

The Problem of Non-Discursive Thought from Goethe to Wittgenstein

Syllabus

Course Description

The problem of non-discursive representation, posed in its most general form, can be formulated as the question: How can a particular, non-discursive item have general significance? This problem of what we might call, with Hegel, *the concrete universal* assumes a variety of expressions in almost every discipline: How is a picture so much as able to convey a determinate intelligible content – a content that admits of understanding and misunderstanding? How is it that a diagram or geometrical construction shows something general (how things are in all cases of a certain kind, not just how things are with respect to this triangle)? How are *paradigmatic* examples (according to Kuhn’s theory, a crucial vehicle of instruction and inquiry formation in physics) understood and elaborated? How is it that a poem means more than it merely says and thus escapes reduction to any of its possible paraphrases?

Although our seminar is concerned to get a handle on this problem in its full generality, our path into it will be historical, genealogical and comparative. The historical point of departure for the seminar will be a moment in the (broadly speaking) German Enlightenment – a moment in which, we claim, the question of the nature of concrete universals was first posed in its full generality. Anecdotally, we can locate this moment in the conversation that took place between Goethe and Schiller on July 7, 1794, in which Goethe claimed – although by the lights of the strict Kantian Schiller this was impossible – to “see Ideas”. Indeed, the central notion of Goethe’s own scientific research and, arguably, of his aesthetic theory – the notion of the *Urphänomen* – presupposes just this capacity of non-discursive representation or “intuitive understanding.” We will locate the other chronological edge of our historical frame in the work of the later Wittgenstein, where we find a kindred insistence on the fundamental importance of non-discursive representation as evidenced in such notions as that of *perspicuous insight*, *aspectual seeing*, *family resemblance*, and *Übersicht* (synoptic grasp). Our aim is to explore some of the crucial way-stations between Goethe and Wittgenstein in the exploration of these ideas, starting with their initial articulation in the work of late 18th and early 19th century German philosophers (especially Kant and Hegel) and tracing them up to their most recent forms of development and contemporary inheritance in the work of contemporary scholars and thinkers, such as Stanley Cavell, Michael Fried, and John McDowell. A more detailed description of the course can be found at our website: <http://hum.uchicago.edu/frankeinstitute>

The course itself is part of a larger full-year project funded by a Mellon Foundation Sawyer Seminar grant, with additional funding assistance coming from The Division of Humanities, The Franke Center, the Wittgenstein Workshop, the Center for Interdisciplinary Research, and Robert Pippin’s Mellon Foundation Grant. In addition to the opening conference and our bi-weekly visitors in the Fall and Winter Quarters, these contributors have also provided funding for three further visitors in the Spring Quarter, including an extended series of lectures by John McDowell, and a closing conference in the fall of 2007. More information about these events can be found, as it becomes available, at our website.

INSTRUCTORS

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The Structure of the Seminar

The seminar is open to and intended for both graduate students and faculty. The seminar will meet every Thursday from 3 to 6pm. Except for the occasional scheduling irregularity in the winter, on the even-numbered weeks of each quarter there will be visitors to the seminar who will assist us in exploring the themes of the course, while the odd-numbered weeks will be devoted largely to preparation for these visits. Students taking the course for credit are required to attend all meetings of the course.

On the weekend following the second meeting of the seminar, there will be an opening conference to set some of the themes of the course. All of the visitors but one who will come over the course of the year will be present at the conference. Slightly over half of them will present papers at the conference.

In addition, there will be a weekly graduate section which is only open to (and moreover mandatory for) graduate students taking the course for credit. Anyone who plans to attend the seminar is urged to attend the opening conference.

Satellite Events

No one participating in the seminar is required to attend the satellite events attached to this seminar. Also, unlike the weekly meetings of the seminar, no advance permission is required in order to attend any of the satellite events.

Over the fall and winter quarters of this academic year, many of our visitors will participate in an additional seminar discussion of their work, hosted by the Wittgenstein Workshop on the Friday following their Thursday Sawyer Seminar session. The schedule of those events can be obtained from Kristin Boyce at keboyce@uchicago.edu

In May, 2007 John McDowell will give a series of lectures on perception and action, and in late May and Early June, we will conclude our events for this academic year with seminars with Andrea Kern and Sebastian Roedl. The project will conclude as a whole with a final conference, reconvening all of our visitors from the previous year, in the Fall of 2007.

Course Requirements

The seminar is open to graduate students and faculty. No advance permission is required for any University of Chicago faculty who wish to attend the seminar. Advance permission from the instructors is required for any faculty from other universities or any graduate students from any university who wish to attend the seminar.

In addition to attendance at the weekly seminar meetings and the opening seminar conference, students taking the course for credit will be required to complete one of the following three requirements:

1. One 30 page paper due at the end of Winter quarter
2. Two 15 page papers, one due at the end of each quarter
3. One 15 page paper due at the end of Fall, which is then expanded into a 30 page paper due at the end of Winter quarter

Students taking the course for credit must meet with a faculty member before 10th week of Fall quarter to discuss possible paper topics. Any student taking the course for credit is also required to attend the weekly graduate student discussion section.

Required Texts and Readings

The following English (and German) texts are available at the Seminary Co-op:

Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*
Kant, *Critique of Judgment*
Goethe, *Theory of Colours*
Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*
Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*
Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality*
Fried, *Art and Objecthood*

The rest of the readings will be available through the Regenstein library e-reserve page or through the Seminar's Chalk website.

The readings for each week divide into required readings and background reading. Students taking the course for credit are expected to do the required reading. The background reading is entirely optional.

Schedule of Topics to be Covered in the Seminar

All underlined names are those of outside visitors to the seminars

Fall Quarter

9/28 (1st week) Organizational meeting and overview of the aims of the seminar

10/5 (2nd week) Introduction to Locke, Kant, and Hegel on singular and general representation with Christoph Menke and Terry Pinkard

10/12 (3rd week) Introduction to Kant's Analytic of the Beautiful

- 10/19 (4th week) Richard Moran on Kant, Proust, and beauty
- 10/26 (5th week) Kant and Goethe on intuitive intellect
- 11/2 (6th week) Eckart Förster and Joseph Vogl on Goethe's theory of science
- 11/9 (7th week) Introduction to problems of absorption and theatricality in painting and photography
- 11/16 (8th week) Michael Fried and Robert Pippin on absorption and theatricality in painting and photography
- 11/23 (9th week) Thanksgiving (no class meeting)
- 11/30 (10th week) Eli Friedlander on Kant on the aesthetic ideal and Benjamin on the dialectical image
- 12/7 (11th week) Pirmin Stekeler on the concept of intuition in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*

Winter Quarter

- 01/04 (1st week) McDowell's account of concepts, intuitions, and Kant's Transcendental Deduction
- 01/11 (2nd week) The Pippin/McDowell Debate on Kant and Hegel on concepts, intuitions, and the virtues and shortcomings of the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories in Kant's *First Critique*
- 01/18 (3rd week) Sensibility, understanding, and intellectual intuition in Post-Kantian German Idealism
- 01/25 (4th week) Paul Franks on Kant's Dirty Laundry: Intellectual Intuition, Geometry, and German Idealist Responses to the Challenge of Naturalism
- 02/01 (5th week) Galton and Wittgenstein on unity of concept, family resemblance, and composite photography
- 02/08 (6th week) Joel Snyder on Francis Galton and Etienne-Jules Marey on the photographic representation of generic images, general concepts, and laws of nature
- 02/15 (7th week) Kant on teleology, organism, and the representation of living things
- 02/22 (8th week) The unrepresentability of natural-historical judgments through Fregean logical forms
- 03/01 (9th week) Michael Thompson on the representation of organic activity and practical thought
- 03/08 (10th week) Hannah Ginsborg on Kant on teleology, the representation of judgments of taste, the representation of judgments of life, and the unity of Kant's 3rd *Critique*
- 03/15 (11th week) Stanley Cavell on aesthetic problems of modern philosophy

Schedule of Readings

[FALL QUARTER]

9/28 (1st week) Organizational meeting and overview of the aims of the seminar

10/5 (2nd week) Introduction to Locke, Kant, and Hegel on singular and general representation

Required readings:

Locke, *Essay on Human Understanding* III.1-3 on general terms

Geach, *Mental Acts*, chapters 5-11

Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (selections) on sensibility, understanding, and intellectual intuition: 'On Logic in general' (B74-79), 'On the Logical Use of the Understanding in general' (B92-4), 'On the Pure Concepts of the Understanding or the Categories' §10 (B102-105), 'On Ideas in general' (B375-376), 'Transcendental Aesthetic' (B33-37 and §8.IV B70-72), B-Deduction §21 (B145-6) and §23 (B148-9)

Kant, *Jäsche Logic* (selections) on concepts and intuitions: 'Of Concepts', §§1-16; 'Introduction', §V (9:33-5), §VIII (9:58-61)

Hegel, *Encyclopedia Philosophy of Mind*, 'Theoretical Mind', §§446-450

Background readings:

Hegel, *Encyclopedia Philosophy of Mind*, 'Theoretical Mind' (remainder)

Pinkard, *German Idealism: 1760-1860*, Chapters 1 (pp26-44), 9 (217-33), & 10 (246-65)

10/12 (3rd week) Introduction to Kant's Analytic of the Beautiful

Required readings:

Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 'Analytic of the Beautiful': First and Second Moments (§§1-9; 5:203-219); Fourth Moment (§§18-22) and General Remark (5:236-244); Deduction of Pure Aesthetic Judgments (§§30-40; 5:279-296)

Moran, 'Kant, Proust, and the Appeal of Beauty', paper and handout

Hamawaki, 'Kant on Beauty and the Normative Force of Experience'

Background readings:

Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Empirical and Intellectual Interest in the Beautiful (§§41-42; 5:296-303)

10/19 (4th week) Richard Moran on Kant, Proust, and beauty

Required readings:

Proust, *Swann's Way*, brief selections (TBA)

Background readings:

10/26 (5th week) Kant and Goethe on intuitive intellect

Required readings:

Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, §§76-77

Förster, 'The Significance of §§76-77 of the *Critique of Judgment* for the Development of Post-Kantian Philosophy (Part I)'

Goethe, *Italian Journey*, Palermo, Tuesday, 17 April 1787; to Herder, Naples, 17 May, 1787

Goethe, *Scientific Studies*, 'Methodology' and 'Morphology':

I. Methodology

The Experiment As Mediator between Object and Subject

Fortunate Encounter

The Extent to Which the Idea "Beauty Is Perfection in Combination with Freedom"

May Be Applied to Living Organisms

The Influence of Modern Philosophy

Judgment through Intuitive Perception

Doubt and Resignation

II. Morphology

Toward a General Comparative Theory

Observation on Morphology in General

The Enterprise Justified (From *On Morphology*)

The Purpose Set Forth (From *On Morphology*)

The Content Prefaced (From *On Morphology*)

Background readings:

Förster, 'Hegel's Debt to Goethe'

Pippin, 'Avoiding German Idealism'

11/2 (6th week) Eckart Förster and Joseph Vogl on Goethe's theory of science

Required readings:

Goethe, 'Preface' and 'Introduction', *Theory of Colours*

Background readings:

Goethe, 'Das reine Phänomen'

Goethe, 'Das Sehen in subjektiver Hinsicht von Purkinje'

Purkinje, 'Über wahre und scheinbare Bewegungen in der Gesichtssphäre'

Vogl, 'Wolkenbotschaft'

Cassirer, 'The idea of metamorphosis and idealistic morphology'

11/9 (7th week) Problems of absorption and theatricality in painting and photography

Required readings:

Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality*, chapters 1-2
Fried, 'Wittgenstein, Jeff Wall, and the Everyday'

Background readings:

Fried, 'Approaching Courbet', *Courbet's Realism*, chapter 1

11/16 (8th week) Michael Fried and Robert Pippin on absorption and theatricality in painting and photography

Required readings:

Fried, 'Art and Objecthood'
Pippin, 'What Was Abstract Art? (from the point of view of Hegel)'
Pippin, 'Authenticity in Painting: Remarks on Michael Fried's Art History'

Background readings:

Cavell, 'Music Discomposed' & 'A Matter of Meaning It'
Fried, *Art and Objecthood*, introduction
Wittgenstein, *1914-16 Notebooks*, entries, Oct 7-9, 1916 (pp83-4)

11/23 (9th week) Thanksgiving (no class meeting)

11/30 (10th week) Eli Friedlander on Kant on the aesthetic ideal and Benjamin on the dialectical image

Required readings:

Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 'Analytic of the Beautiful': Third Moment §§10-17 (5:219-236); Remark I (5:341-344)
Goethe, *Faust*, Part II, lines 6173-6306
Goethe, *Farbenlehre*, §§173-177
Benjamin, 'Epilogue' to 'The Concept of Art Criticism in German Romanticism'
Benjamin, 'Program to the Coming Philosophy'
Friedlander, 'In Between', from *Expressions of Judgment: Reintroducing Kant's Third Critique*

Background readings:

Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Art and Genius (§§46-49; 5:303-317)
Goethe, 'The New Melusina', from *Wilhelm Meister's Wandering Years*
Benjamin, 'Convolute N', from *Arcades Project*
Benjamin, Letter on Goethe's 'New Melusina'
Friedlander, 'The Measure of the Contingent: Walter Benjamin's Dialectical Image'

12/7 (11th week) Pirmin Stekeler on the concept of intuition in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*

Required readings:

To be announced

[Winter Quarter]

01/04 (1st week) John McDowell's account of concepts, intuitions, and the argument strategy of Kant's Transcendental Deduction

Required readings:

McDowell, *Mind and World*, Lectures 1 and 2
McDowell, 'Hegel's Idealism as a Radicalization of Kant'

Background readings:

Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B-edition Transcendental Deduction
McDowell, *Woodbridge Lectures*, I & II
McDowell, 'Sensory Consciousness in Kant and Sellars'
McDowell, 'Conceptual Capacities in Perception'
McDowell, "Autonomous Subjectivity and External Constraint"

01/11 (2nd week) The Pippin/McDowell debate on Kant and Hegel on concepts, intuitions, and the virtues and shortcomings of the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories in Kant's *First Critique*

Required readings:

Pippin, 'Leaving Nature Behind'
McDowell, 'Response to Pippin's 'Leaving Nature Behind''
Pippin, 'Postscript: on McDowell's response to 'Leaving Nature Behind''
McDowell, 'On Pippin's Postscript'
Pippin, 'Reply to McDowell's 'On Pippin's Postscript''

Background readings:

Hegel, *Glauben und Wissen*, 'Kantian Philosophy'
Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism*, chapter 2 ('Kantian and Hegelian Idealism')
Pippin, 'Concept and Intuition: On Inseparability and Indistinguishability'
Wildenauer, 'The epistemic role of intuitions and their forms in Hegel's philosophy'

01/18 (3rd week) Sensibility, understanding, and intellectual intuition in Post-Kantian German Idealism

Required readings:

Franks, *All or Nothing*, Introduction, Chapter 1

01/25 (4th week) Paul Franks on Kant's Dirty Laundry: Intellectual Intuition, Geometry, and German Idealist Responses to the Challenge of Naturalism

Required readings:

Franks, 'Kant's Dirty Laundry: Intellectual Intuition, Geometry, and German Idealist Responses to the Challenge of Naturalism'
Franks, *All or Nothing*, chapter 5 & chapter 6, parts 1-2 (pp337-354)
Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 'The Discipline of Pure Reason in its Dogmatic Use' (B741- 755)

Background readings:

Friedman, 'Kant's Theory of Geometry'
Fichte, *Wissenschaftslehre*, Second Introduction, §§5-7

02/01 (5th week) Galton and Wittgenstein on unity of concept, family resemblance, and composite photography

Required Readings:

Francis Galton, *Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development*, selection
Galton, 'Generic Images'
Wittgenstein, 'Lecture on Ethics', excerpt (*Philosophical Occasions*, pp. 37-38)
Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, I, §§66-77, 90-92, 122, 126, 133, 185-201, 415, 654; II, §12 (p. 230)
Wittgenstein, 'Remarks on Frazer's *Golden Bough*', excerpt (*Philosophical Occasions*, pp. 121-133 (especially pp. 131, 133))
Wittgenstein, *Blue and Brown Books*, excerpt (pp. 17-18)

Optional Background Reading from Galton:

'Combined Portraits and the Combination of Sense Impressions Generally'
'Composite Portraiture' (from *The Photographic News*)
'Composite Portraits, made by combining those of many different persons into a single resultant figure'

Optional Background Reading on Wittgenstein on Family Resemblance:

Renford Bambrough, 'Universals and Family Resemblances'
Warren Goldfarb, 'Wittgenstein on Fixity of Meaning'

02/08 (6th week) Joel Snyder on Francis Galton and Etienne-Jules Marey on the photographic representation of generic images, general concepts, and laws of nature

Required Readings:

Etienne-Jules Marey, *Mouvement*, selections
Etienne-Jules Marey, *History of Chronophotography* (tr. by C. S Peirce), selections

Galton, 'Thought Without Words'

Optional Background Reading from Galton:

Galton, 'Mental Imagery'
Galton, 'The Measurement of Resemblance'
Galton, 'Personal Identification and Description'

Optional Background Reading on Goethe, Galton and Wittgenstein:

Carlo Ginzburg, 'Family Resemblances and Family Trees'
Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, 'The Image of Objectivity'

Optional Background Reading on Wittgenstein and Goethe

Mark Rowe, 'Goethe and Wittgenstein'
Joachim Schulte, 'Goethe and Wittgenstein on Morphology'

Optional Background Reading from Wittgenstein

Remarks on Color, I §§1-17, 56, 71-73, II §16, III §§57, 125-131, 206, 251
Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology, Vol. 1, §§889, 949-950

02/15 (7th week) Kant on teleology, organism, and the representation of living things

Required readings:

Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Critique of the Teleological Power of Judgment (§§61-68; 5:359-383);
Preface to the First Edition and Published Introduction (5:167-198)
Ginsborg, 'Kant on Understanding Organisms as Natural Purposes'

Background readings:

Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Dialectic of Teleological Power of Judgment (§§69-71, §§78-81)
Ginsborg, 'Kant's Biological Teleology and its Philosophical Significance'
Ginsborg, 'Two Kinds of Mechanical Inexplicability'

02/22 (8th week) The unrepresentability of natural-historical judgments through Fregean logical forms

Required readings:

Thompson, 'The Representation of Life'
Frege, *Begriffsschrift*, 'Preface'
Frege, letter to Marty, August 29, 1882

Background readings:

Thompson, 'Apprehending human form'
Thompson, 'Three degrees of natural goodness'

Frege, letter to Husserl, October 30, 1906
Frege, "On Concept and Object"

03/01 (9th week) Michael Thompson on the representation of organic activity and practical thought

Required readings:

Thompson, 'Naïve Action Theory'

Background readings:

Thompson, 'Dispositions and practices'
Thompson, 'Practical knowledge'
Thompson, 'What is it to wrong someone?'

03/08 (10th week) Hannah Ginsborg on Kant on teleology, the representation of judgments of taste, the representation of judgments of life, and the unity of Kant's 3rd Critique

Required readings:

Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, First (unpublished) Introduction, §§IX-XI
Ginsborg, 'Kant on Aesthetic and Biological Purposiveness'

Background readings:

Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, First Introduction (remainder)
Ginsborg, 'Empirical Concepts and the Content of Experience'
Ginsborg, 'Thinking the Particular under the Universal'
Ginsborg, 'Kant and the Problem of Experience'

03/15 (11th week) Stanley Cavell on aesthetic problems of modern philosophy

Required readings:

Cavell, 'Aesthetic Problems of Modern Philosophy'
Cavell, 'Wittgenstein's *Investigations*' Everyday Aesthetic of Itself'

Schedule of Opening Conference

The Problem of Non-Discursive Thought

from Goethe to Wittgenstein

Conference at the University of Chicago, October 6-8, 2006.
Swift Hall, 3rd Floor Lecture Hall, 1025 East 58th Street, Chicago, IL

Friday, October 6

- 10:00-10:30 Opening Remarks
10:30-12:30 Eckart Förster (Johns Hopkins), “Intuitive Understanding in Plato’s
Phaedrus”
2:00-4:00 Hannah Ginsborg (Berkeley), “Aesthetic Judgment and Perceptual
Normativity”
4:30-6:30 Joseph Vogl (Weimar), “Goethe on Colors”

Saturday, October 7

- 10:00-10:30 Opening Remarks
10:30-12:30 Terry Pinkard (Georgetown), “Hegelian Life Forms”
2:00-4:00 Joel Snyder (Chicago), “Francis Galton and Etienne-Jules Marey:
Photographing Genes and Laws of Nature”
4:30-6:30 Eli Friedlander (Tel Aviv), “The Measure of the Contingent: Walter
Benjamin’s Dialectical Image”

Sunday, October 8

- 10:00-10:30 Opening Remarks
10:30-12:30 John McDowell (Pittsburgh), “Conceptual Capacities and Perception”
2:00-4:00 Robert Pippin (Chicago), “Ordinary Self-Knowledge in James’s *What
Maisie Knew*”
4:30-6:30 Michael Thompson (Pittsburgh), “Practical Knowledge”