HEGEL AND MCDOWELL ON PERCEPTUAL EXPERIENCE AND JUDGMENT

Paul Redding

In a paper first published in 2008, "Avoiding the Myth of the Given", John McDowell characterizes the myth to be avoided as the idea that "sensibility by itself", effectively the sensibility we might be thought to share with non-human animals, "could make things available for the sort of cognition that draws on the subject's rational powers".[1] This mythical idea puts the conceptual powers of reason "entirely downstream" from the sort of experiences that could justify knowledgeable claims.[2] This theme of avoiding the myth of the given had, of course, been a major one of his book *Mind and World*, published over a decade earlier.[3] There McDowell had drawn upon Kant to argue that conceptual powers are already operative within the very having of those experiences that the mythical picture locates *upstream* from the point at which conceptual capacities are mobilized. Experience *itself* must have *conceptual content*. But from the perspective of "Avoiding the Myth of the Given", McDowell thinks he had earlier gone *too far* with the suggestion that the contents of experience are not only *conceptual*, but also *propositional*.[4]

In *Mind and World* McDowell had attempted to walk the fine line between the Myth of the Given on the one side and its abstract negation on the other. This abstract negation, he pointed out, had led to a position from which the peculiar role played by *experience* in the justification of judgments could not be understood at all. Donald Davidson in particular had exemplified the type of thinker who had over-reacted to the myth, swinging to the opposite extreme, but in "Avoiding the Myth of the Given" McDowell retrospectively construes his own *earlier* espousal of the propositionality of experience as itself conceding too much to Davidson. Davidson, in his own analogue of the criticism of the Myth of the Given, had insisted that "nothing can count as a reason for holding a belief except another belief".[5] In *Mind and World* McDowell had, of course, been in agreement with the critical thrust of this claim: no mere reception of a sensory given—no "sensibility by itself"—could count as a reason for anything. But *against Davidson*, he had wanted to insist that

experience, and not simply commitment to another belief, could count as a *reason* for a belief.

From the stance of "Avoiding the Myth of the Given", McDowell seems to hold that in *Mind and World* he had implicitly accepted an idea at the heart of Davidson's dictum—the idea that only something with the content typically possessed by a belief—only something with propositional content—could play the role of that which could count as a reason for holding a belief.[6] Experience was therefore conceived as having the type of content found in belief, and this had been an error. It had made the position in *Mind and World* prey to Davidson's "telling response" that, "if by 'experience' we mean something with propositional content, it can only be a case of taking things to be so, distinctive in being caused by the impact of the environment on our sensory apparatus. But of course his [Davidson's] picture includes such things".[7] From *Davidson's* perspective there had been "nothing missing from his [that is, Davidson's] picture" to mark a difference between it and McDowell's. Jettisoning the earlier claim concerning the propositionality of experiential content—a thesis that had made it seem that he had treated experience as a type of explicit *taking* things to be thus and so, a type of *judging*—McDowell continues to underline his differences to Davidson by construing experience, along with Charles Travis, as a matter of *bringing our surroundings into view*, and thereby "entitling us to take certain things to be so, but leaving it a further question what, if anything, we do take to be so".[8]

I find myself in sympathy with McDowell's criticism of his earlier self. His earlier position in *Mind and World* had been flawed by equating the idea of the conceptuality of experience with that of its propositionality. Furthermore, my sympathy extends to McDowell's insistence, common to both earlier and later positions, on the need to acknowledge the role for *experience* and Kantian intuition in ways that are *not* acknowledged by Davidson. Against Davidson, the role played by Kantian *intuition* must be given *its due*. My questions here, then, become: what had gone wrong in *Mind and World* and what *exactly* is the role for intuition that must be given its due? My suggestion will be that in line with the spirit of analytic philosophy in general, which is thus the spirit in which Kant tends to be read within analytic philosophy, McDowell had

construed the role of intuition as basically an *epistemological* one, and that when conceived in *that* way, it is hard to avoid the alternatives of the Myth of the Given and Davidson's negation. In "Avoiding the Myth of the Given", McDowell continues to orient his own views on perception primarily in relation to Kant, and while he here explicitly separates the "contents" of experience from the propositional contents of explicit judgment, experience, by being seen as "entitling us to take certain things to be so" is still conceived in a basically epistemological way. But I want to suggest that an explicit shift of perspectives from a Kantian to an *Hegelian* one better helps us understand the role of conceptuality in experience and the need to give experience and intuition its rightful place.

If Kant had veered towards *scepticism* in metaphysics by questioning our epistemic entitlement to metaphysical beliefs, Hegel in turn had questioned the epistemic standards for metaphysics that Kant claimed we could not reach. This allowed Hegel to embrace a type of "metaphysics", but one that nevertheless did not claim to satisfy the old criteria: Hegel's metaphysics is thus distinctly *post*-Kantian. This metaphysics, I suggest, is directed to a comprehensive account of *actuality*, and is thus a type of *modal* metaphysics. We can understand how Hegel gets there by examining the way he reinterprets Kant's concept-intuition distinction.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant famously claims that "Without sensibility no object would be given to us, and without understanding none would be thought. Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind".[9] Typically, I think, this is taken in an epistemological spirit, and it is in this spirit that the thought is easily construed as a version of the Myth of the Given. But intuitions are also used by Kant for the *modal* purposes of distinguishing actuality from mere possibility, but the relations between these modal and epistemological significances can be difficult to untangle. Moreover, exactly what sense of modality is in question in relation to Kant's theoretical philosophy is, I think, unclear. It *is* clear that, after the transcendental turn, Kant dismissed the idea of logical necessity as a source of metaphysical knowledge, and with this out of the way, his account of modality is often described as an epistemic one, suggesting a form of modal *anti-realism* in which the modal distinctions simply reflect

the operations of our cognitive faculties themselves rather than the world. But the Hegelian spirit to which I appeal as a counter is one in which the epistemological perspective is subordinate to a *modal* one, and the main issue for this is a proper characterization of *actuality*. In the next two sections, I'll expand on the way the modal-epistemic relation is conceived in both Kant and Hegel. I'll then trace the consequences of this for Hegel's account of perception, by comparing Hegel's metaphysical account of actuality to a contemporary form of modal actualism, the anti-Lewisian version of modal realism advocated by Robert Stalnaker.

THE MODAL–EPISTEMIC RELATION IN KANT

In *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant employs the notion of possibility in at least two different ways. One sense of possibility is the familiar *logical* sense, in which objects are qualified as possible or impossible as to whether their concepts are free or not free from contradiction. This *de re* conception of possibility would rule out the possibility of a *round square*, for example, but leave God as a possible object, at least "as far as its form is concerned". But while God is thereby *thinkable*, God is not cognizable,[10] the concept of God lacking an *intuition* "through which [its object] is given" (B146). Later, however, another concept of possibility comes into focus, and it is this latter one on which I want to concentrate.

In "The Postulates of Empirical Thought", Kant appeals not simply to the issue of whether some object conforms to the pure categories, but whether it conforms to the categories as *schematized*. The possible, he says, is that which is in agreement "with the formal conditions of experience (in accordance with *intuition* and concepts)".[11] That is, the *form* of intuition has been added to the earlier merely conceptual conditions of *thinkability*, resulting in possible objects for *cognition* (*Erkentnis*) rather than mere *thought* (*Denken*). To be properly *cognizable*, objects must then be logically possible *and* be potentially locatable within the spatio-temporal dimensions of our experience. Separating the *form* of intuition in this way from its *content* has now left the latter to play the modal role of that which signals the *actuality* of some object, which now "requires **perception**, thus sensation of which one is conscious."[12] "That the concept precedes the perception", Kant

writes, "signifies its mere possibility; but perception, which yields the material for the concept, is the sole characteristic of actuality" (A225/B272–3).

That Kant talks here of perception or sensation, and not intuition itself, testifies to the fact that the spatio-temporal *form* of intuition has seemingly been stripped away from this content and added to the categories in the process of their schematization.[13] In short, the picture is that *schematized* conceptual cognitions can deliver no more than *possible* judgments about states of affairs, as when one considers hypotheses, for example; relevant *sensory content* is needed to grasp such possibilities as actual.

Clearly modal issues are here intertwined with epistemological ones—the distinction between the actual and the merely possible status of some cognitive *content* becomes epistemic in relation to the status of the cognitive *state itself*.[14] However, by construing the mark of the actual as this empirical *content* of intuition stripped of any distinctive *form*—that is, perception or sensation—Kant certainly *seems* to be falling into the "Myth of the Given". Russell had thought that the replacement of Kant's *monadic* conception of concepts by the modern *polyadic* one had allowed one to dispense with the structuring role provided by Kant's pure intuitions of time and space,[15] and so we might think of Russell's "conceptual" framework here as analogous to what *Kant* had conceived as the *schematised* set of categories, leaving Kant's sensory *content* of intuition, as Russell was well aware, looking like his own idea of a "sense-datum"—what he thought of as an immediately knowable and entirely *unconceptualized* sensory content *given* in the cognitive attitude that Russell called "acquaintance".[16]

Russellian sense data known immediately in acquaintance provide a clear instantiation of the type of "Given" that is subject to Wilfrid Sellars's critique in *Empiricism and Philosophy of Mind*.[17] Sellars's opposition to this picture is, in its most obvious sense, an epistemological one. First, the idea of the un-conceptualised "Given" is unable to provide the appropriate *rational* constraints on judgment: only something already equipped with some sort of a *conceptual articulation* could provide a

logical constraint for judgment, thus at least gesturing towards the propositionality-thesis of *Mind and World*. Besides this, however, Sellars also appealed to *modal* considerations, suggesting how modally laden concepts could penetrate right into the determination of the very *content* of what was supposedly "given". Thus in his much-discussed example of John the tie-salesman, we are meant to grasp how John's simple perceptual judgment as to a tie's colour is to be thought of as *conditional* upon assumptions about the lighting conditions under which judging takes place.[18] Having been caught out by mistaking green ties for blue ones because he had, unbeknownst to him, been judging them under altered lighting conditions, John had come to grasp his perceptual judgment of colour as dependent on the conditions under which they were being made. That is, he had come to appreciate that *were* the lighting to be different, the experience he is *now* having and on the basis of which he is describing one tie as, say, blue *could* be the basis of a contrary judgment, the judgment that the tie is in fact *green*. There is no sense, then, in which some unconceptualized sensory given can be conceived as rationally grounding the correct application of an empirical concept—the mere reception of some "blue" sensation could not be the rational basis for the perceiver's judgment of a thing's *being* blue.

THE MODAL–EPISTEMIC RELATION IN HEGEL

The broadly "Hegelian" features of Sellars's critique of the Myth of the Given are often noted, and Hegel's "critique" of the idea of "sense-certainty" in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*,[19] chapter 1, taken as *his* criticism of this myth.[20] But Hegel was able to do this, I suggest, by transforming Kant's concept–intuition distinction in such a way as to retain the *modal* actuality-signalling role of empirical intuitions while at the same time jettisoning any idea of a distinctive *non-conceptual* intuitive content able to determine the content of an empirical concept. He did this by replacing the concept-intuition distinction with a *logical* distinction between two different types of *judgment*, a distinction that provided him with the type of *innocent* version of the perceptual (lower-case) "given" that McDowell wants to retain.

The central role played by modal notions in Hegel's account of judgment is apparent from the distinction he makes in the *Science of Logic*, Book III, section on judgment, between an *Urteil* or judgment and

a *Satz*, by which he seems to mean here something like a *sentence* considered in the context of a simple *reporting* usage. Thus, considered as a mere *Satz*, the sentence "Aristotle died at the age of 73 in the fourth year of 115th Olympiad" will have a structure in which *both* subject and predicate are considered as name-like singular terms: "what is said of a singular (*einzelnen*) subject" says Hegel, "is itself only something singular (*nur etwas Einzelnes*)".[21] *In this respect* Hegel's "*Satz*" looks something like what Wittgenstein in places in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* calls a "*Satz*"—that is, a *Satz*-sign [*Satzzeichen*] considered "in its projective relation to the world".[22] For Wittgenstein, the relata here are, on the one side, the configuration of the simple signs in the *Satzzeichen*, itself considered as a *state of affairs* and, on the other, "the configuration of the objects in the state of affairs" *pictured* by the *Satzzeichen*.[23] While Wittgenstein says that one configuration "*entspricht*", corresponds to, the other, Hegel talks of "the agreement [*Übereinstimmung*] of representation with the subject matter",[24] but for Hegel, the *Satz* considered in such a *projective* way is itself neither true nor false but merely *correct* or *incorrect*. And as the capacity for being true or false is the mark of a judgment, a *Satz,* considered in this way, is not a judgment.

For a *Satz* to count as a judgment, an *Urteil*, it must be used in more than in a simple reporting sense: specifically, it must form part of a larger piece of inferential reasoning. "There would be in it an element of judgment", writes Hegel, "only if one of the circumstances, say, the date of death or the age of the philosopher, came into doubt even though the stated figures were asserted on the strength of some ground or other. In that case, the figures would be taken as something universal, as a time that, even without the determinate content of Aristotle's death, would still stand on its own filled with some other content or simply empty" (SL. 553). Hegel thus is, as Robert Brandom has stressed, a type of "inferentialist" for whom the content of a judgment, properly conceived, depends upon the inferential relations within which it can stand in reasoning.[25] It is in relation to *this* function that it must contain universals,[26] the clear suggestion being that we must be able to think of the predicate "happening in the fourth year of the 115th Olympiad", say, as an *abstract* universal capable of being true of (Hegel will say, "subsuming") *diverse* events, allowing it to mediate evidentiary relations

among judgments. We might have evidence, for example, that a three-year siege of Athens started in the fourth year of the 115th Olympiad, and evidence that Aristotle died in the final year of that siege, bringing into doubt the "correctness" of the original *Satz*.

The idea that for the *Satz* to function as a judgment *one* of its terms must express an inference-articulating universal is further exploited in Hegel's treatment of the *types* of judgment. Hegel distinguishes judgments of *existence* (or "thereness" (*Dasein*)) from judgments of *reflection*, it being clear that this is a distinction between perceptual and inferentially based judgments. We typically think of judgments like "Gaius is learned" or "the rose is red" on the model of the predicate expressing something general, *being learned or red*, about some *singular* existent, such as Gaius or some particular rose. In more contemporary terms, we might treat such *singular* judgments "extensionally" in terms of whether or not some entity *satisfies* a concept. Hegel, however, is critical of any such idea of a simple atomic judgment as conveying the content of a simple perception or as something from which more complex judgments can be built, and treats the most *immediate* form of simple judgment—the judgment of *existence*—as one in which the logical roles of subject and predicate are in fact *reversed*, such that *universality* is thought of as qualifying the subject term, and *singularity* the predicate. Let's first attend to the latter.

The singular predicate of the judgment of existence—the *particular redness* inhering in some particular rose—seems to be a simple phenomenologically distinct "given": as *singular* we are tempted to think of it as something like a Kantian *intuition*, or a Russellian *sense-datum*, and its referent might be thought of as a concrete particular or "trope". But that, as a particular instance of *redness*, it has an internal structure emerges on consideration of its negative form. When one says, for example, "the rose is *not* red", negation here will only be taken as applying to the *determinateness* of the general predicate. In saying that the rose is *not* red one does *not* imply that the rose is not *coloured*.[27] Rather, "it is … assumed that it has a color, though another color" (SL 565).[28] If a rose *is* red then it is *not* yellow, *not* pink, *not* blue and so on, and if it is *not* red, it is either yellow *or* pink *or* blue, and so on.[29] This shows that the meaning of the simple judgment "the rose is red" cannot

be given independently of an account of the types of inferences into which that judgment can enter.

Consider now the *subject* term of the judgment of existence. If the predicate is treated as a singular term, then the subject must be treated as a universal.[30] One way to pick out a single thing via general terms is with a definite description, "the tallest woman in this room", say, and, assuming some context this can be generalized to effectively all definite descriptions like "the rose". Aristotle seems to have thought of judgments with such *particular-instances-of-general-kind* subject terms—"this suches"—as instances of the logical form "Some As are B",[31] and, as such, as saying something "about" the genus itself. To say "some humans are dishonest" is to say something about human beings *as such*, i.e., they are capable of *dishonesty*. Hegel plays on the semantic ambiguity of these types of noun phrases, an ambiguity that had been explicitly taught in the type of logic he studied as a student at Tübingen.[32] The initial form of the judgment of existence, "the positive judgment", is not a proper judgment at all, as while the subject "this-such" term contains a universal, it here functions merely to pick out an individual item. The *Satz* involved is functioning *as* a mere *Satz*. Again, it is the possibility of its negation that establishes it as a proper *Urteil*. When, say in a dispute, one denies that the rose is red, and thereby implies it is another colour, one is tacitly appealing to essential properties of the rose *as such*. In contrast, to deny that the number *two* is red is clearly *not* to imply that it is *either yellow, or pink, or blue*, and so on. The sortal term in the subject here functions to control the array of possible contraries relevant for the predicate.

To sum up so far: the judgment of existence has a structure in which something specific is said about some particular thing identified as an instance of a kind. But the ambiguity of this type of subject term allows this sentence to be given a different reading, and it is this different reading that produces the opposed type of judgment, the judgment of *reflection*.

Judgments of reflection are *subsumptive* judgments, in that the property predicated of the subject is a universal in the standardly abstract sense. The quantification of the subject term that was implicit in the "this

such" semantics of the subject of the judgment of existence becomes explicit in reflective judgments that can talk about "all roses" or "some roses" being red or fragrant. Here such predicates will count as "essential universals" that might be equally said of a *variety* of different things beyond the range of roses or flowers, things that might instantiate fragrance or redness *in their own particular ways*. Thus a subsumptive predicate *will not* be identifiable with any phenomenologically *particular* fragrance or colour—any perception or sensation in Kant's sense. Here, presumably the predicates "fragrant" or "red" will refer to something more like *dispositions* to produce a certain effects—some particular phenomenological state, say—in the perceiver. In this context such predicates would then be understood on the model of *more explicitly* dispositional properties such as the "curative" property of a plant, in an example from Hegel's *Encyclopaedia Logic* (§174 add).[33]

Hegel's taxonomy cannot be thought of as a static one. I have mentioned how in the judgment of existence a particular thing, a rose say, is picked out as a instance of a kind, such that "the rose is red" could equally be expressed as "some rose is red", and that formally "some rose is red" can be understood as a *particularly quantified* judgment that stands in a contrastive relation to a universally quantified one—that is, it can be understood as a species of *reflective* judgment.[34] The mere *grammatical* form of the particular judgment thus allows it to be understood as *either* a judgment of existence or a judgment of reflection.[35]

Clearly both epistemological and modal considerations are in play as in Kant's account of judgment, but it is clear that judgments of *existence* are in no way meant to play any *grounding* role in knowledge here. Given the difference in logical form between the two judgments, we cannot think of general judgments as resulting from some type of inductive generalization from judgments of existence. For that to happen, judgments of existence need to be interpreted *as* judgments of reflection. Elsewhere, Hegel discusses this activity of converting specific concrete cognitive contents into abstract general ones as "analysis", a particularly self-conscious version of what he otherwise describes as "reflection".[36] Generalizing, for Hegel, the *immediacy* of judgments of existence neither

implies their *epistemic* priority nor some atomistically conceived logical structure *from which* more complex logical structures can be derived.

Returning then to McDowell, we might say that from Hegel's perspective, the problem with the account in *Mind and World* was that in treating the contents of perceptual awareness as *propositional*, and not simply as conceptual, McDowell was doing what Hegel accuses modern empiricists of doing, of assuming that perception comes as already "analysed" and as having a form that is suitably abstract for the formation of generalizations and laws—a presupposition that seems to be shared by advocates and Davidsonian critics alike of the Myth of the Given.[37] But what then *is* the significance of this purported difference between experienced content and the content of explicit "taking" to be so? Here I want to compare Hegel's distinctions between judgments of existence and judgments of reflection to a similar distinction that is found in the context of Stalnaker's defense of *modal actualism*.

AN INNOCENT, NON-MYTHOLOGICAL LOWER-CASE "GIVEN": STALNAKER AND THE MODAL SIGNIFICANCE OF *DE RE* PERCEPTUAL JUDGMENTS.

While modal issues were largely absent from analytic philosophy during its first decades, they returned with a vengeance in the second half of the twentieth century in response to the revival of modal logic. In attempts to capture the meaningfulness of talk about how the world *might have* been, the Leibnizian idea of possible worlds was revived: one can think of a necessarily true proposition as one true in all possible worlds, and a possibly true one as one true in some possible worlds. But how does one understand what it is to be a *possible world*? Answers here divided metaphysical "actualists" from "possibilists". David Lewis is famous (or infamous) for treating thoughts about non-actual possibilities as thoughts about *real* states of affairs obtaining in *other possible worlds*, worlds that are just as real as the *actual* world but spatio-temporally disconnected from it.[38] The only thing special about the *actual* world is that it is the world in which *we* happen to be, but to think of this as somehow metaphysically privileged would be just like to think of *now* as a metaphysically privileged time. For Lewis, other worlds should be thought of as just as real as other *times*.

Here Lewis can be thought of as making sense of the extension of the truth-theoretical semantics that had developed for *non*-modal logic into the domain of modal logic. Recoiling from such extravagantly counter-intuitive metaphysical commitments, opposing "actualists" have wanted to retain some "realist" understanding of modal sentences as capable of truth or falsity, but without any bizarre Lewisian commitment to other worlds. Actualists thus typically treat "possible worlds" as alternate possible *states of* the world, the actual world—in Stalnaker's account, unexemplified abstract *properties* of the world.[39] Hegel's description of actuality as "concrete" and as containing "possibility within itself as an abstract moment",[40] suggests that we might, at least in a preliminary way, align him with the actualist camp.[41]

To avoid treating mere possibilities as *real*, actualists have typically employed an approach that can be traced back to C. I. Lewis who, in the first decades of the twentieth century, revived modal logic to counter the extensionalist turn in logic introduced by Russell. Lewis was critical of Russell's extensionalist concept of "material implication" and equated his "strict implication", with the *impossibility* of *p* and not-*q*, or, as he otherwise put it, with the idea that "p is inconsistent with the denial of q". Consistency is, Lewis claimed, an *intensional* notion, and cannot be simply equated with groups of propositions that are "concurrently true-in-fact". Rather, "any set of mutually consistent propositions may be said to define a 'possible situation' or 'case' or 'state of affairs', and a proposition may be 'true' of more than one such possible situation—may belong to more than one such set". "Whoever understands 'possible situation', he added, "thereby understands 'consistent propositions' and vice versa."[42] Following this general path, actualists have typically treated "possible worlds" as *abstracta*, identified as "maximal" sets of consistent propositions.

It is not difficult to follow Hegel's account of judgment as one in which judgments are progressively located in "logical space" in the sense of a "space of possibilities". As earlier noted, for Hegel to judge that "the rose is red" is to implicitly locate it in a space of alternate possible but non-actual states, the rose's being yellow, white, pink and so on. For

judgments of reflection, the space is differently configured. Here the negation of "the rose is red" is not defined by a variety of contraries "the rose is white", "the rose is pink" etc., but the contradictory claim that "*it is not the case that* the rose is red". Modal possibilists like David Lewis are happy to posit other-possible-world counterparts to the rose in question, counterparts that are differently coloured, but modal actualists like Stalnaker must find some other way of making sense of talk of alternate possibilities.

Analytic philosophy has its own exemplar of the "analytic" transformation of concrete representations into abstract qualitative ones in Bertrand Russell's famous treatment of the non-existing "present King of France" in which a sentence that purports to be about a concrete particular thing is taken and given a general abstract form. Rather than ask after the present King of France, ask after the nature of existence itself: "Does *it* contain something that is both the present King of France, and bald ?". Hegel seems to have taken *his* idea of analysis as a transformation of concrete to abstract cognitive contents from Leibniz, so it may not be as surprising as it first seems that Hegel's thoughts on analysis here seem to approximate Russell's. But the differences quickly emerge if we think of Hegel in relation to Stalnakerian actualism.

In David Lewis's way of thinking, there are possible worlds in which there is a present King of France—in some he will be bald, in others not, and so on.[43] Meant in this peculiarly *realistic* way, each of those worlds will contain a concrete person the state of whose scalp will determine the truth or falsity in that world of the claim *in that world*. But the actualist, of course, refuses this. Possible worlds are *just* sets of propositions, and it makes no sense to go the extra step of appealing to entities in other possible worlds that are responsible for the truth or falsity of those propositions. But Lewis's thought seems to bring out a peculiarity in Russell's original analysis, in that Russell would treat the sentence, "The present prime minister of Australia is bald" in the same way that he treats "the present King of France is bald". But Stalnaker points to the obvious difference between these sentences understood in the "analysed" Russellian way. In the case of the former, there are specific "witness propositions" of the sort, "Tony Abbott is bald" or, importantly, "*That man* (pointing to Tony Abbott) is bald" that simply

don't exist in relation to the analysed general propositions about the present King of France. And this, I suggest, is the sort of relation that exists for Hegel between judgments of existence and the judgments of reflection that result from their analysis.[44]

From Hegel's perspective, McDowell is correct in "Avoiding the Myth of the Given" in the claim that judgments with an abstract, propositional content that are the contents of explicit acts of *taking* to be so should be thought of as downstream of the experiences, and so correct in rejecting the idea that those experiences have "propositional" content, if we meant this in the standard sense. Furthermore, Hegel's model gives us a way of thinking how experiences might still have *conceptual* content, in that they may be thought of as having a content akin to that of the content of so-called judgments of *existence*, with their phenomenally specific predicates. And Hegel gives us a sense of why such phenomenally rich judgments of existence are necessary, without being tempted into the Myth of the Given, that is, without being tempted by the idea that judgments of existence provide a source of epistemic certainty in relation to which true generalizations can be established by some logical means. But all this, I think needs to be thought from within the context of Hegel's peculiar "actualist" metaphysics. This is the way, I suggest, of getting off the "see-sawing" ups and downs of a philosophical debate that thinks of these issues from a predominantly epistemological perspective, the debate that McDowell so brilliantly diagnosed in *Mind and World*.

In "Avoiding the Myth of the Given", McDowell here tries to loosen the idea of experience and judgment as having identical contents by introducing a gap between experience and judgment, but to do so while not, like Travis, slipping back into the myth that places conceptual powers themselves "downstream" of experience. But in McDowell's formulation, experience still seems to be given its significance in terms of its relation to knowledge in that it is what *entitles* us to judgments.

The Hegelian alternative I've tried to sketch allows us to think through these issues is a slightly different way--to think them through in

terms of the significance ascribed to experience from the perspective of Hegel's conception of the actual—an actual which must be understood as containing *possibility* as reflected within it. Besides putting us in cognitive contact with aspects of the word, experiences, it could be said, allow us to consciously locate *ourselves* in that world, as beliefs formed on the basis of Hegel's contextually specific judgments of existence are clearly instances of what are commonly referred to as "self-locating" beliefs.[45] It is just this that is lost in "reflection" to *centreless* judgments of reflection. But to locate ourselves in the world is to grasp ourselves as objects in the world as so as seeable from the viewpoints of others. Being located in the world is thus what allows us to have experience of similarly located things and at the same time makes our experience subject to specific conditions. It is then the grasp of our located worldly condition that can lead us to ask how the world might appear from other locations within it, other locations that we, as subjects, might have occupied or might in the future occupy. And for the Hegelian actualist this must all be a possibility that is *internal* to experience. Experience itself must then involve a *tension* between the demands that one acquire content for thought, that must always happen *from* a particular point of view, and the demand that one potentially "reflects" on this content, and think "from the viewpoint of others".

Hegel, I believe, thought though these issues more effectively than did Kant. My suggestion is that Hegel's standpoint of modal actualism might allow us avoid the Myth of the Given more effectively than ones that take their bearing from Kant.

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[1] John McDowell, "Avoiding the Myth of the Given", in Jakob Lindgaard, (ed.), *John McDowell: Experience, Norm, and Nature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), republished in, John McDowell, *Having the World in View: Essays on Kant, Hegel, and Sellars* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 257. Page numbers are to the latter publication.

[2] Ibid., p. 258.

[3] John McDowell, *Mind and World*, second paperback edition with a new introduction (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 1996).

[4] "I used to assume that to conceive experiences as actualizations of conceptual capacities, we would need to credit experiences with *propositional* content, the sort of content judgments have. And I used to assume that the content of an experience

would need to include *everything* the experience enables its subject to know non-inferentially. But both these assumptions now strike me as wrong." 258.

[5] Donald Davidson, "A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge", in Dieter Henrich (ed.), *Kant oder Hegel*, (Stuttgart: Klett–Cotta, 1983), p. 141.

[6] McDowell, "Avoiding the Myth of the Given", 268.

[7] Ibid., 268–9

[8] Ibid., 269.

[9] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), A51/B75.

[10] In the Metaphysical Deduction of *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant discusses the modal categories of *possibility*, *existence,* and *necessity* (A80/B106), linking them the modality of *problematic*, *assertoric* and *apodictic* judgments (A70/B95).

[11] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A218/B265, emphasis added

[12] When Kant here repeats that "in the **mere concept** of a thing no characteristic of its existence can be encountered at all" he obscures the role played by the form of intuition here. "For even if this concept is so complete that it lacks nothing required for thinking of a thing with all of its inner determinations, still existence has nothing in the least to do with all of this, but only with the question of whether such a thing is given to us in such a way that the perception of it could in any case precede the concept. For that the concept precedes the perception signifies its mere possibility; but perception, which yields the material for the concept, is the sole characteristic of actuality. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A225/B272–3.

[13] In the Transcendental Aesthetic, Kant describes *sensation* as "the effect of an object on the capacity for representation, insofar as we are affected by it" and characterizes an empirical intuition as one that is "related to the object through sensation". Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* A20/B34.

[14] For example, the criteria for an attitude's content being *actual* is just what, in relation to the attitude itself, marks it as a case of *perceiving* rather than, say merely hypothesising or imagining

[15] See here especially Michael Friedman's lucid presentation of these issues in *Kant and the Exact Sciences* (Boston, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), Ch. 2, "Concepts and Intuitions in the Mathematical Sciences".

[16] See here in particular, Manley Thompson, "Singular Terms and Intuitions in Kant's Epistemology," *Review of Metaphysics* 26 (1972–3), 314–43, in which Thompson portrays Kant's transcendental logic as anticipating Fregean formal logic, with a concomitant treatment of intuitions as semantically analogous to demonstrative pronouns.

[17] Wilfrid Sellars, *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, with an Introduction by Richard Rorty and a Study Guide by Robert Brandom (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997).

[18] Ibid., §§ 14–16.

[19] G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), Ch 1.

[20] See, for example, Willem A. deVries, "Sense-Certainty and the 'This-Such'", in Dean Moyar and Michael Quante (eds), *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[21] G. W. F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. George di Giovani (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 553.

[22] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. C. K. Ogden (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1922), 3.12.

[23] Ibid., 3.21.

[24] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 562. Here Hegel is talking of the initial form of the judgment of existence, the positive judgment, which is not truly a judgment but only a *Satz*.

[25] Robert B. Brandom, *Tales of the Mighty Dead: Historical Essays in the Metaphysics of Intentionality* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 2002), *Reason in Philosophy: Animating Ideas,* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press 2009), and *A Spirit of Trust*, unpublished, draft available at <http://www.pitt.edu/~brandom/spirit_of_trust_2014.html>. I have argued elsewhere, however, that Hegel's inferentialism is weaker than that defended by Brandom. See my "An Hegelian Solution to a Tangle of Problems Facing Brandom's Analytic Pragmatism", forthcoming in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 23.4 (2015).

[26] C.f "It can also be mentioned in this context that a *proposition* [*Satz*] can indeed have a subject and predicate in a grammatical sense without however being a *judgment* [*Urteil*] for that. The latter requires that the predicate behave with respect to the subject n a relation of conceptual determination, hence as a universal with respect to a particular or singular." Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 553

[27] "From the side of this universal sphere, the judgment is still positive".

[28] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 565. Here Hegel draws on features of the logical structure of perceptual judgments later pointed out by the Cambridge logician and Russell-critic, W. E. Johnson, when he called such predicates the *determinants* of some general *determinable*.

[29] Moreover, what counts as a determinable of any entity depends up what *sort* of entity it is. While numbers can be characterized as either odd or even, but not as either red, or blue, or yellow, or …, roses can be characterised as either red, or blue, or yellow, or …, but not as either odd or even.

[30] Otherwise it would be a *Satz* rather than a *Urteil*.

[31] This general conception of the *subject* of such a perceptual judgment broadly coincides, I suggest, with what Hegel describes as the object of perception [*Wahrnehmen*] as discussed in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, chapter 2.

[32] The textbook used was Gottfried Ploucquet, *Logik* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2006). On Ploucquet's treatment of this ambiguity see K. Aner, Gottfried Ploucquets Leben und Lehren (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1999).

[33] We might thus think of such "reflective" properties more on the model of the posited "forces" that explain the fluctuations of appearance as explored by Hegel in Chapter 3 of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, "Forces and the Understanding". See my "Hegel's Anticipation of the Early History of Analytic Philosophy", *The Owl of Minerva: Journal of the Hegel Society of North America*, vol. 42:1–2 (2010–11), pp. 18–40.

[34] That is, "some rose (or roses) is (or are) red" can be regarded as imply "*It is not the case that* all roses are *not* red", and as such it is classed as a reflective judgment.

[35] This is linked to the reversal of which term plays the role of S and which P.

[36] Analysis, Hegel tells us in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, "consists … in dissolving [*aufzulösen*] the concrete that is given, isolating its distinctions and bestowing the form of *abstract universality* upon them; in other words, it consists in leaving the concrete as *ground* and making a concrete universal—the genus, or force and law—stand out through abstraction from the particularities that seem to be inessential." G. W. F. Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic: Part I of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze*, trans. T. F. Geraets, W. A. Sutching, and H. S. Harris (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), §229, add.

[37] In the *Encyclopedia Logic*, in commenting on empiricism, which "relies on the analytic method", he notes that it "falls into error" when it assumes that in analysis it leaves such concrete objects of perception—*Gegenstanden*—"as they are". In fact, abstraction "transforms what is concrete into something abstract [*das Konkrete in ein Abstraktes verwandelt*]" Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic,* § 38, add.

[38] David K. Lewis, *On the Plurality of Worlds* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).

[39] See especially, Robert C. Stalnaker, *Mere Possibilities: Metaphysical Foundations of Modal Semantics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

[40] Hegel, *The Encyclopedia Logic*, § 143, addition.

[41] Appealing to ordinary consciousness he notes that "when we speak of the possible, as distinct from the actual, we call it 'merely' possible"

[42] Lewis, C. I. *A Survey of Symbolic Logic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1918), 333.

[43] Actually, these will be what he calls "centred possible worlds" to capture the indexical "present", but this is not an issue here.

[44] Modern predicate logic employs the notions of "existential generalization" and "existential instantiation" to capture the inferences involved. Existential instantiation says that one can validly move from an existentially quantified statement to one containing a new constant, ((∃x) Fx :: Fa). Modal actualists must deny the validity of existential instantiation for *non-actual* worlds.

[45] On phenomenally rich perceptual judgments as self-locating beliefs see Robert C. Stalnaker, *Our Knowledge of the Internal World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), especially ch. 3.