11 Skepticism, deduction, and reason's maturation[1]

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In 1790, Kant published "On a Discovery Whereby Any New Critique of Pure Reason is to be Made Superfluous by an Older One," a response to J.A. Eberhard's longstanding attack on the *Critique of Pure Reason*. While refuting Eberhard's charge that the forms of our cognitive faculties—space, time, and the categories—are occult qualities unless they are innate in us, Kant asserts that the first *Critique* "admits absolutely no implanted or innate *representations*."[2] To clarify this assertion, Kant distinguishes two kinds of acquired representations. The first are derivative acquisitions (*acquisitio derivativa*), which depend on experience: paradigmatically, sensible intuitions and empirical concepts are representations acquired in experience. The second are original acquisitions (*acquisitio originaria*), which condition the possibility of experience and whose ground lies *a priori* in our faculties: *contra* Eberhard, space, time, and the categories are representations acquired through the activation of the faculties of which they are the forms.[3] Thus, unlike empirical concepts, pure concepts or categories are acquired simply through the use of the understanding. Rather than being arbitrarily implanted in us by an external source, they are internally generated by the understanding's own activity. As Kant says in the Transcendental Analytic of the first *Critique*, the categories are the "self-thought *a priori* principles of our cognition."[4]

It is in the Analytic that Kant gives a transcendental deduction of the categories' necessity for possible experience. Here, a puzzle arises. On the one hand, as Kant explains to Eberhard, whereas sensible intuitions and empirical concepts may be acquired in experience, the categories cannot but have been acquired through our faculties. On the other hand, a transcendental deduction of the categories' necessity is required insofar as their necessity is not self-evident. After all, the deduction is taken up in response to dogmatism, which deploys the categories with no regard for our right to them or the bounds of their legitimate use. A transcendental deduction thus has the peculiar quality of showing that the categories are necessary conditions of experience and yet that we have no rightful claim to them prior to deducing them.

Charles Taylor hints at the peculiarity of articulating the conditions of experience when distinguishing chess from perception. We know what it is to play chess once the rules are explained to us. By contrast, perception is "an inarticulate activity; it starts off entirely so, and remains largely so. And even when we learn to articulate what we see, we never (except when doing philosophy) try to articulate what it is to see."[5] The difference between what one sees and what it is to see reflects the difference between what one understands and what it is to understand. Objects of the understanding are articulable without the categories even being candidates for articulation. Articulating the categories' necessity is a philosophical task, which means that the question of their necessity must first be raised. As Taylor accordingly observes, despite articulating conditions that our experience "cannot but have," a transcendental deduction articulates "what is most difficult for us to articulate."[6] The puzzle, then, is how to comprehend "why […] we have to work so hard"[7] to lay claim to what is originally ours.

Resolving this puzzle requires grasping the essential role that skepticism plays in a transcendental deduction, specifically, the skeptical question *quid juris*, concerning the right by which the understanding possesses and uses the categories. This is precisely the question ignored by dogmatism. A transcendental deduction's response to it accordingly lies at the heart of a critique of pure reason, which, in the Preface to the first *Critique*, Kant defines as "a court of justice, by which reason may secure its rightful claims while dismissing all its groundless pretensions."[8] The pretensions of dogmatism prompt skeptical interrogation of our right to the categories, proof of which falls to a deduction. We can make sense of the effort of asserting ownership of our faculties' ownmost forms by focusing on the turn prompted by the question *quid juris* and, in particular, on Kant's construal of this question in the juridical terms of entitlement to property.

Kant poses the question *quid juris* as a way of adopting a skeptical attitude toward those pure concepts to which we implicitly help ourselves in ordinary experience, scientific inquiry, and metaphysical theorizing. The categories are, as original acquisitions, possessions of the understanding, although not thereby its property. Unless we interrogate our right to them, we cannot thematize their necessity for experience and so risk deploying them beyond their proper bounds. Only by raising the question *quid juris* concerning the categories and giving "a deduction of their entitlement"[9] can we overcome the naiveté with which we use them. As we will see, it is the need to convert the categories from possessions we take for granted to property to which we are entitled—the need for a skeptical intervention with our understanding—that explains the effort of laying claim to what is originally ours.

In Part I, I examine the skeptical challenge that makes a transcendental deduction a pressing matter. The question *quid juris* is required to interrogate our confidence in the categories—to wake us, as Hume wakes Kant, from the "dogmatic slumber"[10] of uncritical trust in our cognitive faculty.

The contingency of having this trust shaken is greater than Taylor at one point suggests. While he notes that "there is nothing sacred about the number of steps"[11] in a transcendental argument such as the transcendental deduction, this contingency extends further: there is nothing sacred about taking any steps at all. Nothing one understands *of itself* compels one to articulate what it is to understand. Articulating this requires sensitivity to the skeptical question of our right to the pure concepts of the understanding.

In Part II, I situate the transcendental deduction within the broader development that Kant regards as the maturation of reason. In the Transcendental Doctrine of Method, he assigns skepticism to the developmental phase between the "childhood" of dogmatism and the "mature and adult power of judgment."[12] If adopted without despair, skepticism can remove our dogmatic pretensions about the nature and scope of the understanding, bringing us toward critical self-knowledge. However, the contingency of deducing our right to the categories applies no less to our pursuit of rational maturity. Just as it is contingent whether one addresses the question of right, so, too, it is contingent whether one does so in the course of working toward the adulthood of critique.

In Part III, I contrast Hegel's post-Kantian account of the skeptical path to rational maturity in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which shifts both the mode of skepticism and the prospect of maturation. First, whereas the Kantian subject consciously raises the question *quid juris* to justify her claim to the categories, for Hegel, spirit suffers its own self-contradictory attempts at justifying its categories. By supplanting the idea that skepticism is a deliberate method of overcoming dogmatism with the idea that it characterizes spirit's long and difficult experience of itself, the *Phenomenology* converts the categories from original acquisitions to dialectical results. Second, Kant regards maturity as a regulative ideal on the grounds that reason is "irremediably" susceptible to transcendental illusion.[13] By contrast, Hegel defines reason as a "*purposive activity*"[14] ineluctably progressing toward absolute knowledge. The *Phenomenology* thereby recasts categorial right as emerging, not from chance confrontation with the question *quid juris*, but from a path whose stages reason can retrospectively show to have been necessary. We will see that Hegel thereby modifies the very nature of deduction for post-Kantian thought.

I.

The puzzle with which we begin concerns the unusual task of a transcendental deduction, which is to lay claim to—or to claim *anew*—what is already ours. On the one hand, a transcendental deduction demonstrates the necessity of the categories for possible experience. As Kant argues, they transcendentally condition any experience whatsoever. On the other hand, without this deduction, we lack an obvious entitlement to the categories as transcendental conditions, without which entitlement we remain unaware

of the proper bounds of their use and so are liable to dogmatism. While the categories are primordial possessions of the understanding—what Kant calls its "ancestral concepts"[15]—they only become its rightful property once our entitlement to them is deduced. The solution to this puzzle is to grasp the role of the skeptical question *quid juris* that first raises the very idea of our right to the categories and enables us to convert them from implicit possessions to rightful property. Grasping skepticism's function in this critical transformation requires registering two important Kantian distinctions.

In the first *Critique*, Kant distinguishes the question *quid juris*, concerning our right to possess and use a concept, from the question *quid facti*, which concerns the fact from which a concept's possession originates.[16] While the question of right and the question of fact are only briefly discussed in this text, they assign tasks that track a related distinction between a transcendental deduction and a class of deductions that Kant divides into empirical and metaphysical varieties.

In §13 of the Analytic, Kant charges a transcendental deduction with establishing our "entitlement" to concepts our possession of which is lawful insofar as these concepts "relate to objects *a priori*." Concepts that relate to objects *a priori* do so with necessity and universality: they are concepts of objects in general, i.e. categories. Deducing our right to them thus provides an answer to the question *quid juris*.

A non-transcendental deduction establishes not the "lawfulness" with which we possess a concept, but "the fact from which the possession has arisen."[17] Such a deduction accordingly provides an answer to the question *quid facti*. However, the fact from which a concept's possession originates can be empirical or metaphysical. In §13, Kant describes "an ancestry of experiences" from which a concept's possession arises and assigns its discovery to an "empirical deduction."[18] A concept "acquired through experience" in this way is an empirical concept.[19] By contrast, a concept that relates to objects *a priori* is pure or categorial. Hence, in §26, Kant describes the discovery of the categories' origin as a "metaphysical deduction," which traces the categories to their "ancestral registry" in the understanding.[20] In the language of "On a Discovery," a metaphysical deduction shows that the categories are originally acquired through the faculty of understanding itself.

Combining these Kantian distinctions, we see that whereas the question of right calls for a transcendental deduction, the question of fact calls for either an empirical or a metaphysical deduction, depending on the concept in question. If the concept is a category, a transcendental deduction will prove our entitlement to it as a necessary condition of experience while a metaphysical deduction will prove its origin in the understanding.

Kant revisits the first distinction in an early 1780s *Reflexion*, addressing the question *quid facti* to the "way one has first come into the possession of a concept" and the question *quid juris* to the "right [by which]

one possesses and uses it." He adds that the "universality and necessity in the use of the pure concepts of the understanding betrays their origin," which origin, since they make experience possible, "must not be empirical."[21] Only a metaphysical deduction can answer the question of a pure concept's origin, namely, by demonstrating its *a priori* ground in the understanding.

We might ask why a transcendental deduction is needed if a metaphysical deduction can show that the categories are the original acquisitions of the understanding. If these concepts have their ancestry in our faculty for judging, what more needs to be proved? Why, after settling the question *quid facti*, should we raise the question *quid juris*? In the terms of our puzzle: why must we lay claim to what is already ours?

To answer this question, it is useful to consider the juridical metaphor with which Kant introduces the distinction between the question of right and the question of fact:

> Jurists, when they speak of entitlements and claims, distinguish in a legal matter between the questions about what is lawful (*quid juris*) and that which concerns the fact (*quid facti*), and since they demand proof of both, they call the first, that which is to establish the entitlement or the legal claim, the deduction.[22]

It is by first establishing the fact of possession that the lawfulness of possession may then be established, for only then is there something to which entitlement can be proven.[23] However, while answering the question of fact is necessary for answering the question of right, it is not sufficient: merely determining "the fact" does not determine "what is lawful." This is why Kant states that jurists "demand proof of both" the fact and lawfulness. Raising the question *quid juris* is necessary to take us beyond the origin of our possession of the categories to a consideration of the right by which we possess and use them. This question is what allows us to convert our possession into property.

We can see why the skeptical question of right is the unique catalyst for this conversion if we consider that ordinary experience is indifferent to its conditions of possibility. Such conditions are presupposed by experience: they are too near to be perceived, too familiar to be recognized, much less thematized as to our entitlement to them. Specifically, ordinary experience involves a tacit trust in our ability to understand the world. As long as experience proceeds on its normal course, ordinary trust in the understanding remains unshaken, in which case there is no felt need to justify it through a deduction of our right to the categories. A certain skeptical challenge is needed to interrupt the unwitting confidence of experience, namely, by putting our trust into question.

The inertia of ordinary trust in the understanding resembles dogmatic trust in reason. For both kinds of trust, the categories' possession and use

go unnoticed and so unjustified. This affinity is discernible in Kant's discussion of the relation between trust and skepticism in "On a Discovery":

> By *dogmatism* in metaphysics, the *Critique* understands this: the general trust in its principles, *without* a previous *critique* of the faculty of reason itself, merely because of its success; *by skepticism*, however, the general mistrust in pure reason, without a previous critique, merely because of the failure of its assertions. The *criticism* of the procedure concerning everything pertaining to metaphysics (the doubt of deferment) is, on the other hand, the maxim of a general mistrust of all its synthetic propositions, until a universal ground of their possibility has been discerned in the essential conditions of our cognitive faculty.[24]

With this passage, we can detect an analogy between ordinary trust in the understanding and dogmatic trust in reason. Just as the normal course of experience provides no impetus to put ordinary trust into question, so, too, the apparent "success" of metaphysics provides no impetus to put dogmatic trust into question. In both cases, what we might call *critical skepticism* is needed to scrutinize the "general trust" in our cognitive faculty—a "doubt of deferment," as Kant says, which suspends this trust until we can secure its justification through a transcendental deduction. Critical skepticism differs from despairing skepticism, which responds with "general mistrust" to the apparent "failure" of metaphysics. Like the dogmatist's assessment of metaphysics, the despairing skeptic's assessment neglects a critique of reason—the court of justice that secures reason's "rightful claims." By contrast, a critical skeptic suspends trust in reason until the categorial ground of our metaphysical assertions can be discerned. Drawing out the proposed analogy, a critical skeptic likewise suspends trust in the understanding until the categorial ground of our experience can be discerned.

The discovery of this ground involves several steps with which we are now familiar. We saw that the categories are original acquisitions of the understanding. We also saw that tracing this origin answers the question *quid facti* while raising the question *quid juris*. Finally, we saw that raising the question *quid juris* requires a skeptical interruption of the normal course of experience. Critical skepticism provides this interruption while steering between "general trust" and "general mistrust" in our cognitive faculty.

What precise form does critical skepticism take? For Kant, it is a generalized yet hopeful form of Humean skepticism. Kant credits Hume in the Introduction to the first *Critique* with coming "closest" to posing the problem of how synthetic *a priori* judgments are possible, on whose solution metaphysics "stands and falls."[25] This is the problem of how it is that we possess the conceptual component of judgments that are universal and necessary yet amplify cognition. In other words, it is the problem of our right to concepts that relate to objects *a priori*. Hume comes close to posing this problem by asking what right we have to the concept of causality, a question

that Kant extends to other pure concepts. As Kant says in *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, the first *Critique* is "the *elaboration* of the Humean problem in its greatest possible amplification." Later, he adds,

> [Hume] rightly affirmed: that we in no way have insight through reason into the possibility of causality […] I add to this that we have just as little insight into the concept of subsistence […] I also add that this very incomprehensibility affects the community of things as well.[26]

Metaphysics cannot become a science without adopting a critically skeptical attitude toward its basic notions.

While Kant generalizes Humean skepticism, he nevertheless renders it hopeful. In the Doctrine of Method, he says that Hume is "perhaps the most ingenious of all skeptics, and is incontrovertibly the preeminent one with regard to the influence that the skeptical procedure can have on awakening a thorough examination of reason." Despite Hume's recognition of skepticism's corrective potential, however, he is diverted on "the trail of truth" by despair concerning reason's justificatory capacity.[27] In *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Hume deems reason "unfit" to prove our right to the concept of causality, our use of which he says is merely "the effect of *Custom*."[28] To the extent that Hume broaches the question of our right to concepts that relate to objects universally and necessarily, the appeal to custom cannot prove the lawfulness of such concepts because this mechanism is empirical and so contingent.[29] But although Hume effectively retreats from the problem of synthetic apriority, its solution remains possible, Kant says, "contrary to the surmise of [its] originator." The solution consists in showing that the categories do not derive from experience because the structure of experience rather "is derived from them, a completely reversed type of connection that never occurred to *Hume*."[30] Pursuing this solution requires taking seriously the skeptical challenge posed by the question *quid juris* and answering it with hope rather than despair.[31]

Hume is Scylla to the dogmatist's Charybdis, displaying general mistrust in our cognitive faculty.[32] "A critique of reason," Kant says, "indicates the true middle way between the dogmatism that Hume fought and the skepticism he wanted to introduce instead."[33] Not only, then, is Hume "far from conceiving […] in such universality" the question of how synthetic judgments *a priori* are possible, but he "deposited his ship on the beach (of skepticism) for safekeeping, where it could then lie and rot."[34] By contrast to this despairing skepticism, critical skepticism raises the question of right as a philosophical task that we may hope to fulfill, thereby winning back the trust that we temporarily put into doubt for this purpose.[35] Hence, whereas Hume rhetorically asks what "logic" or "argument" could ever justify our thought of nature's causal regularity,[36] Kant develops transcendental logic and transcendental argument precisely in order to demonstrate causality's role as a categorial ground of experience. Justifying our claim to the categories thus

converts an original acquisition from possession to property through a skeptical intervention with our understanding—a critical interruption of the flow of experience that reorients us toward what it is to understand.[37]

II.

Critical skepticism, confident in reason's deductive ability, steers between dogmatic trust and skeptical mistrust in our cognitive faculty. It is a response to a crisis that we notice when contrary metaphysical theses appeal to the same principles. In "What Real Progress Has Metaphysics Made in Germany Since the Time of Leibniz and Wolff?," Kant describes an "antinomy of reason" that "throws it into an uncertainty of mistrust" towards its own claims and "casts it into a despair of reason in itself [...] which we may call the state of dogmatic skepticism."[38] The decisive moment is whether, in light of reason's inner tensions, we adopt "dogmatic"—i.e. despairing—skepticism or critical skepticism. The latter, as we have seen, pursues a transcendental deduction of the categories. It is crucial to observe that this deduction is formative for what Kant regards as the maturation of reason insofar as the "doubt of deferment" is pivotal in progressing from the "childhood" of dogmatism to the "adult power of judgment." In this process, the deductive reclamation of the categories as rightful property contributes to the self-possession that emerges from grasping the nature and scope of our cognitive faculty. I will now situate the answer to the skeptical question *quid juris* within the course of reason's maturation in order to show that the contingency of raising the former is inseparable from the contingency of pursuing the latter.

Kant discusses the purpose of skepticism extensively in The Discipline of Pure Reason. In Section II, he imagines Hume's response to the question of what motivates the skeptical attack on the dogmatic use of reason:

> He would answer: 'Nothing but the intention of bringing reason further in its self-knowledge and at the same time a certain aversion to the coercion which one would exercise against reason by treating it as great and yet at the same time preventing a free confession of its weaknesses, which become obvious to it in the examination of itself'.[39]

By Kant's lights, the goal of Humean skepticism is self-knowledge, specifically, knowledge of the limitations or "weaknesses" of our cognitive standpoint. Critical skepticism shares this goal insofar as "philosophy consists precisely in knowing its bounds."[40] As we saw, Hume draws these bounds too narrowly for he is dogmatically skeptical about reason's ability to justify our possession and use of the categories, exhibiting what Kant, in the *Prolegomena*, calls "complete despair as regards satisfaction of reason's most important aims."[41] Hence, while Humean and critical skepticism both seek self-knowledge, the latter spares reason's highest

ambitions in its attack on dogmatism. As Kant says in Section III, "All skeptical polemicizing is *properly directed only against the dogmatist*, who continues gravely along his path without any mistrust of his original objective principles, i.e. without critique, in order to unhinge his concept and bring him to self-knowledge."[42] Skepticism targets dogmatic trust in reason, but indiscriminately censoring reason for its dogmatic deeds out of "general distrust"[43] sacrifices reason's "most important aims," diminishing its potential for self-knowledge. Skepticism's true purpose, then, is to satisfy these aims in order to facilitate knowledge of oneself within one's cognitive bounds.

We can better grasp skepticism's purpose by focusing on Kant's claim that self-knowledge depends on disrupting the path of dogmatism. As we saw, dogmatic trust in reason is reinforced by the apparent success of metaphysics. Absent skeptical pressure, dogmatism proceeds with unquestioning confidence in the categories, an attitude that Kant compares to the innocence of youth:

> The first step in matters of pure reason, which characterizes its childhood, is dogmatic. The [...] second step is skeptical, and gives evidence of the caution of the power of judgment sharpened by experience. Now, however, a third step is still necessary, which pertains only to the mature and adult power of judgment, which has as its basis firm maxims of proven universality, that, namely, which subjects to evaluation not the *facta* of reason but reason itself, as concerns its entire capacity and suitability for pure *a priori* cognitions; this is not the censorship but the critique of pure reason.[44]

On the path to self-knowledge, we begin in the "childhood" of dogmatism, deferring to the *facta* or deeds of reason on the basis of blind faith in the categories. Growing past this phase requires scrutinizing the categories' illegitimate use. But this is "only the second step" for merely scrutinizing the categories' misuse is insufficient for "completing the work" of critique, which, far from censoring reason, evaluates its "suitability for pure *a priori* cognitions." As Kant defines it, critique is a process whereby "reason may secure its rightful claims," in particular, its claim to the categories. Dogmatic skepticism stalls at this developmental stage by deeming reason unfit to achieve its justificatory ambitions. This is why "a third step is still necessary," one that engenders "an adult power of judgment" grounded on such "maxims of proven universality" as the categories. Critical skepticism affords this by employing the doubt of deferment so as to outgrow dogmatic deference to the *facta* of reason and thereby to fulfill "reason's expectations of hoping for better success in its future efforts."[45] Success, following Kant's maturation metaphor, lies in overcoming the deferential behavior of an immature phase and resisting the temptation to underestimate our capacity for self-knowledge.

Grasping skepticism's developmental potential accordingly demands a balance of humility and hope.[46] It is humbling to take responsibility for *facta* predicated on blind faith and to scrutinize the faculty responsible for them. Kant warns, however, that

> for reason to leave just these doubts standing, and to set out to recommend the conviction and confession of its ignorance, not merely as a cure for dogmatic self-conceit but also as the way in which to end the conflict of reason with itself, is an entirely vain attempt, by no means suitable for arranging a peaceful retirement for reason; rather it is at best only a means for awaking it from its sweet dogmatic dreams in order to undertake a more careful examination of its condition.[47]

Dogmatism gives rise to a crisis in which contrary metaphysical theses appeal to the same principles or, in the language of the Discipline, in which conflicting *facta* appeal to the same pure concepts. Dogmatic skepticism cannot resolve this crisis for, by leaving "doubts standing", it betrays reason's ambitions, which include justifying our claim to the categories and ultimately aim at self-knowledge. It thereby leaves us at odds with ourselves, preventing us from regaining trust in our cognitive faculty. This, Kant says in the *Prolegomena*, "promises us absolutely nothing at all, not even the tranquility of a permitted ignorance."[48] Skepticism's real potential consists in provoking a transcendental deduction, which is pivotal in our turn from dogmatic immaturity to critical maturity: to ask the question *quid juris* with conviction in reason's deductive ability is to place hope in reason's capacity to know itself through a "careful examination of its condition."

Reason's adolescence is thus a crossroads at which two varieties of skepticism are available: dogmatic and despairing, or critical and hopeful. The latter enables a transcendental deduction: "the skeptical procedure is not, to be sure, itself satisfying for questions of reason, but it is nevertheless preparatory for arousing its caution and showing it fundamental means for securing it in its rightful possessions."[49] Doubt is necessary to curb dogmatic enthusiasm, but it must find its purpose in the maturation of reason. This is why Kant says that skepticism is "*properly directed only against the dogmatist*." On pain of despair, it must be "the taskmaster of the dogmatic sophist for a healthy critique of the understanding and of reason itself."[50]

It is nevertheless contingent whether we recognize skepticism's true purpose as

> a resting place for human reason, which can reflect upon its dogmatic peregrination and make a survey of the region in which it finds itself in order to be able to choose its path in the future with greater certainty.

Just as we can fail to raise the question *quid juris* in earnest, so, too, we can mistake skepticism for "a dwelling-place for permanent residence" and so

prevent ourselves from ascertaining "the boundaries within which all of our cognition of objects is enclosed."[51] Since these are nothing but the bounds of our own cognitive faculty, we would fail to achieve self-knowledge. But once critical skepticism triggers the categories' deductive reclamation, it can thereby facilitate reason's maturation.

Thus, we can appreciate the full import of the skeptical question *quid juris*. By thematizing the necessity of the categories for experience—resolving the puzzle with which we began of why we claim anew what is originally ours—skepticism serves the end of philosophy itself, namely, mature self-knowledge. In its proper sense, skepticism is *protreptic*, inviting a revolution or turn. Critical skepticism orients us away from the objects of special metaphysics and toward the metaphysics of human subjectivity. It nurtures the insight that, to modify a theological metaphor, human reason is a sphere whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere.[52] As Kant says in Section III of the Discipline,

> Our reason is not like an indeterminably extended plane, the limits of which one can cognize only in general, but must rather be compared with a sphere, the radius of which can be found out from the curvature of an arc on its surface (from the nature of synthetic *a priori* propositions), from which its content and its boundary can also be ascertained with certainty. Outside this sphere (field of experience) nothing is an object for it; indeed even questions about such supposed objects concern only subjective principles of a thoroughgoing determination of the relations that can obtain among the concepts of understanding inside of this sphere.[53]

Confronting the problem of synthetic apriority leads reason through a transcendental deduction toward knowledge of the bounds of its own perspective *from which it cannot be driven and beyond which there is nothing for it*. Whether one takes this turn is not given for the very reason that waking from the slumber of uncritical trust in our cognitive faculty is not given. Indeed, reason is not given to itself unless it undertakes maturation by means of the doubt of deferment.

III.

Once we grasp that a critique of reason is a court for securing our claim to the categories and a path to mature self-knowledge, we can hear the 'of' in both the subjective and the objective genitive. Reason does not operate critically on some distinct entity, but on its own activity. It (contingently) subjects itself to the skeptical crux of deduction—to the humility and hope of deferred trust in itself.[54] Insofar as the question *quid juris* invites self-interrogation, then, to answer it is not only to transform a possession into property, but, in some sense, to transform oneself.

I turn now to consider Hegel's appropriation and modification of Kant's conception of the relationship between skepticism and maturation, which proves decisive for the course of post-Kantian thought.

The *Phenomenology* follows Kant in asserting that the "goal" of philosophical science is an account of what it is to understand or, as Hegel says in the Preface, an "insight into what knowing is."[55] Hegel furthermore agrees with Kant that we initially possess categorial forms of knowing with unspecified right, saying of these forms that "this acquired property still has the same character of uncomprehended immediacy, of passive indifference" and that, until such unquestioning naiveté is outgrown, spirit "does not comprehend itself."[56] Indeed, like Kant, Hegel predicates spirit's self-knowledge on disrupting ordinary and dogmatic forms of trust in our cognitive faculty:

> Quite generally, the familiar, just because it is familiar, is not cognitively understood. The commonest way in which we deceive either ourselves or others about understanding is by assuming something as familiar, and accepting it on that account; with all its pros and cons, such knowing never gets anywhere, and it knows not why. Subject and object, God, nature, understanding, sensibility, and so on, are uncritically taken for granted as familiar, established as valid, and made into fixed points for starting and stopping.[57]

Although Hegel regards his own time as a "period of transition into a new era" in which spirit will transcend uncritical trust in "the familiar", he holds that spirit

> matures slowly and quietly into its new shape, dissolving bit by bit the structure of its previous world, whose tottering state is only hinted at by isolated symptoms. The frivolity and boredom which unsettle the established order, the vague foreboding of something unknown, these are the heralds of approaching change [...] The onset of the new spirit is the product of a widespread upheaval in various forms of culture, the prize at the end of a complicated, tortuous path and of just as variegated and strenuous an effort.[58]

For Kant, the subject takes the critical turn by consciously confronting the skeptical question *quid juris* for the express purpose of deductively reclaiming originally acquired categories. For Hegel, by contrast, spirit embarks with only a "vague foreboding" that prevailing forms of knowing are succumbing to skeptical "upheaval." Moreover, spirit no more diagnoses than suffers the inner tension and dissolution of these forms for they constitute spirit's own developmental stages—the "structure of its previous world." On this account, skepticism is not an explicit question by which to reorient oneself toward one's cognitive faculty, but the mark of a long, "tortuous,"

and only gradually self-aware process to which reason, in its "cunning," bears witness.[59] Hegel thus expands skepticism from a mode of critique to encompass the character of spirit's historical "experience of itself."[60]

Hegel elaborates on this transformation in the Introduction to the *Phenomenology* when he says that spirit's "pathway of *doubt*" is a "way of despair." This is not Humean despair about reason's deductive ability. Rather, spirit experiences "thoroughgoing skepticism" about its forms of knowing—the "so-called natural ideas, thoughts, and opinions" that, upon reflection, collapse into their opposites. Since these are spirit's "own configurations," their loss is "the loss of its own self."[61] As Hegel observes, at his stage of its development, spirit "has not only lost its essential life; it is also conscious of this loss [...] and now demands from philosophy, not so much *knowledge* of what it *is*, as the recovery through its agency of that lost sense of solid and substantial being."[62] Disillusioned with the contradictions of faith and enlightenment, spirit dialectically mediates them in order to derive categories that "no longer fall apart."[63] It is by the "strenuous" effort of surviving the death of previous forms of knowing that spirit wins the "prize" of an insight no longer burdened by the experience of skepticism.[64]

The prospects for maturity also shift on Hegel's account. He agrees with Kant that philosophy is a "formative process" that transposes truth from an allegedly subject-transcendent "substance" to a matter "*for* knowledge."[65] However, Kant posits "a natural and unavoidable dialectic" in which reason, despite grasping the proper use of the categories, is vulnerable to backsliding into the transcendental illusion that they are determinations of things in themselves,[66] which renders mature self-knowledge a regulative ideal. By contrast, spirit's maturation achieves completion because Hegel recasts categorial right as emerging, not from "contingent philosophizing" prompted by the question *quid juris*, but from "a necessary and complete process of becoming."[67] Having superseded forms of knowing that constituted its earlier stages, spirit now comprehends these as unlivable. This is why Hegel says spirit is a movement "that *recollects* itself, whose existence is self-knowledge."[68] By losing its former shapes, it secures a lasting insight into its own true forms of knowing, that is to say, into absolute knowledge.[69]

While allowing for contingency at the level of entities, Hegelian dialectic removes the contingency from which Kantian deduction emerges, namely, the contingency of whether we feel the skeptical pressure to justify our claim to the categories of the understanding and, more broadly, of whether we value the pursuit of rational maturity that their deductive reclamation facilitates. The critical turn is, for Kant, individually taken, however publicly lived. Whether we follow Hegel in holding that "the individual must all the more forget himself" within the "total work of spirit", or instead take Hegel's thought to signal the "nullity" and "indifference of each individual life that is the direction of history,"[70] is a decision that shapes our inheritance of post-Kantian philosophy.

Notes

1 For helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper, I thank Karin de Boer and audiences at the Universities of Bonn and Toronto.
2 Immanuel Kant, "On a Discovery Whereby Any New Critique of Pure Reason is to be Made Superfluous by an Older One," in *Theoretical Philosophy After 1781*, trans. Henry Allison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002a), 8:221.
3 Kant, "Discovery," 8:221–3. Compare: "*each of the concepts [i.e. space and time] has*, without any doubt, *been acquired*, not, indeed, by abstraction from the sensing of objects (for sensation gives the matter and not the form of human cognition), but from the very action of the mind, which coordinates what is sensed by it, doing so in accordance with permanent laws." Immanuel Kant, "On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and the Intelligible World [Inaugural Dissertation]," in *Theoretical Philosophy 1755–1770*, trs. and ed. David Walford (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 2:406.
4 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, eds. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), B167.
5 Charles Taylor, "The Validity of Transcendental Arguments," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 79 (1978): 162.
6 Ibid, 164–5.
7 Ibid, 160.
8 Kant, *Critique*, Axi.
9 Ibid, A85/B117.
10 See Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* in *Theoretical Philosophy After 1781*, trans. Gary Hatfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University of Press, 2002), 4:260.
11 Taylor, "Transcendental Arguments," 164.
12 Kant, *Critique*, A761/B789.
13 Ibid, A298/B354-5.
14 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 12.
15 Kant, *Critique*, AA81/B107.
16 Ibid, A84/B116.
17 Ibid, A85/B117.
18 Ibid, A86/B119.
19 Ibid, A85/B117.
20 Ibid, A81/B107, B159.
21 Immanuel Kant, *Notes and Fragments*, trans. Curtis Bowman, Paul Guyer and Frederick Rauscher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 18:267.
22 Kant, *Critique*, A84/B116.
23 See Ian Proops, "Kant's Legal Metaphor and the Nature of a Deduction," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 41 (2) (2003); Dieter Henrich, "Kant's Notion of a Deduction and the Methodological Background of the First *Critique*." In *Kant's Transcendental Deductions: The Three 'Critiques' and the 'Opus Postumum,'* ed. Eckart Förster (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989).
24 Kant, "Discovery," 8:226–7.
25 Kant, *Critique*, B19.
26 Kant, *Prolegomena*, 4:261, 310. Compare: "[Hume's] question was not, whether the concept of cause is right, useful, and, with respect to all cognition of nature, indispensable, for this Hume had never put in doubt; it was rather whether it is thought through reason *a priori*, and in this way has an inner truth

independent of all experience, and therefore also a much more widely extended use which is not limited merely to objects of experience: regarding this Hume awaited enlightenment. The discussion was only about the origin of this concept, not about its indispensability in use; if the former were only discovered, the conditions of its use and the sphere in which it can be valid would already be given" (4:258–9). Karin de Boer argues that Kant considers Hume's account of causality to extend to all pure concepts because "what Hume calls judgments about matters of fact corresponds to Kant's notion of synthetic judgments at large rather than to that of synthetic *a posteriori* judgments alone." "Kant's Response to Hume's Critique of Pure Reason," *Archiv für Geschichte die Philosophie* (forthcoming).

27 Kant, *Critique*, A764/B792. According to Robert Stern, Kant regards Hume's skepticism about reason's capacity for justification as grounded on a Pyrrhonian drive to bring disputes about metaphysical principles to an end, but holds that Hume cannot escape these very principles. "Metaphysical Dogmatism, Humean Scepticism, Kantian Criticism," *Kantian Review* 11 (2006), 106–8. Stern notes (114n13) that although Hume chides Pyrrhonism as itself unlivable, he acknowledges that it is at least instructive for the "mitigated" skepticism he endorses. David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding And Other Writings*, ed. Stephen Buckle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), §12.2–3.

28 Hume, *Enquiry*, §§4.2, 5.1. See Kant, *Prolegomena*, 4:257–8. Lewis White Beck argues that, although Hume has no theory of an *a priori* concept of causality, he nevertheless distinguishes, as if a "Scottish Kant," between *a posteriori* causal laws induced from experience and "a principle of a higher order which regulates our ascription of causality." *Essays on Kant and Hume* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 126.

29 Hume, *Enquiry*, admits that custom, "like other instincts, may be fallacious and deceitful" (§12.2). See Kant, *Critique*: "the same thing happens to [Hume] that always brings down skepticism, namely, he is himself doubted, for his objections rest only on *facta*, which are contingent, but not on principles that could effect a necessary renunciation of the right to dogmatic assertions" (A767-8/B795-6). John Callanan, "Kant on Nativism, Scepticism, and Necessity," *Kantian Review* 18 (1) (2013) argues that Kant is justified in conflating Hume's model of cognition with Crusius' on the grounds that both undermine the categories' necessity by appealing to a contingent mechanism. See: "*Crusius* alone knew of a middle way: namely that a spirit who can neither err nor deceive originally implanted these natural laws in us. But, since false principles are often mixed in as well—of which this man's system itself provides not a few examples—then, with the lack of sure criteria for distinguishing an authentic origin from a spurious one, the use of such a principle looks very precarious, since one can never know for sure what the spirit of truth or the father of lies may have put into us." Kant, *Prolegomena*, 4:319.

30 Kant, *Prolegomena*: 4:313.

31 "This is how skepticism defines the task of philosophy for Kant. It is not that philosophy must seek, above all, to refute skepticism. Rather, philosophy must learn from skepticism which questions to ask, while transmuting the skeptic's mood of despair [...] So skepticism defines philosophy's task by teaching it to ask transcendental questions. But skepticism is *also* a problem of the past. Once the mood has changed from despair to hope, no further refutation of skepticism is called for, and Kant's central arguments do not seek to provide one." Paul Franks, *All or Nothing: Systematicity, Transcendental Arguments, and Skepticism in German Idealism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 151–2.

32 See: "[Locke…] proceeded so inconsistently that he thereby dared to make attempts at cognitions that go far beyond the boundary of all experience […] The first of these two famous men [i.e. Locke] opened the gates wide to enthusiasm, since reason, once it has authority on its side, will not be kept within limits by indeterminate recommendations of moderation; the second [i.e. Hume] gave way entirely to skepticism, since he believed himself to have discovered in what is generally held to be reason a deception of our faculty of cognition. We are now about to make an attempt to see whether we cannot successfully steer human reason between these two cliffs, assign its determinate boundaries, and still keep open the entire field of its purposive activity." Kant, *Critique*, A95/B127-8.
33 Kant, *Prolegomena*, 4:360.
34 Ibid, 4:262, 277.
35 Compare Kant's charge in his 1794/95 lectures on metaphysics that Crusius held "that the criterion of truth is to be sought for only in the ideas which the creator has placed in us, just because he could not trust it to our reason that it would find these ideas itself." Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Metaphysics*, trs. Karl Ameriks and Steve Naragon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 29:959.
36 Hume, *Enquiry*, §4.2. Compare: "[Philosophers] have sufficient force of genius to free them from the vulgar error, that there is a natural and perceivable connexion betwixt the several sensible qualities and actions of matter; but not sufficient to keep them from ever seeking for this connexion in matter, or causes. Had they fallen upon the just conclusion, they wou'd have return'd back to the situation of the vulgar, and wou'd have regarded all these disquisitions with indolence and indifference. At present they seem to be in a very lamentable condition, and such as the poets have given us but a faint notion of in their descriptions of the punishments of *Sisyphus* and *Tantalus*. For what can be imagin'd more tormenting, than to seek with eagerness, what for ever flies us; and seek for it in a place, where 'tis impossible it can ever exist?" David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature, Volume 1*, eds. David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007): 1.4.3.
37 "If skeptical reflection shows perception to be cognitively null, then it is operating with the wrong conception of a perceptual object; what skepticism properly teaches is the need to adjust our conception of the reality of objects to the conditions under which they can appear to us." Sebastian Gardner, "Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology in the Light of Kant's Third *Critique* and Schelling's *Real-Idealismus*," *Continental Philosophy Review* 50 (1) (2017): 4–5.
38 Immanuel Kant, "What Real Progress Has Metaphysics Made in Germany Since the Time of Leibniz and Wolff?," in *Theoretical Philosophy After 1781*, trans. Peter Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University of Press, 2002b), 20:327.
39 Kant, *Critique*, A745/B773.
40 Ibid, A727/B755.
41 Kant, *Prolegomena*, 4:271.
42 Kant, *Critique*, A763/B791, emphasis added.
43 Ibid, A767/B795.
44 Ibid, A761/B789.
45 Ibid, A764/B792.
46 See Ibid: "although reason can never refuse critique, it does not always have cause to shrink from it" (A739/B767).
47 Ibid, A757/B785.
48 Kant, *Prolegomena*, 4:274.
49 Kant, *Critique*, A769/B797.

50 Ibid, A769/B797.
51 Ibid, A761/B789.
52 Compare Nicolaus Cusanus, *On Learned Ignorance*, trs. Jasper Hopkins (Minneapolis: A.J. Banning Press, 1985), II:12.
53 Kant, *Critique*, A762/B790.
54 See Ibid: "Pure reason in its dogmatic (not mathematical) use is not […] so conscious of the most exact observation of its supreme laws that it can appear before the critical eye of a higher and judicial reason except with modesty, indeed with a complete renunciation of all pretensions to dogmatic authority" (A739/B767).
55 Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 17.
56 Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 17–8.
57 Ibid, 18.
58 Ibid, 6–7.
59 Ibid, 33.
60 Ibid, 56.
61 Ibid, 49–50.
62 Ibid, 4.
63 Ibid, 22.
64 See Robert Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 108.
65 Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 17, 10.
66 Kant, *Critique*, A297-8/B353-5.
67 Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 20.
68 Ibid, 28.
69 Compare Hegel, *Phenomenology*: "[Truth] never appears prematurely, nor finds a public not ripe to receive it" (44).
70 Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trs. E.B. Ashton (London: Routledge, 2004), 362.

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