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**Review: Sedgwick, Sally. *Hegel's Critique of Kant: From Dichotomy to Identity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. xii + 194 pp. Cloth, \$65.00**

Trip Glazer

Sally Sedgwick's most recent book is not, as its title might suggest, an exhaustive compendium of Hegel's criticisms of Kant. Instead, it is something that is in many respects far more valuable: it is a detailed and thorough investigation of *one* particular criticism, which Sedgwick claims we must understand if we are to see any of Hegel's other criticisms in their proper light. As a scholar who has published extensively on these other criticisms, her claim should be taken seriously.

In a nutshell, *Hegel's Critique of Kant* explores Hegel's rejection of the distinction between concepts and intuitions that Kant defends in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. (Sedgwick draws most frequently from Hegel's early *Differenzschrift*, but cites later works when they are illuminating.) Famously, Kant argues that human mindedness is *discursive*, in the following technical sense: our cognitions result from the application of formal *concepts*, which originate in the spontaneous faculty of the understanding, onto contentful *intuitions*, which originate in the receptive faculty of sensibility. However, because concepts and intuitions are thoroughly distinct in kind and hail from incongruous faculties—Hegel calls them “heterogeneous parts”—Kant is forced to accept the contingency of their harmony. Indeed, Kant concludes in the *Critique of Judgment* that we must *assume*, as a matter of practical necessity but without theoretical justification, that nature is suited to be represented by our concepts. Hegel worries that this intrinsic contingency

opens the door to skepticism, and in response he rejects Kant's view of concepts and intuitions as "heterogeneous parts." Instead, he adopts a view according to which concepts and intuitions derive from an original, "organic" unity. (The reader may be disappointed to learn that Sedgwick limits her discussion to Hegel's critique of Kant and does not venture to explore Hegel's positive claims. This restraint is especially frustrating when Sedgwick avers that her understanding of Hegel's critique casts new light on his positive theory of mind!)

Hegel scholars often find themselves caught in a double-bind. If they write about Hegel using Hegel's own terminology, then readers complain that they are reading gibberish. But if scholars write about Hegel without using Hegel's terminology, then readers complain that while what they are reading is philosophically sensical, it just isn't *Hegel*. To her credit, Sedgwick has found a way to escape this frustrating dilemma. Each chapter reconstructs an element of Hegel's criticism using a somewhat different set of Kantian or Hegelian terms. (Chapter 1 is organized around the distinction between "discursive" and "intuitive" intellects, Chapter 2 around that between "organic" and "mechanical" phenomena, Chapter 3 around the difference between a "purely subjective" and an "absolute" idealism, and so on.) This tactic allows readers both to follow the criticism as Hegel presents it and to triangulate the meanings of Hegel's various terms, so that they may be able to translate them into contemporary philosophical terminology, should they wish to. If a reader feels lost in the distinction between "discursive" and "intuitive" intellects, for example, then she might understand the point better when it is phrased in terms of "mechanical" and "organic" phenomena. Or if she cannot make sense of the notion of concepts standing in an "organic unity" with intuitions, then she might understand it more clearly when Sedgwick contrasts it with the idea that concepts are "external" to intuitions. Reading this book, one can get into the Hegelian jargon without losing one's grip on the basic philosophical problems, which, as any Hegel scholar knows well, is no easy feat.

Sedgwick carries out her analysis with a stunning level of precision and care. In each chapter she begins by summarizing Hegel's interpretation and criticism of one of Kant's claims. She then returns to Kant's texts to demonstrate that Hegel's interpretation is neither uncharitable nor confused. And, finally, she assesses the validity of Hegel's criticisms and shows why

Hegel's conclusions ought to be accepted. Although the text reads slow and repetitive at times, it is absolutely essential for this type of project that Sedgwick work through the arguments step-by-step—slowly, carefully, and precisely. The reward unquestionably justifies the reader's efforts along the way.

Sedgwick's book is an erudite, scholarly treatment of a very specific topic. It will be very useful for scholars interested in Hegel's criticisms of Kant's philosophy more generally, for scholars interested in Hegel's theory of the mind more generally, and perhaps even for Kantians concerned with defending Kant from his critics. It is not, however, a book that would appeal to the casual historian of philosophy or the part-time Hegelian. The publisher is right to describe this book as "rigorous, focused, and detailed—an important contribution."