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FREEDOM, NORMS AND NATURE IN HEGEL: SELF-LEGISLATION OR SELF-REALIZATION?

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One of the many things that makes Hegel's thought so intriguing is deciding where to place him in the dispute between the ancients and the moderns – a polarity which he himself played a large part in popularizing. This is because on the one hand, Hegel often goes out of his way to emphasize the comparative richness and attractiveness of classical thought, as against the superficial and reductive outlook of the moderns; on the other hand, he is in no doubt about the historical significance of the modern world, and how in many ways the ancient world had to be surpassed. As Hegel puts it with characteristic ambivalence in the *Phenomenology* with reference to Greek ethical life, "Reason *must* withdraw from this happy state" (PhG 267/214): while the transition is somehow inevitable and required, what is left behind still represents something of an ideal which is lost. And it is clear that Hegel holds that some moderns have gone too far away from the wisdom of the ancients, with Kant as one prominent example amongst others.

Still, this leaves the commentator on Hegel needing to strike a balance, and different options are available. One of the distinctive features of Robert Pippin's enormously important contribution, I think, has been to make Hegel's commitment to the modern central to his reading. Thus, while acknowledging the significance of classical thought to Hegel's work, for Pippin it is ultimately Hegel's modernism, and specifically his *post-Kantianism*, that makes him a key philosophical figure. Of course, what Kantianism and thus post-Kantianism amount to is itself highly contestable. Nonetheless, understandably enough, for Pippin unless this is made central to our reading of Hegel's thought, we will be lost – and where this approach applies to both Hegel's theoretical and practical philosophy.

When it comes to the theoretical philosophy, this outlook is articulated most clearly in the Introduction to the now-classic *Hegel's Idealism*, in what I think of as a statement of Pippin's Principle:

> More to the general and more obvious point, however, much of the standard view of how Hegel passes beyond Kant into speculative philosophy makes very puzzling, to the point of unintelligibility, how Hegel could have been the post-Kantian philosopher he understood himself to be; that is, how he could have accepted, as he did, Kant's revelations about the fundamental inadequacies of the metaphysical tradition, could have enthusiastically agreed with Kant that the metaphysics of the "beyond", of substance, and of traditional views of God and infinity were forever discredited, and then could have promptly created a systematic metaphysics as if he has never heard of Kant's critical epistemology. Just attributing moderate philosophic intelligence to Hegel should at least make one hesitate before construing him as a post-Kantian philosopher with a precritical metaphysics. (Pippin 1989: 7)

Following this Principle, Pippin himself developed a Kantian reading of Hegel's idealism, which while of course it goes beyond Kant in significant respects, still has a recognizably transcendental flavour – a flavour that has not endeared Pippin's reading to all tastes.

Similarly, in Pippin's treatment of Hegel's practical philosophy, he has underlined Hegel's commitment to a Kantian notion of freedom as self-legislation, notwithstanding their other well-known differences. For Pippin, this goes along with a characteristically modern move away from nature and thus from any sort of Aristotelian naturalism in ethics; the puzzles that arise for Kantian self-legislation are answered by Hegel's turn to history, and the move from the 'I' to the 'we'. So for Pippin, again, while Hegel undoubtedly drew something from the Greeks, his outlook is fundamentally a modern one, and highly indebted to Kant, despite their less significant divergences.

Others, however, have put the emphasis in a different place in their reading of Hegel, seeking to push the balance more in favour of the Greeks than Pippin seems inclined to do, whether this is Plato, Neo-Platonism or Aristotle, or some combination of the three. In theoretical philosophy, this has led to more Platonic or Aristotelian readings of the *Logic* in particular, which treat it less as a

transcendental inquiry into "our conceptual scheme"[1] and more as an ontological inquiry into the fundamental structure of being qua being. Of course, those emphasizing the ancient over the modern in this way must pay due attention to the corresponding role of the modern in Hegel's thought. They too must respect Pippin's Principle to this extent; but they will claim to do so without needing to take as much of the transcendental turn as Pippin himself appears to think is necessary if the Principle is to be respected. I have argued elsewhere that this can perhaps be achieved.[2]

In this paper, however, I do not want to discuss Hegel's theoretical philosophy from this perspective, but his practical philosophy. For, the same debate concerning ancient vs modern comes up here, where once again we find Pippin on the side of the moderns. Thus, those who take the other side must face an equivalent of Pippin's Principle in this arena too: just as Pippin thinks attributing "moderate philosophical intelligence" to Hegel in theoretical philosophy means we must see him as taking the transcendental critique of metaphysics seriously, so he thinks attributing such intelligence to Hegel in practical philosophy means we must see him as taking Kant's self-legislation thesis seriously, in a way that makes a fundamental break with anything resembling Aristotelian ethics. It is this application of Pippin's Principle that I wish to explore, where ultimately, I will argue, it misses the way that Hegel's ethics remains in the Aristotelian perfectionist tradition, albeit a perfectionism of a significantly post-Kantian form.

I will begin by saying something about what I mean by perfectionism. I will then look at a dispute between John McDowell and Pippin where Pippin argues against any perfectionist reading of Hegel for failing to recognize the essential modernity of Hegel's position, and thus its underlying Kantian commitments. I then point to evidence to show that Hegel's outlook remains an Aristotelian one, but where Kant's impact is still acknowledged in the form that Hegel's perfectionism ultimately takes, as a perfectionism that relates to the

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[1] Pippin 1989: 8. In his forthcoming commentary on Hegel's *Logic*, however, it appears that Pippin's reading has taken a more Aristotelian and less Kantian turn.

[2] Cf. Stern 2009, and also Kreines 2015.

structure of the will of the rational agent, and is thus of a distinctively post-Kantian kind.

1. Perfectionism

To a surprisingly large extent, "perfectionism" remains the great unknown of ethics. On the one hand, virtually all the great ethicists can be viewed as perfectionists in some broad sense – that is, as making some conception of the flourishing life for human beings, the realization of our fundamental capacities or natures, central to their ethics and social philosophy. What distinguishes them is their different accounts of what that flourishing consists in. Taken in this way, at least the following could be put on this list without raising great controversy: Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Spinoza, Leibniz, Rousseau, Marx, Nietzsche, Mill, Bradley, Green, and Dewey. The question I want to concentrate on here, which equally raises the question above concerning Hegel's place between the ancients and the moderns, is whether Hegel should be included as part of this tradition. I will do so by focusing on a recent dispute between McDowell and Pippin.

Roughly speaking, the terms of the dispute are as follows. In some of his earlier papers on Aristotle, McDowell questions the way in which Aristotle should be considered to be a naturalist. Pippin takes that to show that nature has no place in ethics, thus cutting the ground out from under any perfectionist approach – but, he argues, McDowell fails to see this fully. Pippin thinks Hegel shows a more consistent repudiation of naturalism in his ethics, given the priority he gives to "spirit" over "nature", which requires a shift towards Kantian self-legislation instead. On this account, norms are not to be derived from what is required for the proper realization of our nature qua human beings, but from the form of practical reason, to which Hegel then gives a historicist turn. I will argue, however, that looking at Hegel's *Logic* suggests that Pippin may be too quick to reject the Aristotelian aspect of Hegel's ethics – so that while (like McDowell) Hegel may be taken as rejecting certain ways in which perfectionism might be developed, Pippin goes too far in claiming that he wanted to reject it altogether in favour of a more thoroughgoing Kantian position. As a result, I will argue, Hegel can legitimately be placed in the perfectionist canon after all.

In order to explain what I mean here by perfectionism, naturalism and self-realization, it is helpful to start with a passage from Terence Irwin:

> [Aristotle] defends an account of the human good as happiness (*eudaimonia*), consisting in the fulfilment of human nature, expressed in the various human virtues. His position is teleological, in so far as it seeks the best guide for action in an ultimate end, eudaimonist, in so far as it identifies the ultimate end with happiness, and naturalist, in so far as it identifies virtue and happiness in a life that fulfils the nature and capacities of rational human nature. (Irwin 2007: 4)[3]

So, according to the Aristotelian eudaemonist, the human good consists in happiness; human happiness consists in the fulfilment or realization of human nature; and human nature can be defined in terms of what capacities are essential to human beings, qua members of a natural kind. Thus, the good of a human being is that which promotes the species nature of the individual qua human being and their distinctive capacities, where virtuous action by individual will lead to their good/flourishing, by developing capacities in this way. So, we can take what it is that leads to human happiness, understood as the realization of human capacities, as a guide to action and thus as determining its norms and the character of the virtues.

Now, while a position of this sort can be called eudaimonist, it can also be called perfectionist, because it takes happiness to consist in the proper development of our distinctive capacities, rather than simply pleasure or desire-satisfaction. On the other hand, it may be distinguished from a narrower form of perfectionism, which takes this development to be a good in itself, rather than as an aspect of the well-being of the individual. Perfectionism in both these forms involves a picture of the proper development of our capacities as the kinds of creatures we are, and builds normativity out of that – which is what makes it a kind of naturalism. So the fundamental question is: can the appeal to nature do this kind of work, when it comes to human beings?

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[3] Irwin's three volume work (Irwin 2007, 2008, 2009) is a masterful historical study of the Aristotelian naturalist tradition in the context of the development of ethics. For a classic systematic study, see Hurka 1993.

This is the issue at the centre of the dispute between McDowell and Pippin that I want to look at further, as it relates to Hegel.

2. McDowell on Aristotle

The key paper that forms the basis for the dispute is McDowell's classic text "Two Sorts of Naturalism", which draws out different ways in which Aristotle's naturalism might be understood. One way might be to see Aristotle as trying to use his naturalism to convince people to be virtuous, as a way in which they might then flourish, and thus as a way of making their lives go well given their natures. But, McDowell argues (following others such as Bradley and Prichard),[4] this would be a mistake, for the reason why a virtuous agent would act nobly (for example) is that that action is noble; for any further reason related to flourishing to come into play would just detract from that, and give the virtuous person the wrong reasons to act ethically, based on their interests.

Having made that fairly familiar point, McDowell adds a further argument more relevant to the later dispute with Pippin, namely that for us qua rational agents, appeals to what is natural to us and thus might enable us to flourish as natural beings can cut no ice anyway – so the approach is doomed from the start. McDowell illustrates the problem here with the idea of a "rational wolf", where "a rational wolf would be able to let his mind roam over possibilities of behaviour other than what comes naturally to wolves", where "this reflects a deep connection between reason and freedom; we cannot make sense of a creature's acquiring reason unless it has genuinely alternative possibilities of action, over which its thought can play" (McDowell 1996: 170).

McDowell then considers how this rational wolf might respond faced with some behaviour that he sees comes naturally to wolves, such as hunting co-operatively in a pack: because he is a rational wolf, he can step back and ask of that behaviour "why should I do this?". Once the question has arisen, McDowell asks, "how can it help to appeal to what wolves need?":

> "Why should I pull my weight?", says our reflective wolf, wondering whether to idle through the hunt but still grab his share of the prey. Suppose we respond, truly enough: "Wolves need to pool their energies, if

[4] Cf. Bradley 1927: 58-59; Prichard 1912 and 1929.

> their style of hunting is to be effective." If our wolf has stepped back from his natural impulse and taken up the critical stance, why should what we say impress him? (McDowell 1996: 171)

What is the problem here? The difficulty is that while wolves *in general*, as a kind, may need to work co-operatively as a pack in a way that makes it best for them as a kind, this doesn't necessarily make it best for the individual wolf who (as a rational wolf) is able to distinguish between the two (McDowell 1996: 172).

So, McDowell argues, if we *do* try to ground an appeal to virtue in some further reason to do with flourishing, we can't base it on the flourishing of the *kind* as the individual can always question the significance of that to him- or herself. The only flourishing that will seem relevant will be *individual* flourishing, thereby collapsing ethics into self-interest. The lesson McDowell draws from this is that the "grounding" project is hopeless, and "Aristotelian naturalism" should not be conceived of in this way:

> [Aristotle's] naturalism simply does not promise to validate putative rational requirements. That he is not concerned about grounding is anyway strongly suggested by the fact that he addresses his ethical lectures only to people who have been properly brought up. (McDowell 1996: 174)

Aristotelian naturalism in this first sense, as a response to a "why be moral?" question is therefore rejected.

McDowell then diagnoses why we (but not Aristotle) might feel the pull of such a grounding problem, which he traces back to our scientism and disenchanted view of the world, which leads us to lose sight of the idea that to the virtuous individual, the experience they have may be "directly" reason giving without the need for grounding – by for example seeing that this would be cruel, and so not doing it, where this is the result of a form of upbringing that constitutes our "second nature".[5] However, McDowell does not think that following Aristotle here therefore replaces considerations of our nature with just "second nature", whereby the former would drop out altogether, and if it did, we would seem to have abandoned naturalism entirely. For McDowell thinks it is

[5] For more on this theme, see McDowell 1994: 78-84.

still possible to give first nature an important role in ethics, but not as a response to the "grounding problem".

McDowell identifies two other roles for it to fulfill. First, it is important "because the innate endowment of human beings must put limits on the shapings of second nature that are possible for them" (McDowell 1996: 190); that is, there are naturally defined limits to our capacities for reflection and enculturation that the processes of second nature can take. Second, *from within the reflection of the virtuous agent*, considerations of first nature related to flourishing will be the sort of thing that they will take into account when seeking some "reassurance" regarding whether the practices and norms that have shaped their ethical sensibility are ultimately a good thing. This is not because they are wondering whether, qua individuals, they should adopt those practices (that is the grounding issue again), but rather, whether we as a group have done well to adopt them, given what our flourishing consists in:

> First nature matters not only … in helping to shape the space in which reflection must take place, but also in that first-natural facts can be part of what reflection takes into account. This is where we can register the relevance of what human beings need in order to do well, in a sense of "doing well" that is not just Aristotle's "acting in accordance with the virtues". Consider a rational wolf whose acquisition of practical reason included being initiated into a tradition in which co-operative behaviour in the hunt is regarded as admirable, and so as worth going in for in its own right. What wolves need might figure in a bit of reflection that might help reassure him that when he acquired a second nature with that shape, his eyes were opened to real reasons for acting. The reflection would be Neurathian, so it would not weigh with a wolf who has never acquired such a mode of valuation of conduct, or one who has come unstuck from it. And there would be no irrationality in thus failing to be convinced. But this need not undermine the reassurance, if the reflection that yields it is self-consciously Neurathian. The point stands that what members of one's species need is not guaranteed to appeal to practical reason. But the point is harmless to the genuine rationality of virtue, which is visible (of

> course!) only from a standpoint from which it is open to view. (McDowell 1996: 190-1)

McDowell hereby argues for a second sort of naturalism that is compatible with "a fundamentally Aristotelian outlook", even if Aristotle himself (McDowell thinks) did not raise these questions insofar as he "is notably unconcerned to defend, against potential competitors, the way things look to the kind of person he thinks of as virtuous" (McDowell 1996: 189).

So, as I understand it, McDowell's picture is as follows. To the well-brought up rational wolf (or human being), various kinds of co-operative behaviour will just seem to be what is called for in the situation, as the correct thing to do, and that will be their reason for doing it and why they act; for, in this sort of case, "What directly influences the will is the valuations of actions that have come to be second nature" (McDowell 1996: 191). Nonetheless, one can still seek "reassurance" about this upbringing and enculturation itself: for example, one might ask whether a "debunking" explanation for it would be better, à la Nietzsche or Marx or some other "master of suspicion".[6] And this is where claims about our nature and flourishing can come in, to provide the reassurance that these practices and their norms relate to that nature in the right way.

It is important to recognize, however, that the kind of "reassurance" being considered here is not the same as the kind of "grounding" that the lone rational wolf was seeking: as a wolf working from "outside" the practice of virtue, he was looking for reasons to be moral that would lead to *his* individual good, where an appeal to what is good for wolves in general is not going to satisfy. But in looking for reassurance concerning the practices of our own enculturation – to "help reassure him that when he acquired a second nature with that shape, his eyes

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[6] Cf. McDowell 1996: 190: "People come unstuck from a traditional ethical outlook when reflection does break out, and they come to think, rightly or wrongly, that they have seen through the outlook's pretensions of rational cogency. If something is to be an intelligible candidate for being the way second nature should be, it must at least be intelligible that the associated outlook could seem to survive this reflective scrutiny". Nietzsche would seem to have become "unstuck" in this way, when he writes: "In so far as morality *condemns* as morality and *not* with regard to the aims and objects of life, it is a specific error with regard to which one should show no sympathy, an *idiosyncrasy of the degenerate* which has caused an unspeakable amount of harm!" (Nietzsche 1968: "Morality as Anti-Nature" §6, p. 46).

were opened to real reasons for acting" – this isn't what we are asking about: we want to know rather that these practices are not merely distortive and corrupted ideological constructs, where seeing that that the practices are good for *us* as a whole, not just for the individual concerned, can help to provide us with the confidence we need. The "reflective reassurance" provided by the connection we might find between "virtue and doing well" thus operate at "one remove from the subject's rational will" (McDowell 1996: 191): that is (I take it), what provides the agent in question with reasons to act still only comes from seeing the act as noble or courageous or whatever, not as conductive to well being either of the individual concerned or of group as a whole; but this latter connection can still play a role in the "reflective background for a second nature that values courageous actions" (McDowell 1996: 191), where McDowell puts this idea as follows: "This should be seen as a case of a relation that Wittgenstein draws to our attention, between our concepts and the facts of nature that underlie them. The concepts would not be the same if the facts of (first) nature were different, and the facts help to make it intelligible that the concepts are as they are, but this does not mean that correctness and incorrectness in the application of the concepts can be captured by requirements spelled out at the level of the underlying facts" (McDowell 1996: 193). In this way, then, McDowell offers an account of the place for perfectionism in ethics, and with it a kind of naturalism, not as a form of "external validation" designed to make sense to someone outside our ethical practices, but as a legitimate way of reflecting on them from within.[7]

I now want to look at Pippin's response to McDowell, which in part uses Hegel to challenge the role that McDowell gives to nature. I will suggest that Pippin misses an important aspect of that role, and so also misrepresents the place of Hegel in these debates.

3. Pippin on McDowell: Nature vs Spirit

In his 2002 article, tellingly entitled: "Leaving Nature Behind", Pippin focuses on the role McDowell gives to nature both in his theoretical and practical philosophy, but I will just concentrate on the latter. Pippin summarizes his point as follows:

[7] See also McDowell 1980: 19 and Hursthouse 1999: 194.

> My main question will be whether we gain that much, free ourselves from that much, if we can come to see our capacity for normative stances as "second-nature natural." I want to offer some suggestions that we are better off leaving nature out of the picture altogether, and that doing so begs no questions. This will offer a limited defense of what McDowell, in a sweeping indictment, calls "subjectivism." (Pippin 2002: 60)

And he thinks Hegel is on his side:

> Said very crudely, the developmental "direction" of Hegel's system (a systematic account of forms of intelligibility, ever better explanatory adequacy) is "away" from nature and "towards" "spirit," *Geist*; his "logic" concerns more the inadequacy of *appeals* to nature as *explicans*. (Pippin 2002: 60)

For Pippin, therefore, what makes Hegel a modern thinker is this step away from nature towards spirit, a step that he thinks McDowell's Aristotelian commitments prevent him from appreciating in Hegel. As a result, Pippin's basic strategy is to accept McDowell's rejection of crude Aristotelian naturalism (as grounding), but then to argue that this shows that we can do without nature altogether, and so arrive an account that is more purely social and historical in a way which Pippin thinks is more properly Hegelian.

Pippin therefore accepts McDowell's rejection of the idea that perfection and flourishing could "ground" ethics from the perspective of the individual who is outside ethics; but he thinks McDowell then misses that naturalism can then drop out altogether. The answer to McDowell's "reassurance" question must come instead from an account of the historical development of the practices of the ethical community of which the individual is part:

> The question is: how does a claim of reason, or a commitment to an ideal or goal, become part of the fabric of some form of life? How is the achievement of a genuinely common mindedness (something quite different from a codified, explicit belief system, or subjective commitment to ideals) possible? How could there be a common mindedness such that our reactions to conduct that is objectionable have become so intimate and such a part of that fabric that the conduct being the sort of conduct it is counts *thereby* as reason enough to condemn it. But to understand this,

> we don't need to know anything about growth, organic life, cultivated nature, and so forth. We need to understand "the labor of the Concept" in time. (Pippin 2002: 68)

Pippin argues that the answer to the "reassurance" question must take this form, as appeals to nature cannot carry any weight with us: what does it matter that the process of enculturation is somehow "natural" to us, and what does "natural" mean here anyway?

> If the point is simply that given the various biological and neurological capacities we are endowed with by nature and evolution, human beings have (do as a matter of fact have) the capacity to make, sustain, hold themselves to and pass on in historical memory various kinds of normative institutions, and can form the characters such institutions require, and can create practices that allow for developing and revising the various claims for institutional authority inherent in such institutions, what is gained by declaring so insistently that all of *this* must be understood as a "realization of second nature"? To adopt Rortyean rhetoric, it sounds more like an attempt at an exaggerated compliment than a substantive point. (Pippin 2002: 69)

The fundamental issue, for Pippin, is that ultimately we are *free* of nature, and in the end it must drop out of our ethical reflections in a way that (he thinks) Hegel saw and in a way that makes Hegel radically non-naturalist and non-perfectionist, and so ultimately opposed to anything like McDowell's position:

> A culture (*Bildung*) in this sense, while it is something we must have the requisite natural, enabling capacities to build and sustain, *is only* something that we build and sustain. "Subjectivism" then, directing us as it does toward the historical dissatisfactions and tensions responsible for the institutional change we effect, seems unproblematic enough and to be directing us properly towards history not nature as the domain where accounts of human practices are to be based. In Hegel's somewhat puzzling language, while "*Geist*" is not non-natural or immaterial, it *is* "a product of itself". (Pippin 2002: 70)

For Pippin, then, it looks as if when we want something like McDowell's "reassurance" that our practices are as they ought to be, we can turn to history

rather than nature, where that history can be understood in dialectical terms, as the progressive overcoming of tensions and problems as we move forward – from slavery to universal rights, or from monarchy to democracy, for example. It is that historical process underlying our practices, rather than any appeal to first or second nature, that is needed to do the work:

> If Geist is a distinctive kind by not being a natural but a "self-developing" kind, we could be said to be "learning" collectively the form of life, the institutional form of life especially, suited to such a historical, collectively self-determining being. This means that our analysis of this result is not essentialist or empirical but "reconstructive", a reconstruction in which the meaning of large-scale social and political change is integrated into a view of what, wholly internally, wholly in terms of their own self-understanding, might count as progressive. (Pippin 2014: 729)

This turn from nature to history in Pippin's account goes along with the impact of what he takes to be Kant's major innovation in normative philosophy (albeit one partly inspired by Rousseau), namely the idea of *self-legislation*.[8] For, not only is spirit able to free itself from nature, but it is able to authorize norms *for itself*, rather than have such norms given to it externally, where this is said to be a vital aspect of what it means to be autonomous. At the same time, according to Pippin, Kant's model for this self-legislative account is seen by Hegel as too transcendental and ahistorical, where again it is the collective process of legislation through history that needs to be added to the basic Kantian story, a story which is distinctively modern.[9]

Pippin's case is undoubtedly a powerful one, on both interpretative and philosophical grounds. Nonetheless, I want to argue that it underestimates the significant perfectionist strand in Hegel's thinking, and thus ignores something

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[8] Cf. Pippin 2002: 65: "Put a different, much more general way, the relevant image for our 'always already engaged' conceptual and practical capacities in the German idealist tradition is *legislative power*, not empirical discrimination and deliberative judgment, and the force of this image of legislative power makes it difficult to integrate what McDowell says about the overall effect of *Bildung* – that it simply 'opens our eyes' and allows us to 'see the reasons that are always there whether we notice them or not' – with the Kantian and even Hegelian elements he has also imported".

[9] Cf. also Pippin 2008: 91.

important in McDowell's account. Put simply, while for Pippin Hegel's modernism means he is committed to abandoning Aristotelian naturalism altogether, I will argue that it rather means that this naturalism is transformed into a type of post-Kantian perfectionism, which is a perfectionism nonetheless.

4. Hegel's Logic of Value

When asserting that "the developmental 'direction' of Hegel's system…is 'away' from nature and 'towards' 'spirit,' *Geist*", Pippin cites the relative insignificance of Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature* to the rest of his system.: "As anyone who has slogged through it knows, there is a lot there that seems to turn no other wheel elsewhere in what Hegel says, and very little in the *Philosophy of Spirit* seems to depend on it or refer back to it" (Pippin 2002: 60).

Some might question whether this does proper justice to the joys of the *Philosophy of Nature*. But more importantly for our purposes, Pippin doesn't mention the *Logic* here, where it is arguable that it is in this text, rather than the *Philosophy of Nature*, that the best evidence for Hegel's Aristotelian naturalism can be found. The relevant discussion is the crucial third book of the *Logic*, and in his treatment of the Concept (Begriff), Judgement, and Syllogism. Here, Hegel essentially offers a hierarchy of forms of judgement and syllogism, based on how they treat the relation between the conceptual "moments" of universal, particular and individual. At the bottom of the hierarchy are the judgements and syllogisms of existence respectively, where there is at best a superficial relation between individual and universal, as the latter forms an accidental property of the former, e.g. "This rose is red". Hegel then moves through other forms of judgement and syllogism, as this relation becomes more substantial, until the subject-term of the judgement deals with a natural kind, and the predicate is essential to individuals of this kind. The corresponding syllogism concerns the genus to which the individual belongs, and properties that are essential to members of that genus, e.g. the categorical syllogism "Gaius is a man; men are mortal; therefore Gaius is mortal".

Now, it is precisely at *this* point, when a judgement introduces reference to the kind to which the individual belongs, that Hegel brings in *value and normativity*. Thus, what Hegel calls the "judgement of the concept [Begriff]" are

normative judgements concerning the individual based on how well or badly it exemplifies the universal that constitutes its nature, e.g. "This house, lacking a roof, is bad". So, while at the simplest and most basic level, judgements and syllogisms involve claims about individuals and their simple properties, Hegel holds that it is not possible to rest at merely this level of judgement and syllogism. Rather, it is necessary to bring in more sophisticated forms of thought, involving more complex conceptual structures, to make sense of the world. In particular, it is necessary to thinking of some individual objects as instantiating natural kinds which characterize their essential natures, where this introduces a significant evaluative element. For, to understand a concept as representing a natural kind is to understand individuals falling under that kind in terms of certain characteristics; failing to possess those characteristics is then a fault in the individual qua member of the kind. So, for example, a rose that dies prematurely, or which fails to attract sufficient bees to be pollinated, or is odourless but belongs to a species with a scent, is a 'bad' rose. These norms are not based on mere statistical generalizations, but reflect claims about what it is for a rose of this species to be a proper exemplar of its kind. Thus, for Hegel, value and normativity enters in as a consequence of his conception of the relation between individuals and their fundamental natures. The question of their goodness or badness, and even of their "truth" and "finitude", for him seems to rest on this relation:

> [T]he subject then expresses the relation of that particularity to its constitution, i.e. to its genus and, with this, expresses what…makes up the content of the predicate (*this* – the immediate individuality – *house* – genus –, *so and so constituted* – particularity –, is good or bad) – *apodictic* judgment. – *All things* are a *genus* (their determination and purpose) in one *individual* actuality with a *particular* constitution; and their finitude consists in the fact that what is their particular [character] may or may not be adequate to the universal.[10]

[10] EL §179. Cf. SL 349/585:
The subject of the apodictic judgement ("the house, as so and so constituted, is *good*," "the action, as so and so *constituted, is* right") includes, *first*, the universal, or what it *ought to be*, *second*, its *constitution*; the latter contains the *ground* why a predicate of the judgement of the concept does or does not pertain to it, that is,

According to the *Logic*, it appears, evaluative judgements only make sense by bringing in a consideration of what it is to be a properly functioning member of a kind, which realizes itself in this way.

Now, it is this aspect of Hegel's thought that then seems to resonate with the neo-Aristotelianism of writers such as Foot and Thompson.[11] For, Foot and Thompson have argued that this is the best way to understand the operation of normativity in Aristotle as well. Thus, for example, Foot writes:

> "[N]atural goodness", as I define it, which is attributable only to living things themselves and to their parts, characteristics, and operations, is intrinsic or 'autonomous' goodness in that it depends directly on the relation of an individual to the 'life form' of its species…. Thus evaluation of an individual living thing in its own right, with no reference to our interests or desires, is possible where there is intersection of two types of propositions: on the one hand, Aristotelian categorials (life-form descriptions relating to the species), and on the other, propositions about particular individuals that are the subjects of evaluations.[12]

So, it would appear, on this account as well as Hegel's, a proper use of concepts – in Foot's terms, "Aristotelian categorials" -- must involve an implicit normativity, as it requires thinking of things as members of natural kinds and this itself requires thinking of them as good or bad exemplars of their kinds, in a way that appears to be fundamentally Aristotelian.

5. Hegel, McDowell, Pippin

So where does this brief investigation into Hegel's account of normativity and value leave us in the debate between McDowell and Pippin? On the face of it, it suggests that for Hegel a kind of Aristotelian naturalism is inescapable. This is not the first kind of naturalism that McDowell rejects, whereby an appeal to the kind is used to "ground" ethics, as a way of persuading the non-moral agent to be

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whether the subject corresponds to its concept or not. This judgment is now *truly* objective; or it is the *truth* of the *judgment* in general.

[11] Cf. Thompson 2008: 12:

The project of an "analytic" or "analytical" Hegelianism or of an "analytical Marxism" (however well- or ill-advised such a thing might be) must see itself as aiming at a form of analytic Aristotelianism…

[12] Foot 2001: 26-7 and 33. See also Thompson 2008: 80-1.

moral. Here Pippin and McDowell agree that, like Aristotle, Hegel sees "ethical life" as providing a prior context of education and enculturation, within which this kind of question does not arise – or, if it does, cannot really be answered. Still, naturalism can serve the second role McDowell suggests, of "reassuring" us that ethical life is along the right lines, by appeal to a conception of what it is to be a good or a bad human being, qua exemplar of that kind, where this kind of normativity is an inescapable aspect of our thinking at any satisfactory level: To have the concept of a human being *is* to have the concept of what it takes to be a properly developed human being, against which our practices can be assessed. This view would seem to fit the McDowellian picture rather well.

However, there is a clear line of response from Pippin, which gets at the heart of his argument for "leaving nature behind". For, even if what I have said about the *Logic* is right, this doesn't show that Hegel was a *naturalist* in any serious sense, as it is not in terms of our *natural* kind that we are assessed as good or bad in this way, as plant or animals might be. So, what it is to be a good dog may require the dog to have certain features or to realize certain capacities: Fido is better qua dog than Rex because Fido has four legs not just three, is able to run better as a result, is therefore more likely to breed successfully, and so on. This judgment makes sense in terms of the "natural endowments" of dogs, i.e. what they are characteristically "given" by nature. But for us (Pippin can rightly argue) it is very different: maybe nature "gives" us all sort of things, but whether our life goes well or badly is largely independent of that, so a very different kind of normativity is involved, unrelated to our "species being" or natural life form. So, if I am missing a finger, or a leg, or can't run fast, or mate successfully, it is not clear that this marks me as "bad" or failing to flourish in any sense; only a misplaced biologism could make it seem otherwise. Precisely because (as Pippin argues) "spirit" is largely "free" of nature, this kind of claim is inappropriate for *us.* Thus, while there may be such a thing as the "good life" for dogs or beavers or cows based on their "natural endowments" and "proper functioning", there is no such thing in our case. We are in the realm of spirit and not nature; our norms must be self-legislated rather than "read off" our being in the world.

However, while this worry marks an important difference between us and other natural beings, it is not clear how much it ultimately matters from the

perspective of reading Hegel as a perfectionist and as a kind of naturalist. For, it could still be argued that while Hegel doesn't take our essential properties to all be those that would be identified in purely biological terms,[13] he still thinks there are such essential properties, which can ground the normative claims he wants to make. In this respect, it is useful to compare the categories of "human being" and of "person": while one can think of the former in purely biological terms, associated with various sort of biological functioning, the latter is a different notion that brings in a different conception of proper functioning and thus normativity, while equally characterizing me as a substance universal. Thus, while the category of "person" may not be a natural kind in the biological sense (it is not needed as part of biological taxonomy), it is still a natural kind in the philosophical sense, out of which a related kind of normativity can be built, qua good or bad exemplifications of personhood. In this way, our fundamental difference from animals can be marked. For them normativity only operates at the level of their natural kind, while for us the logical structure of normative claims as based on the essential nature of the individual can still be maintained.

Now, I would like to suggest, something very close to this structure can be found in Hegel's treatment of normativity in his *Philosophy of Right*, where the key starting point is his characterization of our nature as that of free rational agents, which in turn leads him to *the will*, and what it is to be an agent with a will that is properly structured (cf. PR §§5-7).[14] Now this, of course, doesn't fit any purely biological taxonomy. Nonetheless, this doesn't mean that Hegel is denying that for us as *agents* rather than as merely human beings biologically conceived, there is a good and bad way for us to be, particularly concerning the structure of our wills. Indeed Hegel argues that the structure of the will should involve a characteristic kind of unity of different elements that is a commonplace of the perfectionist tradition.[15]

To see how this approach is compatible with an essentially Aristotelian outlook, compare it with Irwin's schematic presentation of Aristotle's view:

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[13] Cf. Rand forthcoming.
[14] Cf. PR §§5-7.
[15] For further discussion, see Stern 2015.

> (1) Human nature consists in rational agency, that is, in exercising the capacity to guide behaviour by practical reason. (2) The human good consists in the full actualization of this capacity in fulfilling our other capacities. (3) The virtues are the different ways of actualizing this capacity.[16]

It seems clear that one can commit to (1) without thinking that "human" here is being used in purely biological terms. Arguably it is *this* that Kant helped Hegel to see, in a way that then took his perfectionism in a particular direction, towards a consideration of our nature as free agents; but to see Kant's impact on Hegel in this way is very different from Pippin's proposal.

It therefore makes sense to claim that Hegel has a perfectionist picture of self-actualization or self-realization, albeit where the "self" is not conceived in narrowly biologistic terms. In one sense, then, Pippin is right in claiming that "spirit" is more than nature qua biology or "life" as discussed in the *Philosophy of Nature*. But taking the *Logic* seriously can also show that he is wrong on the deeper point (which I think McDowell would be happy to accommodate): Hegel remains a perfectionist and naturalist of sorts, with a fundamentally Aristotelian picture at the centre of his thinking. On this basis, therefore, I would claim that Hegel's ethics fundamentally belongs to the perfectionist tradition, and the perfectionists that came after him, particularly Marx and the British Idealists, can be said to have been following in his footsteps.

But, it could be asked, what happens to two fundamental features of Pippin's reading on this picture: namely, the emphasis on self-legislation and hence autonomy, and the emphasis on the significance of history to the Hegelian conception of normativity and to *The Philosophy of Right* itself? Surely both are essential to any properly recognizably Hegelian approach? My brief response to the first question is that the issue concerning self-legislation and particularly its supposed link to autonomy is much more complex and contestable than this suggests, as I have argued at length elsewhere (Stern 2012). And on the question of history, one way to accommodate this might be to adopt the "historicized naturalism" that has been proposed by Allen Wood. Wood's proposal echoes Pippin's focus on the historical relativity of our practices in relation to a "variable

[16] Irwin 2009: 882.

and malleable notion" of the human good: "Historicized naturalism has no general conception of the human good, but for any infant it will be born into a determinate social and historical situation, inheriting from its culture a determinate human self-understanding", so that as a result "[h]istoricized naturalism tells us to choose the childrearing practices that will actualize the self of the newborn child *on that understanding*" (Wood 1990: 33-34, my emphasis). However, I would not be prepared to go even that far in a concession to Hegel's supposed historicism. For, it seems to me that while it is right that for Hegel, self-actualization may occur equally well within different social practices in different societies at levels below those outlined in the *Philosophy of Right*, it is still the case that the fundamental structure of the will that is presented in the Introduction to that text is the same and fixed, as are the fundamental social structures which Hegel takes to realize that will; they are therefore not warranted merely as the form of institutional structure that best fit the conception of our nature prevalent at that historical period. I find no suggestion here that Hegel's naturalism is an historicized one in Wood's sense. I would argue instead that the importance of history for Hegel lies in helping us to see how this form of self-understanding has been developed, and thus how this distinctively modern conception of the will as a balance of "universal", "particular" and "individual" moments has emerged; but this is to make history the ratio cognoscendi not the ratio essendi of what it is to be a free rational agent. Moreover, taken in this way, one can also make sense of the fundamental Hegelian thought that the history of a certain sort of philosophical project might be treated as having reached an 'end' in the modern period, as this conception of agency has finally come into view, which enables us to properly reflect on our ethical and social practices in the way that *The Philosophy of Right* tries to do.

6. Conclusion

One way to focus the issues that I have been addressing is to consider the following passage from a review of one of Pippin's works by Wayne Martin:

> We can now see the outlines of a difficulty for Pippin's Hegel. Extrapolate to a community of Hegelian anorexics, each identifying profoundly with

> their acts of self-starvation, and finding recognition and validation from others in their community. The practice of giving and asking for reasons operates within such a community, and anorexic reasons are recognized as genuine reasons – relative to the distinctive values that structure this particular local world. Members of the community risk their lives, to be sure, but they do so in pursuing something that they value above mere biological existence. To round out the Hegelian picture we can add in a reflective apologist, constructing just-so historical narratives that celebrate the anorexic commitment to "break the power of natural inclination" -- finding therein the culmination of mankind's emergence from its merely animal nature. Does the Hegelian have to concede that anorexia has here become a paradigm of modern free agency? (Martin 2010: 290)

Martin brings out nicely, I think, how in an attempt to "leave nature behind" Pippin arguably goes too far, and fails to see how there is still space in Hegel's account for a basis for normativity in the conditions for flourishing rational agency itself, not just in the kind of dialectical historical narrative that we may be able to tell about our practices. In this way, it could be argued, we properly respect the way in which Hegel harnessed the insights not only of the moderns, but of the ancients too.[17]

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