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THE REALISM OF PURPOSES: SCHELLING AND HEGEL ON  
KANT'S *CRITIQUE OF TELEOLOGICAL JUDGEMENT*

*Abstract*

The paper addresses Schelling's and Hegel's interpretation of Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgement* (1790), focusing especially on the so-called 'problem of teleology.' We reconstruct Schelling's and Hegel's reading of the second part of the *Critique*, dedicated to 'teleological judgement' and the question of natural purposiveness. We first propose a brief reconstruction of Kant's argument about the possibility of using teleological judgement with reference to nature; we then show why Hegel and Schelling were unsatisfied with Kant's argument; Finally, we argue that Schelling's and Hegel's dissatisfaction with the Kantian theory of teleological judgement led them to move beyond Kant, towards a different understanding of the relation between epistemology and ontology.

*0. Introduction*

This paper focuses on Schellingian and Hegelian readings of Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgement* (1790). In particular we focus on how they mobilize the second part of the *Critique of the Power of Judgement* (*CPJ*), which is dedicated to teleological judgement and so to the question of what we call natural purposiveness.

It has been well noted that, in this part of the third *Critique*, Kant addresses our understanding of organic nature (or the realm of living beings) by means of a teleological perspective that overcomes the boundaries of the period's prevailing mechanistic explanatory framework.

For this reason, Schelling and Hegel consider the *CPJ* the very climax of Kantian Philosophy. Hegel's claims about the *CPJ* in *Faith and Knowledge* (1802) are indicative in this sense, especially since this 1802 text marks a moment when the collaboration between Hegel and Schelling was particularly close and the communion of their ideas particularly strong. According to Hegel, the *CPJ* was

the most interesting point in the Kantian system, the point at which a region is recognized that is a middle between the empirical manifold and the absolute abstract

unity [...] It is, namely, in the reflecting judgment [i.e. the issue of the *Critique of the Power of Judgement*] that Kant finds the middle term between the concept of nature and the concept of freedom. On one side, there is the objective manifold determined by concepts, the intellect generally; and, on the other side, the intellect as pure abstraction. Neither theoretical nor practical philosophy had lifted themselves above the sphere of the absolute judgment; the middle ground is the region of the identity of what in the absolute judgment is subject and predicate; this identity is the one and only true Reason (Hegel 1968: 338-339).

Yet while they find the *CPJ* the most interesting point in the Kantian system, Hegel and Schelling also believe that in this very climax of Kantian philosophy emerges the structural limits of the Kantian approach: the reflective and purely subjective nature of teleological judgment.

What we want to elaborate in this paper is Hegel's and Schelling's reasoning for their radical criticism of what they identify as the climax of Kant's speculative philosophy. For their positions reflect not only different interpretations of the realm of nature, and of living nature in particular, but also their belief in the necessity of rethinking the relation between epistemology and ontology in Kantian thought.

The paper is divided into three parts: (1) In the first part, we present a brief reconstruction of Kant's argument about the possibility of using teleological judgment with reference to nature; (2) In the second part, we show why Hegel and Schelling are unsatisfied with Kant's argument; (3) Finally, in the conclusion we try to demonstrate that Schelling's and Hegel's dissatisfaction with the Kantian theory of teleological judgement must be situated within the context of an explanatory framework of rationality that implies a very different approach to the connection between epistemology and ontology than Kant's.

### *1. The problem of natural purposiveness in Kant's Critique of the Power of Judgement*

The question of natural purposiveness in Kant famously implies an antinomy: On the one hand, according to Kant, teleological concepts are necessary in order to understand some kinds of natural objects, namely living beings. On the other hand, teleology is problematic insofar as it takes our comprehension of living beings beyond the scope of scientific discourse (cf. Zumbach 1984; Zuckert 2007; Steigerwald 2006, 2010; Goy, Watkins 2014)

Let us elaborate the terms of this antinomy: For Kant, the only model of causality admissible in terms of a scientific explanation of the natural world is efficient causality, or causality that is coherent with a mechanistic view of nature. However, living organisms, which are clearly part of the natural world, according to Kant are always inexplicable by this kind of causality.

The mechanistic framework is thus incapable of grasping the structure of an organized being; in particular the mechanistic framework and the model of causality

coherent with it are incapable of accounting for the mutual relations between parts and whole typical of organisms, the dynamics of their growth and reproduction.

According to Kant, in order to comprehend vital organization we have to assume a teleological framework of explanation and turn to a model of causality that is not efficient causality but final causality – or the kind of causality that modern science has banned from the possibility of a scientific explanation of the natural world. In other words, we must assume that nature has something like a purpose, an end or a goal, which therefore seems to mean that at the base of nature we find a supernatural mind, some sort of intelligence or divine architect who is the origin of all this purposiveness.

However, according to Kant this presupposition of purposiveness is unsustainable for an explanation of nature that intends to be scientific. In this way, comprehension of organized beings that implies reference to a teleological explanatory framework produces an antinomy.

Since it addresses the conceptual implications of teleological notions in describing form and functions of living organisms, Kant's theory of teleological judgement can be understood as a strategy to justify the use of teleology in the scientific explanation of biological systems.

According to Kant, the impossibility of presupposing an intelligence as the origin of ends in nature does not prevent us from using a teleological approach with respect to living beings. Kant himself maintained that when we adopt a teleological approach, we have to be aware that the claim of final causality in nature is legitimate only by means of analogy. According to Kant, in fact, the analogy with the sphere of human intentional action is the only coherent way we can think of such causality. In other words, we can only think of it in terms of technical-practical purposiveness. Yet within the sphere of human action and the arts, final causality is not problematic, because human ends always presuppose a will (an intention) as their origin.

«Nevertheless, teleological judging is rightly drawn into our research into nature, at least problematically, but only in order to bring it under principles of observation and research in analogy with causality according to ends, without presuming thereby to explain it» (Kant 1968: 360: 21-25).

This use of analogy suggests that teleological judgement is only reflective and cannot shed light on the ontological status of living beings. This is why the notion of purposiveness, according to Kant, «belongs to the reflecting, not to the determining power of judgement» (*Ivi*: 360: 5 f.). It is therefore a concept employed «for guiding research into objects of this kind» (*Ivi*: 375: 20 f.).

In this sense, we can say that teleological judgement has a general epistemological value for guiding research into the organic world but has no ontological commitment; such an account of teleological judgment does not amount to saying that organized beings are teleologically organized.

Kant's analogical strategy, borrowing from the technical/practical domain in order to understand the natural one, is not his only attempt to legitimize the teleological approach with respect to nature. Kant also distinguishes between two different models of purposiveness: external and internal purposiveness. He argues that only the second has epistemic value with respect to our knowledge of the natural world.

External purposiveness takes place when an entity or a natural event appears to be oriented towards use by something else: «by external purposiveness I mean that in which one thing in nature serves another as the means to an end» (*Ivi*: 425: 4 f.). Purposiveness, in this case, is «contingent in the thing itself to which it is ascribed» (*Ivi*: 368: 12). Internal or inner purposiveness takes place when a single thing is simultaneously a «cause and effect of itself» (*Ivi*: 370: 36 f.), that is, when the end of an object is the realization of the object itself.

This distinction is essential for Kant. On the basis of this distinction, he is able to rehabilitate the notion of purposiveness and save it from the criticism of teleology prevalent in Early Modern Philosophy and Science. For Kant, external purposiveness is the model of purposiveness at the base of artefacts, since artefacts depend on entities other than themselves. An object can be an end for something else only if its purposiveness finds its origin in another item external to it that plays a causal role with respect to the object itself. In this sense, external purposiveness implies the presupposition of an intelligence that serves as the origin and justification of purposes. It is for this reason that according to Kant we cannot apply the notion of external purposiveness to explain the way of being of natural objects.

In order to say that something exists as a natural end it is required «that its parts be combined into a whole by being reciprocally the cause and effect of their form» (*Ivi*: 373: 17). According to Kant, a living being can be both a cause and effect of itself in at least three senses: (a) Firstly, with respect to the species, in the sense that an organism, by producing another, «continuously preserves itself, as species» (*Ivi*: 371: 11 f.). It is, therefore, both a cause and an effect of the survival of the species; (b) Secondly, with respect to the individual, in the sense of growth, which «is to be taken in such a way that it is entirely distinct from any other increase in magnitude in accordance with mechanical law» (*Ivi*: 371: 15 f.); (c) Thirdly, in the sense that the preservation of each part «is reciprocally dependent on the preservation of the others» (*Ivi*: 371: 31 f.). For instance, leaves «are certainly products of the tree» (therefore, its effects), «yet they preserve it in turn» (*Ivi*: 372: 1) and therefore are causes<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> This is a very interesting point within Kant's argument: the capacity of being both cause and effect of itself as the basis of the extraordinary capacity possessed only by living beings of fixing possible deficiencies (self-help) via a transformation of the functions of single parts in order to preserve the whole organism. This capacity, distinguishing them from even the most complex

Since internal purposiveness is not reducible to external purposiveness, and since this implies that there is a kind of purposiveness which cannot be reduced to an intention, the application of a teleological framework to the natural world is possible only in relation to internal purposiveness. The application of the model of external purposiveness to natural beings requires reference to unsustainable metaphysical assumptions.

In this sense, the distinction between internal and external purposiveness satisfies both an epistemological and an ontological demand. The difference between internal and external purposiveness demonstrates the futility of scientific accounts of nature that rely on teleological principles based in external purposiveness (such as the various forms of anthropocentric and cosmic teleology) as well as the possibility of a model of teleology based on the intrinsic purposiveness found in organized nature, even if that purposiveness mainly serves a regulative and heuristic function. The distinction between internal and external purposiveness also highlights a difference between natural and technical products:

An organized being is thus not a mere machine, because that has solely moving force [bewegende Kraft]; rather it possesses formative force, and indeed of a kind which it communicates to kinds of matter [Materien] which do not have it (it organizes them), thus a self-propagating formative force, which cannot be explained through the capacity for movement (mechanism) alone (*Ivi*: 374: 21-26).

In other words, Kant argues on the one hand that mechanism, as a reference to efficient causes, cannot account for the structure of organized beings, which seems to invoke a form of technical causation. However, a technical account is also inadequate to explain organized beings for two reasons: first, because the reference to intelligent design lies beyond the scope of proper natural science, and second, because organized beings display a peculiar form of self-organization that sets them apart from machines. As the scholarship on Kant attests, his solution to this predicament is to argue that the purposive features displayed by organized beings should not be considered ontologically defining properties, i.e. as having their own *constitutive* character, but should rather be ascribed to the way we make sense of them based on our own particular cognitive faculties, i.e. as reflective of the *regulative* principle of our power of judgment.

## 2. Schelling and Hegel on natural purposes

It is precisely to this connection between epistemology and ontological commitment, implied in the concept of internal purposiveness, that Schelling and

artefacts, can lead to the development of completely novel forms of life, as well as to odd or deformed creatures (cf. Kant 1968: 372).

Hegel point as the index of a radical incoherence in Kant's argument (Esposito 1977; Chiereghin 1990; Gerabek 1995; Warnke 1998; Richards 2002, Wirth 2003; Matthews 201; Steigerwald 2013; Gambarotto 2017).

On the one hand, Kant shows that the self-producing structure of living beings is irreducible to any kind of causality known to us. Living beings are not entities explicable through the efficient causality at work in physics. Nor are they simply artefacts. If they were artifacts, we might be able to explain them through the same model that we use for artifacts, external purposiveness. In this sense, an organism would be considered an organized structure and the principle of organization would be the author at the origin of it. Yet this framework of explanation would lead these natural entities out of nature, because we would have to admit the existence of something external to nature in order to consider them.

This irreducibility of living structures to other kinds of causality seems to suggest that the notion of internal purposiveness is the only one able to grasp the ontological structure of natural organized beings. Yet, on the other hand, even according to Kant, it is impossible to think of any type of purposiveness without at the same time thinking of some intention as its justification. So, if we assume that internal purposiveness is the ontological structure of living beings, we also assume the notion of a designer at the origin of nature.

This forces Kant to assume the notion of natural purposiveness as something merely regulative, never constitutive. In order to think some products of nature as teleologically organized, in fact, Kant has to assume at least an artefact model of nature.

Therefore, either we think that assuming the hermeneutics of artefacts as the paradigmatic way to understand nature somehow reflects the way of being of nature itself or, if we want to avoid reaching such a conclusion, we have to admit that the results conveyed by the assumption of such a model are merely subjective constructions that have nothing to do with the way of being of the reality we are investigating. On the one hand, the analogical strategy is invoked by Kant to justify the reference to teleological judgement in our comprehension of the natural world. On the other hand, this strategy is inadequate if it is meant to grasp the way of being of living organisms and, in particular, their self-organizing principle (the principle of internal purposiveness).

The notion of inner purposiveness is the condition of possibility for thinking life. According to Schelling and Hegel, Kant's difficulties in comprehending of living beings and the notion of internal purposiveness mirror a particular set of dualisms underwriting Kantian philosophy: between subject and object, thinking and reality, concept and world. These dualisms can be described as the tension produced when an object of thought is something extraneous to the thinking subject.

This dualism, according to Hegel and Schelling, is the characteristic of modern thought, or rather, typical of that type of "philosophy of reflection" at work in modern thought. Such philosophy of reflection is clearly active in Kantian philosophy, even if Kant's work contains the impulse to overcome it. Indeed, as Schelling writes in the Introduction to the *Ideen für eine Philosophie der Natur*:

Mere reflection, therefore, is a spiritual sickness in mankind, the more so where it imposes itself in domination over the whole man, and kills at the root what in germ is his highest being, his spiritual life, which issues only from Identity. It is an evil which accompanies man into life itself, and distorts all his intuition even for the more familiar objects of consideration. But its preoccupation with dissection does not extend only to the phenomenal world; so far as it separates the spiritual principle from this, it fills the intellectual world with chimeras, against which, because they lie beyond all reason, it is not even possible to fight. It makes that separation between man and the world permanent, because it treats the latter as a thing in itself, which neither intuition nor imagination, neither understanding nor reason, can reach (Schelling 1994: 71).

What is called into question here is the relation between thought and reality. This issue touches problematically on the entirety of modern thought, which can be seen as a way to explain the different ways thought can relate to the external reality of the subject. In other words, it poses modern thought as an attempt to justify the epistemological possibilities of the subject in relation to the different levels and structures of reality.

According to Schelling, the Kantian distinction between a phenomenal world organized by the categories of the understanding and a noumenic world unreachable by reason makes reality something comprehensible only through a sort of reduction of objectivity to subjectivity. Beyond this subjective reality there can be only a chaotic world without reason, structure, or logos, which cannot be called a world.

If subject and world, thinking and reality, are conceived as separate, then their relation can be understood in two ways: either the mind is a *tabula rasa* to which reality imparts its content (but this makes it hard to explain, for instance, the predictive power of the sciences without reference to psychological mechanisms like habit), or reality is formed by rules that the subject imparts to it (making scientific explanation equally problematic, since within the framework of constructivism – which claims reality's dependence on the mind – reality seems to lose the role of resistance that it can play only if it is independent of the subject that represents it).

These two positions can be called idealism and realism, transcendentalism and empiricism, or constructivism and objectivism. Schelling and Hegel seem to think they are one-sided, and because of this, they continuously replicate the separation between subject and world, instead of escaping it.

According to Schelling, in terms of overcoming the problems implicit in a transcendental position, in every form of psychological foundation of objectivity, and certainly in every constructivist position, the realist philosopher, who begins with the assumption of a reality that is partly or fully independent from thought, seems to have the upper hand. Realists argue that the world is not the product of a mental construction.

But if reality is completely independent from thought, a series of questions arise: How does one access reality? Do our discourses about reality end up being mere interpretations of it? Does the realist, who wants to show reality's independence from thought, risk legitimating the very attitude from which he or she is running by saying: no facts exist, but only interpretations? What are our discourses about the world (considered as completely other to the subject), if not products of conceptual schemes that the subject imposes upon the world in attempt to get a grasp on it? Further still, does a strong ontological realist position that sets reality as independent from thought not risk supporting a very weak epistemological position that makes knowledge and all of our other discourses on the world an artifice of the subject without any relation to what is ontologically recognized as other from it?

These are the questions that Schelling and Hegel discuss in relation to Kant, on the one hand, and Jacobi, on the other. According to Schelling and Hegel, the escape from the problems that pass through modern thought is to overcome the gap between thought and reality, between subject and object, and thus to rethink the supposed separation between epistemology and ontology.

This is the concern underlying Hegel and Schelling's criticism of the Kantian theory that teleological judgment is reflective judgment. They find the assumption that the inner purposiveness of nature is a form of reflective judgement with regulative value for only guiding research into the object or into the world of living beings, with nothing to say about the real being of the object or of the world, the product of a subjective presupposition of a division between thinking and reality, spirit and nature, mind and world.

For as soon as we enter the realm of organic nature, all mechanical linkage of cause and effect ceases for us. [...] only between quite different things is a relation of cause and effect possible. The organic, however, produces itself, arises out of itself; [...] Every organic product carries the reason of its existence in itself, for it is cause and effect of itself. [...] Only in organized beings are they real; they exist without my participation [...] (*Ivi*: 93-94).

Internal purposiveness for Schelling is not a mere product of the thinking subject's consideration of an object that is not, in its concrete reality, purposively organized. It is moreover not a conceptual scheme that the subject imposes on the world in order to make it intelligible to a mind that is extraneous to it: «thus, a concept lies at the base of every organization, for where there is a necessary relation of the whole to the part and of the part to the whole, there is concept» (*Ivi*: 94).

To say that the organism is a concept is to say that the concept is not, as a merely reflective standpoint would argue, something that belongs only and exclusively to the subject. With a clear anti-Kantian intention, Schelling argues

that «this concept dwells in the organization itself, and can by no means be separated from it» (*Ivi*: 94).

This acknowledgment of the reality of the concept of the organism is not a return to the type of theistic metaphysics that Kant criticizes when he deconstructs the physico-teleological view of the world: a view based on the assumption that external purposiveness is the organizing principle of the world. Rather, it is an acknowledgement of the intrinsic self-organizing features of organic nature.

Similarly, and perhaps more radically, Hegel claims that considering the internal purposiveness of natural organized beings as the product of subjective or reflective thought about the natural object is a form of reducing internal purposiveness to an external one. In *Faith and Knowledge* – the text in which the young Hegel discusses the philosophies of Kant, Jacobi and Fichte as different forms of a single approach that he, together with Schelling, calls *Reflexionsphilosophien* – Hegel summarizes the Kantian position on the possibility of comprehension of the purposiveness of nature as still abiding by a somewhat “technical” understanding of purposiveness:

[Kant] recognizes that, in and for itself, it may be possible that the mechanism of nature, the causal relation, and its teleological technicism are one. . . . Although Kant recognizes this as not impossible, and thus as one form of thinking, he still remains with that way of thinking on which [nature] is simply divided, and what knows it is a correspondingly contingent, simply finite and subjective cognitive faculty, which he calls the human cognitive faculty, and declares the rational cognition for which organism, as [truly] real Reason, is the higher principle of nature and the identity of the universal and the particular, to be transcendent (Hegel 1968: 341-342).

In other words, for Hegel, if the concept of inner purposiveness that constitutes the concept of the organism is transcendent, all purposiveness necessarily becomes external purposiveness. Elaborating Hegel’s position on the question of teleology and purposiveness this becomes even more clear. In paragraph 204 of the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, in the section explicitly named ‘Teleology’, Hegel writes that «purpose is the concept that is for itself and that has entered into a free concrete existence [Existenz]» (Hegel 1992: 209).

Purpose is therefore the concept that has entered into existence, that is no longer only the concept of a subject; purpose is a concept that has reached its concrete existence. The complexity of Hegel’s evaluation of Kant’s notion of purposiveness is evident here. According to Hegel, Kant’s focus on the concept of purpose is one of the most profound contributions made in all of critical philosophy. But at the same time, the way in which Kant comprehends the concept of purpose is radical evidence of the narrowness of Kantian philosophy. Indeed, Hegel writes in the Anmerkung to the § 204:

«With regard to the purpose, one should not immediately or should not merely think of the form in which it is in consciousness, as a determination on hand in the

representation. Through the concept of inner purposiveness, Kant re-awakened the idea in general and that of life in particular. Aristotle's determination of life already contains the inner purposiveness and thus stands infinitely far beyond the concept of modern teleology which has only the finite, the external purposiveness in view» (*Ivi*: 210).

The great merit of Kant according to Hegel is therefore to have re-awakened the idea in general and the idea of life in particular. In Hegel's view, Kant criticized modern metaphysics for understanding natural purposiveness in terms of mere utility and emphasized the incongruence of referring to a divine maker when talking about natural objects. His distinction between "internal" and "external" purposiveness is aimed precisely at discarding this metaphysical assumption.

On the other hand, Kant is quite firm in maintaining that we can only conceive of natural organization according to the model of intentional agency. He therefore construes purposiveness as a regulative principle: we cannot claim that organized beings are the result of divine design, but we do not seem to have other options for conceiving of them. Thus, we must consider organized beings *as if* they were the result of intention, from a merely epistemological point of view.

### 3. Conclusion

The very discussion of purposiveness and particularly on inner purposiveness has to do with the possibility of reason (and consequently philosophy) to grasp and comprehend reality, and most of all to grasp and comprehend 'life', that is, for Schelling and Hegel and for all the post-Kantian debate, the very core of reality.

The term 'life' is here polysemous – at least in the use made of it by all the authors of the post-Kantian landscape. It is possible to say that in the German word *Leben* we find the convergence of all the different meanings of life that in the Greek tradition found their representations in the very different words of *zoe*, *bios* and *psichè*. With the word *Leben* we index life in a biological sense, life as a mode of existence, life as the principle of living.

The concept of life is a key concept for all of post-Kantian philosophy: it is crucial for Fichte, above all in the revisions of the *Wissenschaftslehre* after 1800; it is central to the work of Schelling, Hölderlin, and Hegel, but also Jacobi, Goethe, and all the natural scientists involved in the project of giving birth to the new science of biology, whose name was coined in this period.

Emphasis on the concept of life plays a critical role in Kant, Schelling and Hegel in establishing a critique of what we might call the discourse of modernity. According to these authors, modern thought – which is grounded in the authoritative power of the thinking subject and which is deeply marked by the fracture between subject and reality – is a thought structurally incapable of thinking the dynamics of life.

This emerges in a very clamorous way in the philosophy of Kant. For Kant, *life* is what we cannot comprehend with our cognitive faculty. Life is for Kant a sort of mystery.

One says far too little about nature and its capacity in organized products if one calls this an analogue of art: for in that case one conceives of the artist (a rational being) outside of it. Rather, it organizes itself, and in every species of its organized products, of course in accordance with some example in the whole, but also with appropriate deviations, which are required in the circumstances for selfpreservation. Perhaps one comes closer to this inscrutable property if one calls it an analogue of life: but then one must either endow matter as mere matter with a property (hylozoism) that contradicts its essence, or else associate with it an alien principle standing in communion with it (a soul), in which case, however, if such a product is to be a product of nature, organized matter as an instrument of that soul is already presupposed, and thus makes that product not the least more comprehensible, or else the soul is made into an artificer of this structure, and the product must be withdrawn from (corporeal) nature. Strictly speaking, the organization of nature is therefore not analogous with any causality that we know (Kant 1968: 374: 27 f.).

A philosophy bound to a radical separation between subject and object, between thinking and reality, and between spirit and nature is unable to grasp life, finds it impossible to think something like life.

In this conceptual framework, the subject can only apply its own categories over reality in order to make it intelligible. In this manner, the subject is always closed in itself, and its thinking about reality, nature, and the world is always only *its* reality, *its* nature, and *its* world.

To say that life is a mystery, that we cannot comprehend life, means to say that we cannot comprehend reality and that what we comprehend is only a construction of our reason, of our cognitive faculties.

According to the post-Kantians, conversely, life is the core of reality, because it is in a certain sense the dimension where nature and spirit are the same, where it is not possible to separate what is mere nature from what is spirit. The main idea of the post-Kantian philosophers was that modern thought, dominated by the fracture between subject and object, mind and world, nature and spirit, is incapable of thinking the complex dimension of being that is life – a dimension in which the subject is also the object and the object is also the subject. A dimension which deconstructs the strong separation between epistemology and ontology from the inside, or which deconstructs the possibility to maintain as different discourses the one that focuses on our possibility of knowing what there is and the one that focuses on what there is. The question of life shows the artificiality of this separation.

Life is not simply a “substance”, indifferent to the dimension of the subject; on the other hand, it is neither simply the product of subjective thought. For this reason, the thought of life cannot simply be closed within ontology, leaving the subject in a way to mirror reality, or within epistemology, thus risking to reduce reality to a projection of the subject.

To Hegel, the primary task of philosophy is to unmask the idea, defended by old metaphysics, that the true is something that lies in a form of substantial objectivity, regardless of the way in which this substance itself is thought. On the other hand, just as radically, philosophy must unmask the idea that the truth is something that has nothing to do with things, which is not and cannot be objective, as it is rooted solely in the subject's conception of it.

It is only within these coordinates that we can understand some of the most pivotal assertions of Schelling's philosophy. In his *Introduction* to the *Ideen*, Schelling argues that «the system of nature is at the same time the system of our spirit» (Schelling 1994: 93). In the *Introduction* of the *Erster Entwurf*, he maintains that «if it is the task of transcendental philosophy to subordinate the real to the ideal, it is, on the other hand, the task of the philosophy of nature to explain the ideal by the real. The two sciences are therefore but one science, differentiated only in the opposite orientation of their tasks» (Schelling 2004: 30).

In this sense, the question of the realism of purposes implies the necessity of re-thinking not only the relationship between thinking and reality, between epistemology and ontology, but even more importantly, the necessity of conceiving a new concept of thinking and a new concept of reality.

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