes on behind the back, as it were, of the individual’, as Jim nicely puts it (225). In fact, there are two ways in which spirit might not be fully self-sufficient in the metaphysical sense. On the one hand, this could take the form of the individual realization of spirit not being aware or conscious of the fact that freedom for spirit in general is its end; ‘for itself’, it would not be oriented toward freedom, since it would fail to have ‘consciousness of its own concept’ (225). But it could also take the form of the individual coming to recognize (be conscious of) the fact that it *is* or has been oriented toward freedom (and so *is* spirit ‘for itself’) but yet still not be spirit in a way that the *individual* has *freely* determined to be this ‘for itself’. To be spirit that is *fully* absolute, it would need this latter more absolute, free, self-determination – conscious, and consciously free, determination of itself, for the sake of its freedom – now understood as ‘self-explanation’. In Jim’s words, we are looking for ‘the notion of something that not only has its concept *in* itself but also *for* itself’, and so ‘something that is what it is *because of* how it understands or comprehends itself’ (230; my ital.). Again, this is supposed to be found in spirit as our human own species.

If Hegel is right that there is such a ‘fully self-determining system’ – even if it is perhaps ‘realized only in our own case, of spirit’ – then Jim concludes that this would finally satisfy the Kantian demand for complete reasons, and be finally and fully explanatory; that is, metaphysics would have finally come forward as a science. What is more, our consciousness of *it* (spirit) will also reveal more directly and positively to us what is lacking, metaphysically speaking, in other domains of attempted explanation – even if there is an indirect sense in which ‘we comprehend completeness of reason’ whenever we ‘see the contradictions arising from its lack’ (255). It will also imply that ‘when we explain nature, we are in this sense finding an approximation *of ourselves* within

it', since we (as spirit) are the only truly satisfying explanations (complete reasons) that there are (236; my ital.).

And simply by reaching the point in the *Logics* when we can think of the absolute idea, we ourselves can 'gain knowledge allowing complete explanation of itself' (257). This is how Jim means to gloss Hegel's claim at the end of the *Wissenschaft der Logik* (WL) that, with the idea, what Hegel calls 'spirit' has achieved 'the absolute knowledge [Wissen] of itself' (WL 6:469). In fact, our own thinking through the *Logics* 'is what realizes the absolute idea': 'if we follow this process of thinking, then spirit (in this logical sense) is our kind, and our following along is spirit coming to itself as the resolution of the contradictions along the way' (244).

§2. Some remarks and questions

Hopefully even this brief summary will give you a sense of the breadth and ambition of Jim's undertaking in this book. To this, let me just add that, throughout, Jim's presentation of Hegel also engages fruitfully in a dialogue with two distinct philosophical traditions. First, Jim aims to show how the critical moves he sees Hegel making in the *Logics*, concerning the insufficiency of certain metaphysical positions, are echoed or mirrored in more recent literature on related topics. For example, we find Jim putting Hegel's arguments about mechanism and explanation into instructive conversation with Jaegwon Kim, David Chalmers, David Armstrong (among others); Hegel's perspectives on monism and grounding are usefully put into critical dialogue with recent work by Jonathan Schaffer; Hegel's treatment of teleology are helpfully illuminated by reference to Robert Cummins, Karen Neander, and Ruth Millikan.

Second, throughout the book, Jim himself is in a running conversation with the work of many recent English- and German-language commentators on Hegel, in order to

bring more sharply to the fore how Jim's own approach complements, builds off of, or simply outperforms some of the leading interpretive options currently on offer. The two interpretive traditions that Jim perhaps most directly engages with are, on the one hand, the approach to Hegel that takes its cue from aspects of Kant's agenda in the *Transcendental Analytic*, concerning the conditions ('demands') for self-consciousness, most fully and thoughtfully exemplified by Robert Pippin, and on the other, the approach that takes its cue from Spinoza's metaphysical monism, such as Rolf-Peter Horstmann's and Frederick Beiser's.

Jim's approach aims to distinguish itself from the 'demands of self-consciousness' approach by (following Karl Ameriks and Terry Pinkard in) insisting that we should take our cue instead from Kant's account of metaphysics and reason in the *Dialectic*. Jim's approach aims to distinguish itself from the 'pre-Kantian rationalist metaphysics' approach to Hegel by arguing that Hegel's own view of reason must be sharply distinguished from traditional 'foundationalist' views which model rational explanation (and hence, 'the absolute') too exclusively on the substrate-property dependence relation (cf. 6; 22, etc.).

There is much to recommend Jim's attempt to refocus our attention on the possibility that Hegel is interested in affirming something that is at once more metaphysical than we might have anticipated, but nevertheless also directly responsive to Kant's critical challenge to the very possibility of metaphysics. As critic myself, however, I want to raise a series of questions both about Jim's presentation of Hegel's own critical relation to Kant, and also about Jim's account of Hegel's positive project in the *Logics*.

I will pose several questions, first, about the precise way to understand Hegel's relation to Kant, both the Kant of the *Analytic* and that of the *Dialectic* (§2.1), focusing

especially on whether Kant's own arguments in the Dialectic against the possibility of metaphysical cognition of the absolute actually turn on the specific assumption Jim identifies as problematic – namely, on a uniform conception of the absolutely unconditioned as absolute substrate. I will then turn (§2.2) to concerns about Jim's account of Hegel's own conception of the subject-matter and methodology of the *Logics*, in order to put pressure on whether the ultimate position Jim is led to, concerning the nature of absolute spirit, is actually so different after all from the more self-consciousness-focused interpretations.

2.1. On Jim's reading of Kant and Hegel's criticism of Kant

Jim argues that Hegel is critical of Kant's estimation of the possibility of metaphysics, not because of Kant's general characterization of metaphysics as reason's search for the absolutely unconditioned, but because of Kant's specific understanding of what the absolutely unconditioned would look like, from an ontological point of view. This latter 'notion' is one that 'Hegel seeks to deflate' – namely, the notion that the absolute will consist in '*substance as bare substrate*' (my ital.), as 'something absolutely or unconditionally corresponding to the subject of the subject-predicate judgment' (155). As Jim sees it, Kant's basic presupposition is that 'any given explanatory regress *must have an endpoint in a substratum* for that regress, which need not be absolutely bare but would have to be at least bare relative to that regress' (156; my ital.).

Now, from the passages Jim goes on to furnish, it is clear that Hegel is critical of the view that the absolute must be conceived of as a bare substrate. What is less clear is that *Kant himself* holds this view. The only passage that Jim provides as evidence that Kant thinks this in general about the absolute comes from the *Prolegomena*'s discussion of reason's concept (idea) of the soul. In this passage Kant speaks of reason's 'demand that

for each predicate of a thing we should see its appropriate subject', and if this subject turns out to be a predicate as well, then 'we should seek its subject again, and so forth to infinity', until we reach something which is a 'final subject' and not a predicate of some further subject (§46, 4:333). What we must determine, then, is whether this passage can bear the weight that Jim assigns to it.

2.1.1. What is it about substance that is at issue in the Paralogism?

I don't think that it does. Kant here is most concerned with the difficulties which arise when 'human understanding' aims 'to *cognize* this object *determinately*, like a given object', because this object (the 'absolute subject', 'the substantial') is only 'a mere idea' (4:333-4; my ital.). Kant holds that we cannot ever 'cognize' any such 'absolute' subject 'determinately', because this object cannot be 'given' in any intuition; indeed, it would not be given to the mind even if 'the whole of nature' was given ('laid bare'). Rather, Kant's view is that everything that *is* possibly 'given' from nature – in the outer case, 'all real properties by which we cognize bodies' – 'are mere accidents for which we lack a subject'; for example, the property of 'impenetrability', which 'must always be conceived only as the effect of a force' (4:334). The 'absolute subject', or 'the substantial', for all of these predicates is something we can *think*, through the idea of reason, but not an object we can *cognize* or think determinately, as it is never itself the object given in any particular intuition.

Kant's claim here is thus a very specific thesis about whether anything which can be given in intuition can be cognized as an absolute subject. Now, Jim, by contrast, takes Kant's point to be instead that an absolute subject must be 'something *independent of everything* corresponding to predicates of judgment', without any qualification on the kinds of predicates that are at issue (162; my ital.). But Kant nowhere makes this further

general claim about the absolute subject and its independence from *all* predicates, only the more limited one that the absolute subject is not identical with any of the *specific* predicates which can be given in intuition.

What is more, Kant immediately goes on to note that, while we are not ever given such an absolute subject in the case of *outer* experience, ‘it does appear as if we *have* this substantial thing in the [*inner*] consciousness of our self (of the thinking subject), and indeed in an immediate *intuition*, since all predicates of *inner* sense are related to the I, as subject, and this cannot be thought of as predicate of any other subject’ (4:334; my ital.). Two things are of special note for our purposes about this shift. First, it shows that Kant explicitly allows for a distinction between ‘what is substantial’ in the outer case and what is substantial in the inner case precisely on the basis of certain *predicates* (being given in inner sense, etc), which implies that he does not mean to be making more general claims about the subject in question being radically independent from all predicates whatsoever. Second, Kant is concerned foremost with drawing our attention to the fact that, unlike in the case of the absolute subject of the predicates given in outer sense, the absolute subject of those predicates given in inner sense *seems* to be *itself given* along with these predicates – in our self-consciousness, in an immediate intuition. This implies even more so that Kant’s concern here is not with the abstract thought of a bare substrate shorn of all predicates, or even of all predicates which are given, but simply with the possibility that the determinate cognition of the subject of predicates itself might be given in inner intuition (and hence fall under the predicate: being given in inner intuition, among many others).

This concern with determinate cognition of the absolute subject, in relation to certain very specific predicates, is reiterated in the following section (§47). Here Kant

claims that our concept of the subject of the predicates of inner sense will remain ‘empty’ if we cannot ‘prove’ that the object of this concept also bears the specific predicate of persistence (4:334). Though we can and must think of the object in question as ‘the ultimate subject of thinking, which cannot itself be represented as the predicate of another thing’, and hence as a ‘substance’, we have learned from the Analytic (and Part II of the *Prolegomena*) that the only way we can show that we can determinately cognize (rather than merely think abstractly of) something as a substance is if we can demonstrate the validity of the specific determination: ‘persistence *in time*’, with respect to it (B183).³ Kant’s argument here is that, in the present case, this demonstration for this specific predicate is simply not possible. There is no hint that Kant’s analysis here rests on a more general argument based upon the assumption that, because our conceiving of the thinking subject as substance implies that it cannot itself *be* a predicate, the subject must itself be *completely independent* (‘bare’) of all predicates.

The main difficulty of the Paralogism is thus the attempt to cognize determinately not just the soul as substance ‘in time’ (within the bounds of inner experience), but rather to cognize the soul as a substance that persists even *beyond* these bounds, ‘after death’, and hence *beyond* ‘life’ as ‘the subjective condition of all our experience’ (§48, 4:335) – and hence a condition on inner experience in particular. Here we have extended our conception of the subject from (i) that which has *this or that* intuition or experience as its predicate, or even *all* intuitions, experiences, all representations as its predicates (every

³ In fact, so long as the concept of persistence is understood within the bounds of the First Analogy (as pertaining to existence ‘in time’), Kant here claims explicitly that he actually accepts that ‘the persistence of the soul during life can be inferred’ and ‘the persistence of the soul can be proven only during the life of a human being’ (§48, 4:335). Strikingly, this suggests that we can in fact cognize the object of inner sense as to certain of its predicates. (As I see it, this is just what inner experience consists in.)

predicate that fills the time of inner intuition), to (ii) that which has all of these as predicates but *also* exists (persists) beyond, or independently of, its relation to what is given in inner sense.

Note, then, that the problem is not *ever* that the subject thought of in (ii) is too bare to have *any* predicates; it is specifically said to have what is given in inner sense as its predicates, to have these predicates truly predicated of it. Indeed, it is compatible with Kant's view that the subject could even have these predicates 'essentially', insofar as it would not be the specific thinking thing that it is if it did not have just these predicates rather than others. In this sense, the substance could be *dependent* (for its identity) on the specific set of predicates which are given in inner sense. It's just that, as thought of in the idea, the substance in question would also have a *further* set of predicates true of it. And it is judgments expressing this further set of predications that Kant argues we cannot determinately cognize (demonstrate) as true or as false. If this is right, then the single passage in question that Jim points to, in order to ascribe to Kant the specific assumption about reason demanding that the absolute be conceived of as a bare substratum, does not justify this ascription.

2.1.2. The essentiality of Kant's reference to space and time in the Dialectic

What we have also seen, however, is the extent to which Kant's analysis has an explicit concern for the distinction between the sensible vs. super-sensible predicates, with respect to possible cognition. Jim's own interpretive route suffers from trying to do an end-around past Kant's more specific concerns with the nature of space and time in the Dialectic, in order to make what Ameriks would call a 'short argument' for the insufficiency of the intellectual conception of the objects of reason, independently of their possible relation to sensibility. That is, Jim wants to have Hegel be able to make an

argument against Kant, concerning the nature of the objects of reason, that ‘has *nothing* to do with an application to a specific domain’ – including the domain of the supersensible conditions on experience in particular; instead, ‘the problem is rather entirely *internal* to the conception of the unconditioned that is so applied’ (168; my ital.). As Jim sets up the critique of Kant, the entire problem is that ‘we [Kant included] tend to think of reasons and their completeness through the lens of the form of subject-predicate judgments’ (168), and this has nothing to do with specific issues concerning the nature of space and time or the specific applicability of the ideas of reason in relation to the spatial or temporal domain.

As Jim acknowledges in footnotes, this circumventing of transcendental idealism will surely seem unsatisfying to many Kant-scholars as a successful reading of the Dialectic. The whole set-up of the Dialectic is given in terms of the attempt of reason to go beyond *intuition* and *experience* in particular, to *their* ‘absolute’ conditions. For example, at the outset of the Dialectic, the ‘transcendental ideas’ themselves, as ‘pure concepts of reason’, are first introduced precisely as those concepts which have their ‘origin [Ursprung]’ when ‘one applies [anwendet] the form of inferences of reason [syllogisms] to the synthetic unity of *intuitions*’, as that according to which ‘the use of the understanding will be determined in the whole of the entire [gesamte] *experience*’ (B378; my ital.). For Kant, the ‘concepts of pure reason’ arise precisely because they ‘treat all cognition of *experience* as determined through an absolute totality of conditions’ (B384; my ital.). This is confirmed by Kant’s treatment of each of the ideas precisely in terms of the manner in which they allow us to *think* of an object which serves as a condition on *experience* considered as a whole, considered as a ‘collective’ rather than merely ‘distributive’ unity

(cf. B610), yet with no possibility of being able to determinately *cognize* the object in question.⁴

2.1.3. Kant's plurality of concepts of the unconditioned

In any case, the sheer plurality of ideas (concepts of reason) points to a further problem which arises for Jim's charge against Kant. As Jim has it, Kant understands the objects of reason in a uniformly problematic way that rests on a certain conception of the correlates of the subject-predicate judgment-form. Yet the case of the soul is the *sole* case in which Kant characterizes a specific 'unconditioned' object of interest to reason in terms of something in the neighborhood of the subject-predicate form of judgment. And even the idea (pure rational concept) of the thinking substance does not aim to 'determine' its object by means of the *categorical* (subject-predicate) *judgment-form* per se, but rather is lead to conceive of an absolute subject in relation to its representations considered as predicates by way of reasoning about the *categorical syllogistic* form (cf. B379).

The distance is even more pronounced with the other ideas of reason, as these do not arise through reasoning about the categorical (subject-predicate) form *at all*, and do not determine their objects as absolute in virtue of being a subject in which a totality of predicates inhere. For the idea of the world-whole is the idea of 'the unity of the *series* of conditions of appearance' (B391), insofar as this object is determined by reasoning about the form of *hypothetical* syllogism. Likewise, the idea of God is 'the absolute unity of the conditions of all objects of thought in general', as 'the thing that contains the supreme condition of the possibility of everything that can be thought' (B391), insofar as this object is determined through reasoning about the form of *disjunctive* syllogism.

⁴ Cf. 'we can have no acquaintance [Kenntnis] with the object that corresponds to the idea', and so have only 'a problematical concept' of the objects of the ideas (B397).

Kant's conception of 'the unconditioned' is thus much more pluralist than Jim lets on to: there are *several* concepts of 'what is unconditioned', one for each of the 'species of syllogism', since 'in each of them prosyllogisms proceed to the unconditioned' to determine it in distinct ways; in Kant's words: '*one*, to a *subject* that is no longer a predicate, *another* to a *presupposition* that presupposes nothing further, and the *third* to an *aggregate* of members of a division such that nothing further is required for it to complete the division of a concept' (B379-80; my ital.).⁵ It is only the concept of the unconditioned of 'the categorical synthesis' in particular which leads to the concept of an unconditioned as *subject*; the unconditioned in the 'hypothetical' synthesis is thought of as relative to the synthesis of '*members of a series*', and that of the 'disjunctive' synthesis is thought of as relative to the synthesis of '*parts in a system*' (B379). *Neither* of these latter two relations of conditioned to what is unconditioned can be reduced, thinks Kant, to the manner in which a subject as substance functions as something 'unconditioned' in relation to its inferences.

The above characterization of the object of the idea of God – as the '*supreme* condition of the possibility of *everything* that can be thought' – itself points up a *further* difficulty with Jim's account of Kant. Though Kant holds that they relate to a totality of conditioned things of a certain sort (representations, the series of changes in appearances), nowhere does Kant claim that the soul and the world-whole are *absolutely* unconditioned, i.e., unconditioned in every respect. Nor does Kant claim that either one serves as what

⁵ For more on the variety of the senses of unconditioned in the Dialectic, see Watkins (in progress).

is unconditioned with respect to *every* condition. If anything were to receive this title, it would have to be reserved only for the object of the transcendental ideal – namely, God.⁶

This, however, further highlights the way in which Kant's thinking about the unconditioned is not all funneled through reasoning about subject-predicate judgment-forms, about what would be absolute relative to such a form. The most absolutely unconditioned thing, God's absoluteness, is represented by reason *not* in virtue of being the absolute *subject* of all predicates, but by being a *sum-total* of all (positive) reality. God's absoluteness is not thought of as being absolute with respect to the category of substance, in the sense of everything else being its inherence or accident. Rather, God's absoluteness is thought of as absolute through the unity of *disjunctive* syllogistic form, under the pure rational concept of 'the whole of possibility' (B600). Kant's understanding of something's being the reason for something else, or being the (metaphysical) explanation for something else, *not at all* limited to an inference from the regress of predicates to an absolute subject that bears them as 'bare' substrate. It does not even take the subject-predicate sort of regress to be the most paradigmatic, 'supreme', case of such explanation-relations.

In his exposition of Kant, Jim says very little about divine unconditionedness. (He also says very little about Hegel's account of the divine; more on this below.) Yet for Jim's Hegel to have Kant himself as his target, what Jim would have to show is that, underneath this apparent plurality of senses of 'what is unconditioned', and especially the sense of the divine unconditionedness, Kant nevertheless is committed to the absoluteness and unconditionedness of the objects in question as, in each case, consisting solely in their

⁶ It is an interesting question whether Kant would accept that even God is absolute in Jim's Hegel's sense, insofar as Kant does not seem to think that God (or anything else) is an absolute ground *for itself*. (cf. Watkins in progress.)

absolute independence ('indifference') from all predicates (properties) of the relevant sort. What the foregoing is meant to put pressure on is whether such a demonstration can be forthcoming, since Kant accepts that there are several distinct forms of rational explanation, exemplified by distinct forms of syllogisms, *besides* that of pointing to the substance for a given predicate (inherence) to provide one of the reasons why the inherence exists.⁷

2.1.4. Hegel and Kant on the logical form of the perspective of reason on its objects

Even so, let us assume for the moment that Jim could make the stronger case that, despite the surface pluralism of Kant's account of reason and its conceptions of the unconditioned, Kant is ultimately guilty of seeing reason as *only* actually at work when we can identify a bare substratum/property dependence relation. In any case, Jim does provide evidence that Hegel himself is critical of this sort of view, whoever held it. In fact, at times Jim appears to use what he calls the 'judgment argument' to show that there are more general and insurmountable problems with conceiving of the relation of rational explanation as *ever* being captured in the form of subject-predicate judgments (156f).

This conception of reason-relations is a manifestation of what Hegel calls 'the perspective of the mere *understanding* on the objects of reason' (EL §27; 156). This perspective is supposed to be overcome by the attainment of 'the perspective of *reason* alone' on the objects of reason (156). The shift of perspective will require that we rethink

⁷ Jim does point to one passage (cf. 167) from the Second Antinomy, concerning the compositionality of the substance of the world, where Kant does analyze the thesis position as committed to the thought that there are 'first *subjects* of all composition', which will be 'simple beings' (B464; my ital.). What is not at all clear, however, is that Kant is thinking of the whole-part relation with respect to substances as an *instance* of the subject-predicate relation, rather than as a *distinct* relation of conditioning.

the relation between what is conditioned and what is unconditioned in a form *other than* that of subject-predicate judgment.

Now, I have already suggested that Kant himself recognizes and foregrounds just this fact. The objects of reason are the objects which are articulated, from the point of view of *reason*, *not* by any simple subject-predicate structure – not even in the case of the soul as a kind of absolute substance which would serve as a condition for all of the representations which are constitutive of experience. Instead, they are thought of by way of the concept of an *absolute totality*, whose intellectual content is itself articulated by way not just of the category (predicate) of totality, nor by reflection on a judgment-form, or even a single syllogism, but instead by reflection on the unity of a *series* of (pro-)syllogisms into a totality, insofar as the completeness of this *series* would thereby express something absolute. Already for Kant, then, the perspective of reason is therefore constituted by the determination of objects through a content determined by a more complicated kind of intellectual shape or logical form than that of simple subject-predicate judgment.

As is evident from the *Logics*, Hegel, too, means to articulate a positive alternative to such an impoverished perspective of understanding, also under the name of the perspective of reason, in virtue of which an object of reason is not ever simply determined as the bare correlate of the subject-term in a simple single subject-predicate judgment-form. Yet while Jim's book is good at focusing our attention on Hegel's critique here, Jim's text itself left it unclear to me as to what Hegel's own alternative would look like, shape-wise, from Hegel's own point of view. In part this is because Jim skips over the section of 'the doctrine of the concept' in which Hegel himself first introduces how we are to understand 'the object' of the concept, and ultimately the object involved in 'the idea'.

This occurs in a section that comes before the specific forms of ‘the object’ that Jim does consider (mechanism, chemism, teleology).

What is striking, for our purposes, is that Hegel’s own account of ‘the object’ might seem to more directly indicate Hegel’s continuing *debt* to Kant’s understanding of objects of concepts from the perspective of reason, rather than announce an abrupt change of perspective. For here Hegel, too, writes that ‘the object’ is the ‘realization of the concept’ in which ‘the universal’ is ‘one *totality* going back into itself’ (EL §193; my ital.), insofar as the object is to be understood as a ‘transition...*from the syllogism*’ (EL §193 Anm; my ital.).

In any case, what is true is that what Hegel understands by ‘the *idea*’ itself, insofar as it is the ‘subject-object’, the ‘unity of concept and objectivity’, rather than ‘the object’ per se, will be something thought of as having an even more complicated structure than ‘the object’ of ‘the concept’. Indeed, the perspective which has in view ‘the idea’ itself is one that supercedes even this determination of ‘the object’ from the point of view of Kantian reason, understood as the correlate of a totality of syllogisms. The idea itself, for Hegel, is neither the *concept* of this sort of object of reason, nor something which has a complicatedly (mediatedly) structured *object* over and against it, but is rather ‘the absolute *unity* of the concept *and* objectivity’ (EL §213; my ital.). But what logical shape will this subject-matter (the idea itself) have, if not something determined as the correlate of either a subject-concept, or even of a whole syllogistic series?⁸

⁸ This is pressing for Jim insofar as he understands each step of the *Logics* (save the final one) to consist in failed attempts at ‘definitions of the absolute’. One would expect there to be a simple general argument against all such definitions if they were to take the form of a subject-predicate judgment. Nevertheless, all of the ‘definitions’ of the absolute that Hegel considers in the *Logics*, even after what Jim calls the ‘judgment argument’ in the introductory sections, have the form: the absolute is X. What we might expect, if Jim’s

2.2. On Jim's account of Hegel's conception of the subject-matter and methodology of the *Logics*

With this question let me turn now, in conclusion, to Jim's own positive account of 'the idea' as Hegel's proposal for the 'complete explainer' which can meet the rational demand Kant sees as constitutive of metaphysics – before saying a few words about Jim's account of Hegel's perspective in the *Logics* more generally.

2.2.1. The place of the individual in the emergence of spirit

As we have noted above, Jim follows Marcuse and others in setting out to unpack Hegel's doctrine of the idea from the point of view of *life* (199f). This follows Hegel's own presentation in the *Logics*, since, though Hegel's account of the *absolute* form of the idea is something that goes *beyond* mere life, Hegel himself claims that 'the idea is *first* of all life' (WL 6:468; cf. 199, 203). To highlight what is involved from the shift from the mere *concept* (judgment, syllogism) and the (just articulated) *object* of this concept, on the one hand, to the *idea* as the unity of concept and object, on the other, Hegel points first of all to the way in which life manifests the fact that 'the idea is essentially *process*' (EL §215). Yet life, and the idea, is not *merely* process; 'what is living' is in fact 'the process of its *concluding together* [Zusammenschließen] with itself' (EL §217). This points to the increased rational-explanatory self-sufficiency of what is living, over and against what is merely an object (whether mechanical, chemical, or even teleological). Not only can the sheer *existence* of a living thing only be explained as the individualization or realization (object) of a genus or species (concept), but also the *development* or movement of its existence is something that continues to be purposively oriented by its concept throughout, as Jim

anti-categorical-judgment-form approach is correct, is that the final expression of the absolute, at the end of the *Logics*, would take some entirely distinct form altogether.

explains at length in Chapter 8. (Strikingly, Hegel describes life as ‘processes’ that themselves are ‘*active* [tätige] syllogisms’ (EL §217).)

What, then, does Hegel think is lacking about the idea as life or living being, as far as the metaphysical demand of reason for ever more complete explanation? As we saw above, Jim’s account of what is still unexplained about life points exclusively to the inability of the idea as life to explain the *differences or variety* that obtain within life, both between species but also within species as to their individual instances (cf. 219-20). To find something which would explain even this about itself, Jim claims that Hegel argues we must look to something that possesses *freedom*, so as to ‘explain diversity out of itself’ (221). This something is ‘our own species, kind, or concept – which Hegel calls *spirit*’ (220).

At this point, two questions arise. First, exactly how does the presence of freedom in a being ‘explain’ the ‘diversity’ that pertains to this being’s existence ‘out of itself? It might seem that freedom alone cannot *fully* explain what diversity accrues to members of a species, since, as Jim himself emphasizes (cf. 222), the actual exercise of freedom depends on its being realized in a particular place and time with particular options – and so depends on freedom itself being ‘limited’ by things which its own existence does not explain.

Second, what sort of metaphysical standing accrues to the being which possesses this freedom – i.e., to spirit? The above quote makes it sound as if spirit is the name for our *species*, and so what possesses freedom in the relevant sense, and what is therefore ultimately self-explanatory, is not any one of us individual humans, but instead humankind. Yet later Jim writes that while ‘the absolute idea is no substrate’, ‘nor is it an individual’, since ‘it is a process or movement, and one *connecting* kind and particular

individual' (232; my ital.). This suggests that it is not our species per se, but something more like the *unity* of our species (concept) with its individuals (object) – as with the shape of 'the idea' in general. Still later, however, after characterizing the process of spirit as ultimately a kind of '*reflectiveness* or *thinking*' (228), Jim writes that 'if *we ourselves* can think this process [of thinking] through', then 'this is testament to the reality of the absolute idea and spirit' (241), which suggests that it is *individuals* ('us') after all which constitute the reality of spirit as absolute idea and are hence that which is 'free'.

In Hegel's own account in the *Logics* of the transition from the idea as life to the idea as spirit, Hegel can actually seem to point to a much more dramatic dissolution of the individual. For Hegel holds that the individual as the product of the process of life is something whose 'self-concluding' unity ultimately 'falls apart [zerfällt] along two sides': first, the immediate product of life is not only something *individual* whose *existence* is now clearly something *mediated* by the concept (species), and so not self-sufficiently individual; secondly, and even more dramatically, the individual is something whose existence '*perishes* [untergeht]' in the 'power [Macht]' of the 'species' or genus (EL §221). As a result of 'the *death* of the merely immediate singular living thing', 'the idea' comes to be a 'free *genus* for itself in existence' (EL §222).

Crucially, it is precisely this 'going under' of the individual ('the death of life': WL 6:486) which constitutes 'the coming forth [Hervorgehen] of *spirit*' (EL §222).⁹ The coming forth of *spirit* occurs with the freeing of the *genus* for existence, as both 'the completion [Vollendung] of the idea of life' and the '*realizing* of itself [the genus] as universal...through the *sublation* [Aufheben] of the particular singular individualities

⁹ In the WdL Hegel identifies this 'going under' that brings forth spirit, not with actual death but with 'begetting [Begattung]', which 'extinguishes [erstirbt] the immediacy of living individuality' (WL 6:486).

opposite one another' (WL 6:485). I will come back to the Spinozistic undertones of this characterization of spirit below.

What is Jim's take on this? As we have seen, Jim's account does not explicitly deny that spirit is something whose freedom will be exercised over and above any one individual. In fact, Jim highlights the fact that Hegel's account of the freedom of spirit 'requires turning...toward a focus on forms of *relations* between individuals', e.g., 'habits or customs, such as language', and 'the *institutions* discussed in the *Philosophy of Right* and the comparable parts of 'Objective Spirit'', such as the family and the state (223; my ital.).

Still, as Jim also rightly notes, even this does not move us to the *absolute* form of spirit, which Hegel associates with art, religion, and philosophy. Yet to get to absolute spirit, Jim appears to suggest, in effect, that we must return to the perspective of the *individual*:

what is important with spirit does *not* go on so much behind the back, as it were, of the *individual*. On the contrary, the development of spirit turns on thinking or reflective capacities, and the resulting development explains the growth of improved understanding of our kind or concept, and its immanent purpose or freedom. (225; my ital.)

Jim thinks this is necessary because, for spirit to be 'absolute', 'what is required is self-determination involving this *consciousness* of its own concept' (225; my ital.), where the locus of consciousness is in an individual.

In part, I suspect Jim is lead this direction by his desire to avoid any sort of Spinozistic interpretation of what is absolute for Hegel. Yet if this re-individualization is the right way to read the move to absolute spirit, then despite the initial advertising, Jim's approach actually seems to lead us directly into the territory that Pippin, Pinkard, and others have been charting for some time as where Hegel's response to Kant ultimately culminates – namely, in a complicated reconceiving of the nature and structure of

individual self-consciousness, one that incorporate the effects of forces of social and cultural mediation on its constitution, but one that is nevertheless importantly continuous with Kant's 'I' of apperception.

Moreover, for Jim to actually explain what absolute spirit is – and for absolute spirit to be explanatory *of itself* (carry its own explanatory import), and hence complete the demands of reason – there will need to be an articulation of just the thing that Pippin and Pinkard have been insisting on – namely, an articulation of the conditions of self-consciousness of the sort that is constitutive of spirit, and a demonstration that this very phenomenon is self-explanatory. But then despite the apparent divergence in his initial focus – the metaphysics of reason (Kant's Dialectic), rather than self-consciousness (Kant's Analytic, apperception problematic) – it seems that for Jim as well, the metaphysics of reason turns out culminate in the realization of a self-conscious self-determining self-explanatory individual. What it ultimately means for something to be a complete reason is completely understood only through self-consciousness of self-consciousness itself.

2.2.2. The subject-matter of the Logics and the movement toward the absolute idea

Now, as I have already intimated, there are reasons to wonder whether either absolute spirit itself, or its form qua absolute idea, are properly thought of as things which are even possibly realized in the consciousness of any individual thinking person. For one, in Hegel's system, the individual thinking person, along with consciousness and self-consciousness, would seem to be primarily the subject-matter of '*subjective spirit*', whereas '*absolute spirit*' requires a shift from the individual perspective of the I, through the perspective of groups of individuals (family, corporation, state) in '*objective spirit*', to a still further and distinct perspective expressed in art, religion, and philosophy. While this need not leave behind individual consciousness altogether, it does complicate in many ways

what should be said about which agent should be identified as fully self-determining or self-explanatory. Religion, for example, is said to be spirit ‘treated just as much as going out from the *subject* and to be found in it, as going out *objectively* from absolute spirit, as spirit in its *community* [Gemeinde]’ (EG §554; my ital.). And philosophy, ultimately, is said to ‘have its object in common with religion’, insofar as ‘both have truth as their object, and indeed in the highest sense – in which *God* is the truth and *God alone* is the truth’ (EL §1 8:41; my ital.). Philosophy in general is to culminate in ‘the self-thinking idea’ (EG §574), ‘the self-knowing reason’ (EG §577), which is nothing other than ‘the idea eternally in and for itself, eternally active as absolute spirit’ (EG §577) – or, as the final word of the *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences* has it: *God* itself (in Aristotle’s Greek: *theos*). And the content of the *Logics* in particular is (infamously) said to consist in ‘the presentation of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and of a finite spirit’ (WL 5:44).

As Jim himself acknowledges (cf. 225), a suggestive picture of what it could mean for spirit to go out from something *besides* the (individual) subject is already given with the first emergence of spirit from life that we met with above – by the way in which the genus frees itself from individuality to realize itself through the individual but nevertheless ‘behind the back of the individual’, to use Jim’s phrase. But Jim’s guiding claim seems to be that, for the demand in metaphysics for explanation to be rationally completed, whatever it is that serves as the ‘complete explainer’ must *not* ‘go on behind the back of the individual’ (225). This is why toward the end of his book, Jim also emphasizes the idea that the very thinking through of Hegel’s *Logics* by *an individual* (e.g., Hegel himself) is what demonstrates (or at least gives a ‘testament’ to) the actual concrete realization of the absolute idea in absolute spirit (241). In fact, Jim claims that ‘*our* following along [of the

Logics] *is* spirit coming to itself', in the form of the final completion of the demand for explanation (244; my ital.).

I myself don't see much evidence in Hegel's texts of this sort of emphasis on the return to the individual consciousness as what realizes absolute knowing – rather than Hegel concluding by pointing to absolute spirit itself, qua God, as what would achieve absolute knowing. Indeed, at the end of his book, Jim himself acknowledges that he hasn't said much at all positively about how his view can be compatible with the connections Hegel draws between 'spirit's absolute knowledge of itself' and 'Aristotle's account of God as thought thinking itself' (264). Rather, Jim only notes, by way of a defense, that there are reasons to think that his view will not turn out to have *more* difficulties than those prominent Spinozist interpretations of Hegel which, by contrast, do insist on placing heavy emphasis on just these sorts of theologizing remarks Hegel makes concerning what it is that *does* ultimately to satisfy metaphysical demand for complete reasons (265).

Nevertheless, to the extent to which Jim modulates the subject-matter of the *Logics* (and philosophy itself) away from 'the presentation of *God*' as what is absolute, and toward the presentation of (something about?) our own human species or kind, or especially toward what can be 'realized' in one of its instances (in Hegel, in each of us), Jim will face additional pressure to differentiate the resulting 'humanized' interpretation of absolute spirit from the other main interpretive camp he means to distance his reading from – namely, those (like Pippin) who see Hegel's philosophy as a radicalization of Kant's

account of the demands implicit in human rational self-consciousness¹⁰ – now understood as the complete self-explanation of the ‘thinking’ that humans are capable of.¹¹

* * *

I hope that these critical remarks will draw Jim out to say more in defense of his account of Hegel’s critique of Kant’s Dialectic, and also more about the extent to which he means to de-theologize the conclusion of Hegel’s metaphysics without collapsing into the Kant-oriented style interpretation of absolute spirit itself. I also hope, however, that these remarks will serve to complement my initial summary in highlighting even more so just how helpful, informative, and instructive Jim’s book itself is with respect to Hegel’s conception of metaphysics, how useful a guide it is into several crucial lines of thought in Hegel’s system, and how rich of a philosophical and hermeneutical contribution it makes to the field.

¹⁰ In Pippin’s words, ‘an absolute or final account of what it is to know, and not a knowledge of a divine Absolute’ (Pippin 1989: 247).

¹¹ One key point of difference that Jim notes from Pippin’s account in particular is that Jim sees the discussion of the absolute idea at the end of the *Logics* as staying on the same level of ‘object-level’ of analysis as the preceding discussions in the doctrine of being and of essence, rather than ascending to a separate ‘meta-level’ discussion of the conditions for generating a *Logic* in the first place (253). Pippin describes the discussion of ‘the doctrine of the concept’ as ‘metalogical’, insofar as it is ‘a reflective account of the subjectivity of the objective logic’ (Pippin 1989: 247). What is less clear in Jim’s account is how the shift from the objective logic (doctrine of being) to the subjective logic (doctrine of concept, and the idea) is *not* a shift in ‘levels’ by way of a kind of reflection on what about ‘the concept’ (or: thinking, reason, spirit) was *already* implicitly at work in, and responsible for, the movement of the thought determinations in the doctrine of being (and essence).