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Taking the Teleology of History Seriously: Lessons from Hegel's Logic

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Abstract

To oversimplify quite a bit, scholars' presentation of Hegel's teleology constitutes a continuum according to how more-or-less secured the progress towards the goal is supposed to be, which tracks roughly the nature of the end and its necessity. In this article, rather than focus on the end and progress towards it, we will focus on the means and structure of teleological relationships on Hegel's account. This focus follows from an essential feature of Hegel's discussion of teleology in the *Logic*, in which teleology is introduced to solve a problem in the individuation of entities. It will turn out that the fullest actualization of the end is in the durable means, which is also thereby individuated. And it will turn out that the paradigmatic historical means—the state—is tensed, as it were, between the end and its realization that makes it synchronically historical. This synchronic historicity is missing in the usual progressive and thus diachronic accounts of the teleological process of history. But first we step back even farther (at least historically). We begin by taking up the two most important philosophical accounts of teleology for Hegel, namely those of Aristotle and Kant. Then we go to Hegel's *Logic* for his reconstruction of teleological processes against the background of the explanatory need for individuation. We focus on four aspects of Hegel's account: that teleology is a structure of reciprocal interaction, that the purpose is an immanent governing principle, that change is the price of immanence, and that the durable means is the teleological object par excellence. Finally, we trace these features through Hegel's account of world history and conclude with some brief remarks on the historicity of the state described in the *Philosophy of Right*.

That Hegel has a teleological theory of history in *some sense* is beyond question. But *what sense* remains an open question. Answers to that question take the form of qualifiers to the term 'teleology', and we might distinguish four recent versions: external teleology, internal teleology, immanent teleology, and precarious teleology. According to Lawrence Dickey's external teleology, Hegel has a progressive religious view according to which the goal of its development is reconciliation with God (Dickey 1989). According to Eric Michael Dale's immanent teleology, Hegel has an Aristotelian-naturalist conception of human progress (Dale 2014). According to Terry Pinkard's internal teleology, Hegel's account is one of the open-

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ended development of infinite ends (Pinkard 2017). Finally, according to Rocío Zambrana, the very stage to which we have developed (modernity) reveals the essential precariousness and ambivalence of all normative commitments (Zambrana 2015). To oversimplify quite a bit, in these four views we have something like a continuum according to how more-or-less secured the progress towards the goal is supposed to be, which tracks roughly the nature of the end and its necessity. In this paper however, we want to focus the treatment of Hegel's teleology in a somewhat different direction. Rather than focus on the end and progress towards it, we will focus on the means and structure of teleological relationships; our focus is on the teleological object rather than the teleological process. This focus follows from an essential feature of Hegel's discussion of teleology in the *Logic*, in which teleology is introduced to solve a problem in the individuation of entities. It will turn out that the fullest actualization of the end is in the durable means, which is also thereby individuated. And it will turn out that the paradigmatic historical means—the state—is tensed, as it were, between the end and its realization in a way that makes it synchronically historical. This synchronic historicity is missing in the usual progressive and thus diachronic accounts of the teleological process of history. We will return at the end of the paper to clarify the contribution made by this consideration of the means to the debate between these four different forms of diachronic teleology.

But first we step back even farther (at least historically). In §I we take up the two most important philosophical accounts of teleology for Hegel, namely those of Aristotle and Kant. We stop far short of anything like a reconstruction of Aristotle's or Kant's views, but focus instead on the explanatory needs to which teleological structures respond in their accounts. Then, in §II, we go to Hegel's *Logic* for his reconstruction of teleological processes against the background of the explanatory need for individuation. There we focus on four aspects of Hegel's account: that teleology is a structure of reciprocal interaction, that the purpose is an immanent governing principle, that change is the price of immanence, and that the durable means is the teleological object *par excellence*. Finally, in §III we trace these features through Hegel's account of world history and conclude with some brief remarks on the historicity of the state described in the *Philosophy of Right*.

I. The complexity of teleology

Here we unearth some of the complexity of teleology by considering two central figures in the development of the concept, namely Aristotle and Kant. This exploration aims to provide historical context for Hegel's engagement with this conception, and to profile the distinctiveness of Hegel's conception of teleology. We also want to ward against certain anachronistic readings of Aristotle and Kant, which try

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to make their views on teleology more palatable to contemporary tastes, but at the cost of obscuring the historical issues.

Aristotle introduces the concept of an end to explain certain phenomena in nature. For example, that the leaves of a plant always protect the fruits. Many contemporary scholars believe that such phenomena are related to living organisms, and thus hold that the scope of teleology should be limited to the sphere of living organisms (see Gotthelf 1976; Nussbaum 1978; Charles 2012). Charles and others rightly point out that not all phenomena involving something being good for another thing should be regarded as teleological. Indeed, Aristotle explicitly claims that something can be (good) for another thing merely concurrently rather than teleologically (*Physics*, 196b 23).[1] But Aristotle never makes the organic or the animate into the threshold of teleology. Rather, Aristotle frequently uses inanimate and inorganic objects as examples of phenomena requiring teleological explanation. For instance, Aristotle holds that merely resorting to the movement of stones, soils and concrete cannot explain the constitution of a city wall. Only when we take its end into consideration, viz., the protection and preservation of the citizens, can we fully understand its constitution (*Physics*, 200a 8).[2] Aristotle also refers to rain in the Mediterranean Winter in his discussion of teleology (*Physics*, 199a 8). Given such examples, we should reconsider the domain of teleology for Aristotle.

In the *Physics*, before introducing teleology, Aristotle devotes discussion to explaining what luck is and what the automatic is; both are causes by virtue of concurrence (*Physics*, 197a 33). According to Aristotle, causes by virtue of concurrence basically refer to accidental causes. For instance, a person may run into her debtor and pay the money back, though she did not have the purpose of getting the money back in mind. Thus, she got the money back concurrently. Indeed, causes by virtue of concurrence are indeterminate, and the general situation could have been different, where the cause by virtue of concurrence would no longer be the cause. For Aristotle, the major problem with the cause by virtue of concurrence is that it could not explain 'that which is always or for the most part' (*Physics*, 197a 20). Occasional phenomena might be explained by causes by virtue of concurrence, but regular phenomena require stronger explanations. Concurrence includes luck and the automatic. The distinction between luck and automatic lies on whether something is capable of choosing. As Aristotle puts it, 'in the field of things which in a general way come to be for something, if something comes to be but not for that which supervenes, and has an external cause, we say that it is an automatic outcome; and if such an outcome is for something capable of choosing and is an object of choice, we call it the outcome of luck' (*Physics*, 197b 20). Such a distinction between concurrence and regularity is significant for understanding Aristotle's teleology: when Aristotle turns to specify the nature of teleology, his major concern is to exclude concurrence from the 'being-(good)-for' phenomena. As Aristotle puts

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it, ‘the things mentioned, and all things which are due to nature, come to be as they do always or for the most part, and nothing which is the outcome of luck or an automatic outcome does that’ (*Physics*, 198b 35–199a 2). For Aristotle, the primary contrast with teleological phenomena is mere concurrence, rather than inanimate processes. One important motivation for contemporary scholars to limit teleology to the sphere of living organisms is that they want to draw a clear distinction between teleological process (guided by the concept of end) and necessary process (guided by efficient and material cause). However, for Aristotle, as we have shown in the city wall example, both teleology and necessity can explain the same phenomenon, though in terms of different aspects.

Of course, we agree with the standard interpretation in so far as it clearly distinguishes teleology as a subset of the phenomena of being-(good)-for; simply being good for something does not make the latter into the end of the former. Nevertheless, we do not agree that the crucial characteristic which demarcates the subset is the desire or need of the living organism. Instead, it is the *regularity* of certain natural phenomena, as contrasted with mere concurrence; this is the explanandum which requires a teleological explanans. In our interpretation, two important conclusions can be drawn. First, teleology is disentangled from intentional activities, which corresponds to Aristotle’s explicit claim that teleology does not necessarily involve deliberations (*Physics*, 199b 28). Second, even concerning the same phenomenon, teleological and necessary explanations might jointly explain the same regular phenomenon, though in terms of its different aspects; only the end would explain its regularity, though some other necessary cause might explain other features of the phenomenon.

Unlike Aristotle, Kant encountered the power of modern science, especially Newton’s mechanics. In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant laid a solid foundation for the mechanistic interpretation of the world through his transcendental deduction of the objective validity of concepts of the understanding such as causation. Nevertheless, there remained one group of puzzles which confused Kant: he could not explain the *constitution* of any system by reference to concepts of understanding. Organic systems are only the most obvious example of this difficulty. One cannot explain a frog, as a system involving different but cooperating parts, merely with mechanical causal relationships. Moreover, Kant could not quarantine this difficulty because similar systems, and thus systematicity, exist everywhere in nature. Perhaps one can regard certain inorganic aggregates, such as soil and stone, as not systems at all and as thus requiring no further explanation. Nevertheless, it is almost impossible to regard organic objects in the same way, and Kant furthermore argues that certain natural products involve systems, including ‘crystal formation, various shapes of flowers, or the inner structure of plants and animals’ (*KU* 20: 217).[3]

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To solve this difficulty, Kant reintroduces teleology and appeals to the ends of nature.[4] But only concepts can function as such ends, and thus as conditions that 'ground the causality of their generation' (*KU* 20: 232). For example, the end of a plant, viz., the fully grown one, which has reproduced, can be represented through a concept as the end of that plant. This concept then determines the growth of the plant so that it will actually grow well and reproduce.[5] However, this structure of teleology really confuses Kant because it involves backward causation. The end of the plant, which appears later temporally, functions as the cause of its growth, which appears earlier temporally. As a result, Kant has to qualify his claim about teleology: 'the particular representation of a whole which precedes the possibility of the parts is a mere idea and this, if it is regarded as the ground of causality, is called an end' (*KU* 20: 236). In other words, the end, though merely an idea, functions as the ground of the causality between the whole and the part, which further guarantees the existence of systems in nature.

According to Kant, besides particular systems in nature, nature itself should be regarded as one system. Even non-teleological aggregates become indirectly teleological in so far as they are for the sake of the teleological systems. For example, soils are means for the maintenance of plants. In this sense, they are externally purposive. Indeed, Kant believes that nature itself will be thus connected as one system: 'the teleological judging of nature by means of natural ends, which has been made evident to us by organized beings, has justified us in the idea of a great system of the ends of nature' (*KU* 5: 380).

Now that Kant has argued that nature itself should be regarded as one system, what will be its end? Kant has slightly different expressions of the ultimate end of nature in different places,[6] but the basic constitution of such an ultimate end is clear: it relies on human beings because only human beings have reason, and thus are able to set voluntary ends for themselves (*KU* 5: 429). Moreover, such an ultimate end does not rely on the animal part of human beings, but only on their reason, which promotes the development of culture (*KU* 5: 430), sociability (*Conjecture* 8: 110), or a civil society which can administer justice universally (*Idea* 8: 22). We should notice that, for Kant, the teleological end is always associated with the human species, rather than any individual (*Idea* 8: 18). In other words, Kant holds that culture, as the end of the human species, is never attainable for any individual. Finally, the means to attaining such an end, according to Kant, is the antagonism within society (*Idea* 8: 20). Human beings tend to come together in a society, but they simultaneously have an inclination to isolate themselves, because each of them wants to 'direct everything in accordance with his own ideas' (*Idea* 8: 21). As a result, there are endless conflicts in a society. Such conflicts, despite their immediate negative influence on the society, encourage the development of human talent, which further guarantees the final sociability of human beings. To briefly

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summarize, Kant holds that in history the human species is able to attain the ultimate end, viz., human culture, through its asocial nature.

II. Logical teleology in Hegel

As we have seen, Aristotle appeals to teleology as an explanation for the *regularity* of phenomena, and Kant appeals to teleology as an explanation of the *systematicity* of phenomena. These are not unrelated explananda, of course, and Kant also appeals to at least the danger of irregularity as a threat to systematicity: 'if cinnabar were sometimes red, sometimes black, sometimes light, sometimes heavy, if a man changed sometimes into this and sometimes into that animal form, if the country on the longest day were sometimes covered with fruit, sometimes with ice and snow, my empirical imagination would never find opportunity when representing red color to bring to mind heavy cinnabar' (*KrV* 3: A101). And though organisms stand out as excellent and perhaps even paradigmatic examples of regularity and systematicity for both Aristotle and Kant, both also push teleological explanations beyond the boundary of the organic—Aristotle in multiple directions, and Kant *both* to the whole of nature with respect to our cognitive capacities *and* to the history of the development of those capacities in the species. In addition, Kant extends teleological explanations to human history in the way we have briefly recounted: there is a necessary development *in the species* of our *rational capacities* in the same way that there is a necessary development *in the individual* of its *natural capacities.*

For Hegel, in contrast, teleology solves a problem of *individuation* primarily, and explanation only secondarily. In the setting of the discussion of teleology in Hegel's *Logic*, individuation is the problem which is generated by mechanism (and by chemism to a lesser degree). It is a problem in individuating the systems or the elements within a system that are supposed to be mechanistically related, are supposed to be attracted and repulsed and collide. In terms that recall Aristotle's distinction, Hegel explicitly points this out at the beginning of his discussion of mechanism:

> this is what constitutes the character of *mechanism*, namely, that whatever relation obtains between things combined, this relation is one extraneous to them that does not concern their nature at all, and even if it is accompanied by a semblance of unity it remains nothing more than *composition, mixture, aggregation* and the like. (*WL*: 12: 133, original emphasis)

Teleology is supposed to help us solve that problem of individuation, and it is supposed to do so by concretely bringing together these general or universal governing principles of systems and their particular features (i.e., states or behaviors).

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Obviously, there are Kantian resonances here, both in terms of goal-directedness as setting out a kind of totality, and also goal-directedness as the key to our ability to judge the connection between the universal and the particular. There are similarly Aristotelian resonances as well, since part of the impetus for trying to individuate certain systems is the appearance of regular patterns of behaviour. The particular features that are the specific pieces of behaviour cohere in a regular pattern that is best explained by appeal to a goal. Four aspects of the conception of teleology that Hegel develops to solve this problem of individuation are particularly relevant to the project of determining the precise nature of the teleology of history: teleology is (a) a form of reciprocal interaction, (b) in which the end serves as an immanent governing principle, and (c) thus is exposed to change, and (d) the fullest actualization of the end is to be found in the durable means rather than in anything like a state of affairs corresponding to a projected goal. All of these features lead Hegel to claim that the *historical* individual is the state (§3).

Reciprocal Interaction. Whereas Kant primarily worries about the potential incompatibility between unidirectional efficient causation and teleology, and thus is concerned about the different sorts of temporal orders that the two explanatory models entail, Hegel's discussion of teleology comes at a point at which he has already argued that efficient causation is itself always an abstraction away from reciprocal causation or interaction (*Wechselwirkung*). Even mechanism (and chemism), in Hegel's understanding of that metaphysical schema, requires a form of reciprocal interaction. Teleology is then introduced as a *better form of* reciprocal interaction; the dialectic that drives the argument forward is the attempt to develop a more adequate conception of what a reciprocally interacting structure would be. Reciprocal interaction comes out of causation by a recognition of the ineliminability of the contributions of both what originally looked like a cause and effect to the determination of what the cause itself actually is. Here we have a version of the paradigmatically Hegelian paradox that you progressively lose any grip on the content of an explanans as you try to make it more independent or foundational, but the very notion of an explanans seems to require both content *and* independence, on pain of either a loss of explanatory power or an infinite regress.[7] In this case, you lose the particular content of the cause if you lose its ability to be influenced by the effect and by the conditions. This is a feature of Hegel's discussion of causation and reciprocal interaction in the Doctrine of Essence, and then also of the discussion of the object of mechanism, chemism and teleology in the Doctrine of the Concept.

More specifically we can say that mechanistically conceived causes somehow lack self-determination because they are not sufficiently open to external influence. Thus, at this point in the *Logic*—i.e., the introduction of teleology—we are trying to find something that is both more open to external influence *and* more capable of translating that external influence into a condition of its own individuality, into something like its own identity conditions. It is important to note that Hegel thinks

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this is true for mechanistically and chemically *conceived* causes, not for actual mechanical and chemical causes. He gives several examples of cases in which he thinks there is more reciprocal interaction going on in such actual causes than the mechanistic or chemical explanatory schemas allow, like the musket ball that cannot pierce the hanging sheet because the sheet just moves out of its way, and chemical reactions which are made possible by a previous change in oxidation state on the part of at least one of the reactants *in order to* react (*WL*: 12: 152). Hegel's point is that there is, in fact, more reciprocal interaction in an actual mechanism than a mechanistic *interpretation* of the situation can accommodate.

To think more about the actual structure of reciprocal interaction, consider one of Hegel's paradigmatic statements: 'the means is the external middle term of the syllogism which is the realization of the end; in the means, therefore, the rationality in it manifests itself as such by maintaining itself in this external other, and precisely through this externality' (*WL*: 12: 166).

The means is the middle term of a reciprocal interaction between the end and the conditions—in many respects the means is both the *site* and *record* of that interaction, as we will explore a bit further on in this section. But the means is also a middle term of this reciprocal interaction, so the full interaction is three-fold: between end, means and circumstances. In the teleological activity of an animal eating, the end of its nutrition interacts with the conditions of the existent plants and prey animals through the means of chewing, swallowing, digesting. All of these are in reciprocal interaction: the specific need for nutrition is affected by the plants and animals eaten (e.g., the dog that eats grass after a continual diet of meat), but also by changes in the means (e.g., if the digestive system is compromised and certain nutrients are not absorbed, more of the foods providing those nutrients will need to be eaten). The means is affected by end, of course (primarily as a cause of its development and form), but also by the conditions (as the digestive system itself is weakened by spoiled or contaminated food). Finally, the conditions are most obviously affected by the end (e.g., as grasses are cut short, or seeds distributed, by the animals that eat those plants and fruits), and the means (eating) is the mechanism of that modification. It is already worth noting that in Kantian terms this would mean that it is being introduced as a form of simultaneity (i.e., the structure of Kant's Third Analogy). Hegel does not have the same tight tie between causation and time, so his view is not quite the same, but it is nonetheless his view that we ought to be focused on the way that ends, means and conditions simultaneously affect each other, rather than trying to resolve these causal relationships into a series or complex of unidirectional relationships. Such unidirectional relationships are fine as an abstraction for the purposes of specific study of some parts of the system, but one should not mistake the abstraction for the thing.

Immanent Governing Principle. Second, the end is supposed to be an immanent governing principle. Teleology only solves the problem of the individuation of

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systems if the end can provide the identity conditions of such systems. But a specific critique of the mechanistic conception of law sets out a desideratum of the end: Hegel's critique of mechanism is that mechanism appeals to an explanation, namely a mechanical causal law, that is not itself an element of the system. So mechanism, which is presented as a kind of naturalistic reductionism, in fact appeals to an explanans that is nowhere to be found in the order of nature (the law does not occupy or appear at any spatio-temporal region), and *a fortiori* not in the system itself that is to be explained. If the notion of an end is supposed to solve the problem of individuation in the context of this deficiency of mechanism, that end must be an immanent element or feature of the system.

The key to seeing the immanence of the end, i.e., to understand the way it is supposed to be actual in the system that we are trying to individuate, is to see all trying, tending or striving as itself a manifestation of the end. This is essentially the move from an external to an internal teleology: instead of seeing the end as a state to be reached, we see it as an orientation or a pattern of direction. The goal is realized in the pattern of the attempts to realize it as much or more as it would be in the attainment of a final state or the obtaining of a final state. A very nice presentation of this view comes from Larry Wright:

> appropriate but unsuccessful behavior may well be the most central kind of teleological behavior, both conceptually and identificatorily; for it is the behavior of trying. And not only is trying one of the most emphatically teleological concepts but trying behavior constitutes the majority of that systematically complex behavior we are most reliable and identifying as teleological. The clearest cases of hunting, fleeing, and building consists largely of attempts—success is quite usually elusive […] What makes us say a predator is stalking—rather than writhing or undergoing spasms—is the systematic organization of the movements about the goal object, or about the obvious clues to the goal object, or about something that might be mistaken for a clue. It is this systematicity that makes the *direction* of the behavior so obvious. And the particular systematicity that gives direction to a bit of behavior is that which obtains when that behavior arises because it tends to produce a certain result […] [T]he behavior was plastic and persistent with respect to that result. (Wright 1976: 48–49)

This is really important: *we do not have to wait for the goal to be realized to see it, or to see it as governing the system, or to see it as immanent within it*. This is true even for systems where the goal is never, in fact, reached. The governance is displayed by the plasticity and persistence of the activity, and the immanence is displayed by the pattern of

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attempts as actual states of the system, the pattern that has the shape of the end and the shape of the end qua end not just qua state.

Change as the Price of Immanence. A consequence of this notion that the purpose is an immanent governing principle is the fact that the purpose has to change, or be changeable, and this is one of the hardest features of Hegel's account to keep in view. This particularly comes out in the different ways that Hegel characterizes laws and purposes as governing principles, in both the *Logic* and in the *Phenomenology.* In both places, he criticizes laws for their fixity and their abstractness, as well as their externality to the phenomena involved (e.g., *WL*: 12: 146). The law remains on one side, and the objects on the other, and in the *Phenomenology*'s chapter on Force and Understanding, there are multiple dramatizations of the difficulty with explanations by means of laws. One way of using this difficulty to further characterize teleology is to say that laws are instantiated (and perhaps to a greater or lesser degree of approximation), but ends are realized—and Hegel is clear that anything that is actualized is transformed in the process of its actualization. Thus, there is no simple translation of the end into actuality. In order for purposes to play the explanatory role that they need to play, which involves not only explaining some bit of behavior or activity but also explaining it in such a way that the system that so behaves is thereby individuated, a kind of immanence is necessary that requires the mutability of the end that is the governing principle.

Durable Means. The fourth and final thing to take out of Hegel's treatment of teleology in the *Logic* is a point about *what* is fundamentally purposive, i.e., what is the teleological object par excellence in the world. Hegel is clear that this paradigmatically teleological object is the *durable means* by which the end is translated into actuality and in which the end is translated into actuality. This is what actualizes the end in a pattern of attempts that leave an existent, observable form in the world:

> But the means is the external middle term of the syllogism which is the realization of the end; in the means, therefore, the rationality in it manifests itself as such by maintaining itself in this external other, and precisely through this externality. To this extent, the means is superior to the finite ends of external purposiveness: the plough is more honorable than are immediately the enjoyments procured by it and which are ends. The tool lasts, while the immediate enjoyments pass away and are forgotten. In his tools, man possesses power over external nature, even though in respects of his ends, he is, on the contrary, subject to it. (*WL*: 12: 166)

The important distinction is between the durable means which is the plough in Hegel's example here, and non-durable means like the exertion of the ox pulling the plough, or the time of the farmer who is driving the ox and so on. In the

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durable means, 'the rationality in it manifests itself as such by maintaining itself in this external other, and precisely through this externality' (*WL*: 12: 166). In the durable means we see the end maintaining itself, and that means maintaining its purposiveness, and maintaining its governing nature through the externality that it uses. The end may be producing all sorts of other things, but it is also *self*-active: its activity is involved in that durable means and the plough, and the form that the plough takes on, harvest after harvest, and the kinds of care that has to be taken to make sure that it continues to function properly. The durable means takes on its character from both the end and the end's openness to external influence—the durable means is also the means by which the end and the circumstances interact. Thus, the means provides a sort of *register* of those interactions, the change in the end, and the pattern of attempts—it thus provides an objective form of the first three features of teleology we have discussed. If we are looking for teleology in the world, this is the kind of thing that we are looking for: this sort of durable means.

Of course, in this passage Hegel is talking about finite ends; one should not think that Hegel also holds that the durable means would be somehow more honorable than infinite ends, such as freedom. This will be particularly important when we get to the philosophy of history. The question of honour can drop out here, where our questions are: What kind of thing is purposive? In what way does purposiveness show up in the world? How do we see its structure? This is where the durable means is so important: because not only does the tool last, it condenses purposiveness into an object of perception and investigation. That is the key feature that the state has with respect to world history: it is going to condense that purposiveness and show it to us *as an object*. So the durable means retains a specific and ineliminable metaphysical role, even for infinite ends.

III. Teleological features of world history

Reciprocal Interaction. As we noted above, Hegel comes to the discussion of teleology having already established that all causation is a kind of reciprocal interaction. Thus one way of making out the structure of any purported teleological system on Hegel's account is to begin by profiling its own unique form of reciprocal interaction. World history is a structure of reciprocal interaction in at least two ways. The first is a kind of reciprocity between freedom and interest:

> the first thing to be noted is that what we have called the principle, the final end, the destiny, or the nature and concept of spirit *in itself*, is purely *universal* and *abstract* […] In other words, what is only *implicit* is a possibility, a potency, but it has

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> not yet come out from its inwardness into existence [...] A second moment is needed to arrive at its actuality, that of activation, of actualization, and the principle of that is the will, the activity of human beings in general in the world. (*LWPH* 91/18: 158)

Shortly afterwards, Hegel doubles down on this point:

> Nothing happens or is brought to completion unless the individuals who are active in it are satisfied too—they who are particular [individuals], and who have needs, drives, and interests that are specific, are their own… (*LWPH*: 92/18: 159)

As usual, Hegel is not much interested in spelling out the particular category under which human interests, drives, desires, needs and so on are to be understood. But the important thing here is that there is a kind of reciprocal interaction between this universal concept of freedom and these particular needs, drives, desires and interests. This is central to Hegel's presentation of different institutional structures and what makes them unique. In particular, there is often an important interaction between kinds of interests and the kinds of freedom. One of the clearest examples of this is in Hegel's discussion of Roman history. On his view, the Romans have a formal and legalistic conception of freedom of the person precisely because there is no homeland, no ethical life, and no shared religion of the original Romans, who Hegel says are shepherds and bandits whose needs and drives do not really group them together. They simply pursue particular personal advantage, which then interacts with a conception of freedom that is abstractly universal with an abstract conception of personhood as a bearer of property rights that has to be abstract in order to encompass all of these particular forms of advantage or self-interest in the absence of a shared religion or ethical life. This is why, for example, marriage and family in Rome, Hegel thinks, are simply power structures of domination, and why the Roman property right is full dominion over a thing, in a way that would not be tolerated in a world with a richer ethical and religious life. This is the first kind of reciprocity important for understanding Hegel's theory of philosophy of world history, namely the reciprocity between freedom and interest.

Another form of reciprocity is between the state and its conditions that Hegel refers to several times:

> It has already been remarked that the constitution of a people forms one substance and one spirit with its religion, with its art and philosophy, or at least with the representation and conceptions of its culture generally—not to mention additional external factors such as its climate, its neighbors, and its position in the world at large… (*LPWH*: 107/18: 181)

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This is a statement of Hegel's essentially Montesquiean view about the relation of the state to many other factors that show up in Hegel's account as reciprocally interacting: religion, geography, economic development, etc.[8]

Immanent Governing Principle. From the text that we have of Hegel's introductions, freedom is clearly supposed to be an immanent governing principle of history. To pick just one passage out of many: 'Freedom is itself the end or purpose of its own operation' (*LPWH*: 89/18: 155). History is that operation. Here we can start to leverage the analysis given in the previous section with the four views of teleology introduced at the beginning of the paper. In particular, it is sometimes thought that if the teleology is immanent then it has to be naturalistic. This is Dale's view: the freedom involved is merely human freedom, and the world in which teleology is operative is the merely natural world—otherwise the end would be transcendent, located in God's mind. But there is nothing in Hegel's logical conception of teleology that entails that the immanence of the end be construed in such finite or naturalistic terms. Of course, there is some certain sense in which Hegel's move to teleology is a kind of naturalistic move because it is a move to immanent principles of explanation, as opposed to principles of explanation that are transcendent. But the relevant contrast is not between the ends of the natural world and ends of the supernatural world, but rather between laws and ends as governing principles, regardless of the domain governed. Hegel thinks that mechanists are making the same mistake that they themselves attribute to divine teleological explanations, namely that of appealing to something outside the system as the principle that does the explaining. But the criticism of that mistake does not entail a view about what those principles actually are or what the scope of the phenomena is in which those principles are operative. Teleology does describe the objective side of realization—it describes the objective form—but 'objective' is not the same as 'natural'. For the same reason, we disagree with Lawrence Dickey, who I think thinks that if we move to an immanent teleology, we have *ipso facto* rejected any religious interpretation of Hegel's philosophy of history. This is not true either: the immanent versus transcendent conception of teleology is orthogonal to the question of whether the kind of freedom we are talking about is merely human or involves the kind of return or reconciliation with God that history has on Dickey's interpretation.

Change as the Price of Immanence. As we noted above, it is a consequence of Hegel's logical view about teleology that if freedom is the immanent end that is the organizing principle governing history, then change in the content and conception of freedom is the price of that immanence. Here is another well-known quote from Hegel's introduction:

> The development of the organic individual as such is such that it produces itself in an immediate, unopposed, and unhindered

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> fashion; nothing can intrude between the concept and its realization, between the implicitly determined nature of the germ and adequacy of its existence to its nature. With spirit, however, it is otherwise […] The transition of its determinate nature into its actual existence is mediated by consciousness and will… Spiritual development, therefore, is not just a harmless and conflict-free process of emergence, as in organic life, but rather a hard and obstinate labor directed to itself; moreover, it involves not merely the formal aspect of developing as such but rather the production of a purpose or end with a specific content. (*LPWH*: 109/18: 184)

History is not simply the translation of a given concept of freedom into actuality; it is the transformation of that concept as it is made concrete into specific forms of life. As Terry Pinkard puts it with respect to the correlated concept of subjectivity, 'most crucially for Hegel, the philosophical comprehension of history is a comprehension of how historically the metaphysics of subjectivity itself—and not merely our conception of the metaphysics of subjectivity—has changed (Pinkard 2017: 3–4). Again, this follows relatively directly from what is going on in the *Logic*, and also there are plenty of passages in the *Philosophy of World History* that suggest this. This point has largely been acknowledged by scholars at the macro level, but we should also look for this kind of change at the micro and meso levels as well. That is, we should look for them *within* ages and nations, and *across* different institutional designs.

We can connect this third teleological element with the first (reciprocal interaction) by noting that the *kind* of reciprocal interaction matters for whether the process so structured is capable of modifying the end, and thus is a teleological process in the full-blooded sense. In historical terms, Hegel marks this difference as the difference between China and India, on the one hand, and Persia and Greece, on the other:

> With the Persian empire we enter for the first time into world history proper. Although China is an important, essential element, it lies outside the connections of world history, as also does India, the other element, which has only a mute, silent, inner connection that passes by inconsequentially. With Persia, however there is in fact a conscious and clear connection […] The Chinese and Indian world is still contemporaneous for us and therefore we can be more precise about it; the Persian world is one that has long vanished. If we know of the Persian world and what appears to us to be us most ancient aspect is an element that has survived all history and is still extant in

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> venerable remains, that has come to light only in recent times. (*LPWH*: 304/27.1: 205-6)

There is a fascinating paradox here that is explicable in the terms that we have introduced. China and India remain actual historical civilizations in the nineteenth century, whereas Persia perished, and yet Persia was world-historical in a more full-blooded sense than China or India. Hegel even claims that the Chinese state is *more similar* to contemporary European states than any other state (*LPWH*: 223/27.1: 113). What sense can be made of this? Persia is more fully ('properly') world-historical precisely because it is more fully teleological, such that its end changed in the course of its development. In contrast, the ends of China and India did not change, and so there was not historical *development*. The ends of China and India—i.e., freedom understood in a certain sense—are not challenged and shaped by the course of events in China and India, and so that course of events is not fully historical because it is not fully teleological.

So much for the diachronic aspect—but why do the ends of freedom in China and India not change? Because the form of reciprocal interaction that structured that course of events was not of the right kind. There are two ways in which it was not of the right kind. The first is indicated in the passage above: they did not have sufficient interaction with other states and peoples. The state never has to develop as a means for managing the conflict between their own national principle and that of other states, and so it does not develop into the kind of durable means that transmits causation in both directions. The second way in which Chinese and Indian interaction was not of the right kind is that it is primarily an interaction between an abstract and thus universal end of freedom, on the one hand, and particular differences that were understood in *natural* terms. In China these particular differences primarily take the form of individual families: 'The principle of the Chinese state rests wholly on patriarchal relationships; they determine everything' (*LPWH*: 224/27.1: 113). In India, they primarily take the form of caste differences, which are more qualitatively characterized than the rather quantitative differences between Chinese families, but are still rendered fixed and stable by a natural conception of hereditary ranking. There is no pressure on the end of freedom to evolve because it is never confronted with new problems to solve, only the same problems interminably. This connects to another feature Hegel ascribes to both China and India, which is their geographical uniformity.

In contrast, Hegel takes Persia and Greece to present forms of reciprocal interactions *between social groups making shifting normative claims*. Hegel emphasizes this in the very introduction to Persia by claiming that in Persia, the reciprocal conflict is between the Chinese and Indian principles, and so is a sort of meta-interaction between different minimally teleological systems that in the Persian system are reduced to mechanical systems that interact in a way governed

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by the Persian end (*LPWH*: 304–5/27.1: 207). In Greece, Hegel thinks we find interactions between different Greek states (i.e., different ways of articulating the Greek end) that are conflicts both between individual states but also among parties within each state (*LPWH*: 407/27.1: 329-330). This is the connection between inner and outer conflict, both of which were lacking in China and India. In any modern state, there will be social groups within it that sympathize or identify with some of its neighbours rather than others. In Hegel's time, the difference between Germans who identified more with France or more with Austria was an important political difference for intra-German affairs as well.

In all of this, of course, we see in Hegel a massive development of the means Kant suggested for historical development, namely the antagonism of 'unsocial sociability' (*Idea*, 8: 20). Two central things distinguish Kant and Hegel on this point, however. First, for Kant the relationship is essentially diachronic, and the law-governed social order lies in the far future. Second, Kant's model of this antagonism is primarily the bloodless and non-political public use of reason. In contrast, Hegel thinks of the law-governed social order as precisely the structure of social antagonism (which is occasionally bloody), and thus as something taking place in the present that structures development, and not simply a far future state to be awaited.

Durable Means. This takes us to the fourth element, which is the conception of a particular kind of institution as playing the role of durable means—namely, the state. Here we get the biggest payoff for this application or this extension of the conception of teleology from the *Logic* to the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*: a richer understanding of the reason that the state is the threshold of history for Hegel, and why it is so central to the writing of history but also to the existence of history. The best way to understand this is to think of the state as the historical object par excellence because it is the durable means of the end of history, namely freedom. Here is a passage from Hegel's introductions that starts to get at why this is the case:

> From this discussion of the second essential element of historical actuality of a purpose as such [i.e., the necessity of passion and satisfaction], it is evident—if in what has been said we consider the state—that in this aspect the state will be well-constituted and internally powerful if the private interest of its citizens coincides with the general end of the state, each finding in the other its satisfaction and actualization […] But for the state to achieve this unity, numerous institutions must be established and appropriate mechanisms invented. This involves a lengthy struggle of the understanding […] as well as a struggle with particular interests and passions […] The pointed time at

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> which the state attains such a unity marks the period in its history when it flourishes, the period of its virtue, strength, and success. (*LPWH*: 93/18: 161)

The state is the historical object par excellence because it is the durable means by which individual interests on the one hand and the abstract end of freedom on the other have become imbued with each other, have come to characterize each other. The most important thing here is that in order to achieve this unity, 'numerous institutions must be established and appropriate mechanisms invented'. What we have in the articulated institutional structure of the state is a record of all of the human intelligence that has gone into making this universal end of freedom compatible with the variety of human needs and interests and passions. The state does so in such a way that that end of freedom takes on a concrete form in virtue of its being embedded within those interests and passions, and vice versa. Different institutions speak to different interests and passions, and therefore, speak to different ways in which this embedding can go. When we look at institutional structures, we have in front of us a record of all of those attempts, of all of that trial and error, of all of that intelligence designed to bring these things together. What we have then is a middle term that is this durable means, which we can start to analyze and investigate. We can then work out in each direction what those interests were on the one hand, and what the end is on the other hand. Because those interests are so particular and fleeting, it is difficult to catch them on their own, as it were. This is particularly the case if we are considering a civilization that has since died, and for which we only have artifacts. Similarly, the formal or universal end of freedom is so general or abstract that it is difficult to catch, as it were. But in the state as a durable means, we have something that we can analyze, and start to separate out what those two elements are if we understand it as the actualization of the one and the other.

It is extraordinarily important to focus on the theoretical importance of the state, i.e., the importance of the state as an object of investigation. This theoretical value is not contrary to some of Hegel's other claims about the value of ethical life, for example, or the value of religiosity. And importantly we should recognize that that world history remains at the level of objective spirit, at least as a phenomenon, and so there is something else going on in art, religion and philosophy that is in some sense inherently more valuable (see e.g., *LPWH*: 99/18: 170). The centrality of the state to world history is essentially a theoretical or epistemic centrality: the state is the document that we have to work with. It is the working tool, the durable means, that allows us to figure out what shape the universal end of freedom has for a particular historical state, and what shape the individual interests of its residents took on. As already mentioned, this is easiest to see in cases, such as Persia, where we must consider a civilization which has died and we work with artifacts. But it is

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just as true in the cases of our own states, which might be hard to see precisely because they are too close rather than too far away. Hegel's discussions in his *Philosophy of Right*, particularly the discussions of civil society, are full of passages where he reads off from the concrete details of instititutional structures both the specific form of freedom and the particular interests involved, frequently with surprising results.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion let us consider the *Philosophy of Right*, and particularly what the foregoing tells us about the historicity of the state in the *Philosophy of Right*, which is essential to understanding its significance and to interpreting the particular moves that Hegel makes. To start, in what sense is the state that Hegel tried to describe as being a Germanic or broadly European state of the early nineteenth century a form of reciprocal interaction? What sorts of things were interacting, and how? Hegel says of his own time that *desires* have taken a back seat to *conceptions* as the particularities that are jostling with each other:

> In no other time than our own have such general propositions and conceptions been advanced with more forceful claims. Whereas history customarily seems to present itself as a conflict of passions, in the present age—although the passions are not absent—it appears, on the one hand, primarily as a conflict of conception striving to justify themselves to one another, and on the other hand as a conflict of passions and subjective interests, but essentially under the banner of such higher justifications. (*LPWH*: 98–99/18: 169)

These clashing conceptions are the circumstances in which the end of freedom actualizes and develops, but underneath those conceptions are the usual passions and interests. This generates a two-level and ambivalent field in which politics operates, since both advocates and opponents of any given position are able to characterize that conception either as conception or as interest—and thus countercharges of hypocrisy, vanity and ideology are always available as well. Crucially, the durable means which is the state described in the *Philosophy of Right* must thus be the interaction between a universal concept of freedom, on the one hand, and this doubled field of particular conceptions and interests, on the other. Things get even more complicated, however, because the language used in the conceptions is essentially a language of freedom—those interests are presented as politically legitimate by rendering them as forms of freedom. We must look at the institutions of Hegel's state as embodying these conceptions and as attempts to justify those

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conceptions to other conceptions embodied in other institutions. The family articulates one conception of freedom, the corporations of civil society another. We could also shift focus slightly and put the point in terms of groups. The substantial (agricultural) estate embodies one conception of freedom—that articulated by the family—and the business estate embodies another—that articulated by civil society. That is, we should look at the institutional design of Hegel's proposed state as a conversation between essentially different groups of people leading different kinds of lives with different conceptions of freedom. The state has to get these people talking to each other, as well as maintain interaction between the institutions.

The final thing has to do with the state being the historical object par excellence and a further way in which we ought to understand the state's historicity. There is a great line in the 1830–31 introduction, in which Hegel says:

> All deeper feelings such as love as well as religious intuition and its forms are wholly present and satisfying in themselves; but the external existence of the state with its rational laws and customs, is an incomplete present, the understanding of which calls for incorporating the awareness of its past. (*LPWH*: 116/18: 193)

The state is this incomplete present and it is precisely that incompleteness, this felt need for incorporating the awareness of its past and its potential future, that makes it such a historical object. This is not only the case in making it the object of a philosophy of world history, but also the case in our own experience of our own states.

In terms of the four views from which we began, a consideration of Hegel's logical conception of teleology pushes closest to both Pinkard's infinite ends and Zambrana's plasticity approach. Both Dale and Dickey embed a fixed conception of teleology into their account, which is foreign to Hegel's understanding of the basic structure of the teleological relation. There is furthermore nothing distinctively naturalistic about Hegel's account, contra Dale. Dickey's account, however, has as a central feature one aspect of Hegel's view from which we have unfortunately abstracted due to constraints of space, and that is the interesting interaction between religious and political conceptions of freedom. These are deep and complex issues, and Dickey's work remains the most advanced understanding of that issue. Our view is that the end of freedom remains mutable even on Hegel's version of the Christian story, but demonstrating that is a large task in itself.

The consideration of Hegel's logical conception of teleology, and particularly the mutability of the end, push in the direction of Pinkard's and Zambrana's views. Zambrana's conception of plasticity, however, fails to account for the tremendous signficance of the past within the incomplete present. The present is far less a powderkeg ready to explode and far more a field of tension centred around durable means. The means we have—institutions such as the family and the state—have

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only endured because of their ability to slowly change shape while still accomplishing their task of putting particular interests and the general end of freedom into reciprocal interaction. Our view is thus even more conservative that Pinkard's conception of the open development of infinite ends, though we share the principle that there is no end of history on Hegel's account. Development is open, but paradoxically the complexity of modernity makes alternatives even harder to formulate—simply because so many different institutions and interests must be made to work together.

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Notes

[1] Moreover, Charles calls our attention to the distinction between 'that for whom the action is good and that for whose sake it is done' (2012: 228). For example, the nice weather outside might be good for human beings, but it is not for the sake of us that it is nice outside. Based on this distinction, Charles suggests that it is the desire or need involved in the living organism that is essential for teleology. As Charles puts it, 'the [teleological] actions and processes are ways of achieving an end state desired or needed by the agent, animal, or plant' (2012: 230).

[2] The controversy of this example is that a city wall is a human artifact so can be regarded as related to living organisms or even intentional activities. However, Aristotle's concern here is to understand the constitution of the city wall, which is itself inanimate. Concerning such examples, Broadie rightly argues that Aristotle takes the notion of craft as a model of teleology (Broadie 1987: 36). However, we hold that it is the regularity that makes human craft teleological, not its intentionality.

[3] Abbreviations used:

References to Kant are by volume and page number to *Kant's Gesammelte Schriften* (Berlin: Königlich Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1910–).

Conjecture = Kant, *Conjectural Beginning of Human History.*

Idea = Kant, *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose.*

KrV = Kant, *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft.*

KU = Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft.*

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References to Hegel are by volume and page number to *Hegel's Gesammelte Werke* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1989–).

LPWH = Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, trans. R. F. Brown & P.C. Hodgson (Oxford: Clarendon, 2011). First page is to English translation, second is to *GW*.

WL = Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, trans. G. di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[4] In the first *Critique*, Kant already suggests only the immanent use of ideas can provide systems (*KrV* 4: B679). The ends of nature belong to such ideas.

[5] Indeed, Kant is hesitated to claim that the end can determine the causality of its parts. Sometimes he will make weaker claims and admits that ends are subjective presuppositions and merely for our reflective power of judgment (*KU* 20: 209, 211, 216, 218). Nevertheless, Kant has also made stronger claims, which entail that the purposiveness of nature is objective and not merely for the reflection of human judgments (*KU* 20: 219, 220, 232). For more discussion on this debate, see White (1997), Wood (1999), and Zammito (2008).

[6] In the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, he claims that the ultimate ends of nature are human happiness and human civilization (*KU* 5: 430); in the *Idea*, he argues that 'nature has willed that man should produce entirely by his own initiative everything which goes beyond the mechanical ordering of his animal existence' (*Idea* 8: 20); in the *Conjecture*, he claims that promoting sociability is the principal end of human destiny (*Conjecture* 8: 110).

[7] See Yeomans (2012: Ch.4).

[8] See Yeomans (2017).

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