

# Thought and Incarnation in Hegel

Stephen Theron

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## PREFACE

Hans Küng, writing on God and incarnation in Hegel, speaks of “the very notion that God incarnates in Jesus Christ”. Where would such a notion come from, though? *What is it?* A product of love, Küng urges, thereby siding with McTaggart as seemingly against Hegel in finding a supreme place for love in the Notion, rather than for knowing. The truth, rather, one feels bound to affirm, is that God’s incarnation in Jesus Christ *is* the notion that he incarnates, inasmuch as necessarily *trans*-historical, notional in a word. One thinks, therefore, that this Word incarnate, and not merely the fact of it, *is* the notion or Concept, “first”, Hegel variously says, reaching fulness *conceptually* as or when immediately sensuous and sensible. He has his cake and eats it. For there is not a general predicate or essence of incarnation which then instantiates in one chosen being or perhaps more, by adoption as it was once put, by participation or by other means<sup>1</sup>. God, the infinite being, could not be so complicated, so complex, since these are limitations. This *thought* of incarnation, Hegel comments, “is religion elevated to the level of conceptual consciousness”. Jesus Christ, that is, *is* God’s word, his *verbum interius*. “The Word was with God and the Word was God ... and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. This was the true Word ...” This, I take it, from the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel, is the sense of an otherwise oddly phrased exclamation by one of the twelfth century Victorines, viz. *Jesus Christus, solutio omnium quaestionum*. It also corresponds to Aristotle’s refusal to distinguish, in the sense of spiritually or mentally separating, God, *ho theos*, from God’s *thought* of himself and only of himself. This is the background to Hegel’s statement, in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, that God *is* revelation and is his revelation of himself indifferently, simply because, in the first place perhaps, he could not be anything else or less. It is also first foundation of and final conclusion to the system of Absolute Idealism as set forth and/or worked out in Hegel’s *Science of Logic*, either version. The tie-up with Duns Scotus is patent, though not in any exclusive sense, as sensitive interpretation of Thomas

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<sup>1</sup> Hegel’s making this point is well brought out and emphasised in a short piece by Chrysantho Sholl Figueiredo: “The Logic of Incarnation: Hegel’s Use of the *Philebus* in the Shorter Logic and in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*” in *Philosophy Study* October 2016, Vol. 6, No. 10, pp. 569-577).

Aquinas, or Augustine, would show.<sup>2</sup> A *felix culpa*, namely, is no merely abstract *culpa* or fault, but is bound to finitude itself, such as the infinite is bound to allow as what highlights its own specific character. Hegel's dialectic of good and evil grows naturally out of this whole complex background, inasmuch as by the same movement of thought it takes it to itself.

To this thought of "incarnation" belongs, therefore, according to Hegel, all that follows, not as derived from but as fulfilling and itself explicating the religious systems preceding or accompanying it, along with any artistic products thus elicited from or presaging it. This becomes, namely, the explication of self-consciousness to itself:

The readiest instance of Being-for-Self is found in the 'I'. We know ourselves as existents, distinguished in the first place from other existents, and with certain relations thereto. But we also come to know the expansion of existence (in these relations) reduced, as it were, to a point in the simple form of being-for-self. When we say 'I' we express the reference- to-self which is infinite, and at the same time negative. (*Enc.* 96, *Zus.*)

The connection between the two ideas, so to say theological and philosophical, lies in the word "infinite" as used here. Its sense, as applied to self-consciousness, expresses the profoundest truth of Hegel's logic. Thus he adds here that just this is what distinguishes man, just or inasmuch as it distinguishes self, "from nature altogether, by knowing himself as 'I'"; that, namely, is what he is. For in this I alone is to be found the apprehension of Nature as one whole in what is an identity of knower and known, this in turn, necessarily, entailing the identity of each self-consciousness with each and with all. This has the profoundest consequences for our apprehension

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<sup>2</sup> I refer here to Scotus' doctrine that incarnation is/was intrinsically necessary to God, i.e. it belongs to his "idea", irrespective of any *culpa, felix* or not, on the part of man. It is part, though, of the same line of thought, of analysis, to find the fault, *culpa*, ultimately in finitude itself (cf. Hegel, *Enc.* 24, *Zus.* Part 3, comprising an interpretation of the *Genesis* account of the "fall" of man). Yet this is to say simultaneously that it is necessary to man, implicit, that is, to the phenomenology of finite mind, of mind in nature. This in turn prompts one to look for echoes or variants or anticipations of the doctrine in other religions generally (Krishna, Al Hallaj) as well as for further development of this in the Christian proclamation and/or theology itself, such as Hegel found in Eckhart's "If I were not, God would not be", *just as* if he were not then I, or Eckhart, would not be. Pauline or Johannine thought in the earliest Christian writings themselves encourage such a development, in which Hegel's own philosophy can then be seen as participant. This is the supplement, part of it at least, of which Marxist or related interpretations of Hegel stands in need, though the result may well be less adaptable to ephemeral aims or programmes.



of incarnation as necessarily entailing the “that they may be one in us” of Scripture (the “high priestly prayer” of Christ, where the “us” refers to the Father and Son in their unity).

It is therefore typical of the child, of man in his prime or initial and foundational situation, to wonder how it can be that he finds himself one amongst the objective crowd of people surrounding him, or surrounding him and his mother maybe, or how, indeed, he can find himself at all. In Newman this leads on to the statement that he, Newman, or the subject, “knew” as a child or even knows now as “reality” no other being but two, himself and God, say self and God, two horns of a dilemma in Hegel which thus become there irresistibly identified in an “absolute idealism”, where God is the Idea, namely, closer to self than self, *intimior me mihi* as Augustine had seen it and/or distilled it from innumerable Johannine or Pauline texts, or his own interior life indeed. The system (of logic) thus corresponds, as much theologically explicating as originatively eliciting, to deep tradition, hence its belonging to as also constituting philosophy, to these texts, such as “I in them and they in me” or the Pauline “I live yet not I, but Christ lives in me” as the Absolute Subject it thus has to be, Hegel claims, not as idea merely but in concrete mediation. To this corresponds the historic, theologically positivist notion of “sanctifying grace”, not with any certainty found in everyone in this objectified natural world, nor even certainly in any given individual, starting with self. “The truth shall make you free”. There is though, necessarily on Hegel’s premises or findings, an element of representation in this hallowed *picture*, again, of things. Thomas Aquinas would rescue it from this limitation when he explains such “grace” as necessary response to a divine offer, made, it seems, to all, of personal “friendship” (*amicitia*). This can seem distinct from the findings of even a true philosophy. The offer, though, would be based upon an initial consanguinity of spirit with spirit, of, again, spiritual or “logical” absorption of the individual, thus *a priori* “ruined”, into the ultimate concrete universal, into the “one God and father of all” (St. Paul). Yet from “our” point of view in such a frame as this would not everything be grace, as many dogmatic theologians, even they, concur in affirming?

It is, though, in perfect consistency with this that Hegel begins his “The Philosophy of Nature” (*Enc. II*) by declaring that Nature as such is outside the Concept, is the Idea “in alienation from itself”. As such it is in fact exteriority itself, radical contingency as such rather than its exemplification merely (*Enc. 247*). It is to this alienation that man, as subjectively or essentially I, does not finally belong, but which is nonetheless necessary to the Infinite conceptually precisely in its contingency, in its alienation, that is to say, as the other of the same which thus is the same, making the infinite

what it is for thought, i.e. made for itself by itself or by necessity understood as its own constitutive freedom from limitation, necessarily inclusive therefore of *its own* (as it must be seen as) otherness.

The contradiction of the Idea, inasmuch as, as Nature, this is itself outside of or alienated from itself, is rather the contradiction of the on the one hand conceptually spawned necessity of its formation or “creation” (*Gebilde*) and its rational place or determination within the organic totality, with on the other hand Nature’s indifferent whimsicality (randomness) and indeterminate lack of conceptual regularity. (*Enc.* 250)

Here, in this text, one might find the answer to Gentile’s rejection of a philosophy of nature as logically incompatible with Hegel’s system. Nature, namely, is not “thought as thought of” (*pensiero pensato*), as Gentile seems to have assumed, but “thinking thought” (*pensiero pensante*) in that moment of contradiction (rather, it *is* that moment, Hegel seems to say here) of otherness, necessary to or within the Infinite as such.<sup>3</sup> Not only this but the incarnate Word, i.e. the Word simply, just is what we call man. “Behold the man” or, in the Latin simply, *ecce homo*. The face, therefore, the “holy face” of the Word, is archetypal or generative, all our faces being modelled thereon, whether we live before or after that historically perceived phenomenon we call a lifetime (of Christ). Hence the prophet: “There is no beauty in him that we should desire him”. There is a kind of iconographic history here. We are referring rather to the eternal Word, which a face might one-on-one reflect as being naturally “transfigurable”. Thus a breviary hymn speaks of Adam or the first man having the face of Christ. Thus C.S. Lewis remarks meeting a Swiss pastor who had met Hitler. “What did he look like?” Lewis asked. “Like Christ”, came the answer, apparently not meant as distinguishing Hitler but quite the reverse. Another hymn speaks of his coming down from the heaven he never left (i.e. not even or least of all, rather, in thus “coming down”). Hence there was no Word or essence of a word *before* him, again, no “pre-existent Christ”, a phrase Herbert McCabe (*The New Creation*) criticises Raymond Brown, the Scripture scholar, for using, not simply because it seems to set a temporal limit to Christ’s inseparable humanity but because “all times are his”, in the liturgical and Scriptural phrase. There can be no other *concept* of Christ, in Hegelian logical terms, as we have been urging above or, as Hegel says at the end of the Greater Logic, the Concept is “the true Being”. That is the

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<sup>3</sup> This thought is adumbrated, at the same time as he in general praises Gentile’s *Philosophy of Art*, in G. Rinaldi’s *The Philosophy of Art*, Whitelocke Publications, Oxford 2020.

meaning of “He came down from heaven”, the heaven which he never left. This, we may note, is what McTaggart attributes to humanity as a whole, the “Before Abraham was I am” of the Fourth Gospel, while of Abraham too, or of just anyone, it is said in Scripture: “I have loved thee from before the foundation of the world”, i.e. for ever, since God, any God, is necessarily immutable. This, one may note in passing, is the surest basis of the dignity of personality. The conceptual, that is, is the actual, the actual the conceptual, as clearly implied by Hegel’s deeply serious but much maligned adage: “the factual is normative”, as the contingent is the necessary as proceeding from the divine thought, the freedom of which consists in its having “no shadow of turning”, this, this freedom, being what then constitutes the necessary as derivative upon absolute thinking and not a rule conditioning it. Note though that when we say the real in Nature is its concept this is not to be taken as mere exclusion of the contingently sensuous along with temporal and spatial conditions. As Aquinas remarked, sensation is itself a type of cognition, *sensus est quaedam cognitio*, even though one grant the dubiousness Hegel uncovers in its temporal and spatial *objects*. This consideration, in fact, is essential underpinning of his succeeding assertion that the *appearance* of the Word to sense and touch is the Word’s and indeed the divine perfection as itself revelation, not only “to us”, he seems to mean, but as such. It is so, rather, through an inherent dialectic, that of being and nothing, highest and lowest, of a “bringing to nought the things which are”. Yet a careful study of Hegel’s system of logic, *The Science of Logic*, should lay to rest any suspicion that Hegel, with his deep Biblical roots, is merely seeing to it that his texts corresponds to these famous Pauline utterances. We rather find there their spiritual or “sapiential” roots and do not need to deny that the religious and theological past, of Christianity in particular but not exclusively, may have been a necessary condition for the philosophical advance Hegel’s system embodies.

This might be the place to remark that the traditional teaching that the image of God in man lies in “his” soul and not in his body, somehow equated in this its abstract consideration with the phenomenal (“body”, the term, has no place in metaphysics, declares Aquinas, adding that it is only of interest for logicians!), is being superseded in most contemporary theology in favour of this “image” being most nearly caught in the Scriptural statement, “Male and female created he them”.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Fergus Kerr OP, *Twentieth Century Catholic Theologians*, Blackwell, Oxford 2007, pp. 193-202, on Karl Barth, Karol Wojtyła, as Pope, and Joseph Ratzinger as promoters of this development and/or change of view.

The above, anyhow, is what Hegel brings into philosophy. It is part of the doctrine whereby he claims to be transcending *philosophia* towards *sophia* or knowing and not mere love of knowing. This advance to *sophia*, he claims is the historic duty of Christians or the Christian and “Western” world as fulfilling pre- or non-Christian philosophy. Theology, in claiming mere separation from philosophy of a defective kind, has caused confusion here. Philosophy becomes theology or entirely metaphysics (Aristotle’s *theologia*), previously its highest or ultimate pitch merely, but by this same metaphysics, whether or not “hylomorphic”, the ultimate form was ever determinative of the whole substance, as, just therefore, is the “intellectual” soul in man his (determinative) *forma corporis*, inasmuch as God came or comes down to earth, properly in incarnation but only because prefigured in the very creation of this “intellectual creature”. This is often called the implicit Scotism of modern philosophy, noted above here, which often thus understands itself (in Deleuze, for example, just as it is the entire thesis of Gilson’s *On Being and Some Philosophers*). Yet reflection, and consultation of texts, shows that it, this mood or approach, is equally Thomist, despite Thomas’s insistence upon the Augustinian *felix culpa*. For *culpa*, it can be argued, as already above here, can only be felicitous if it is natural to the finite, while Thomas himself accordingly asserts that “whatever can fail at some time does so”, which implies that the finite world as such would elicit the remedy posited. This, incarnation and even man as prefiguring and hence eliciting it, is the taking of earth into heaven, or “of the manhood into God”, there being no “conversion of the godhead into flesh”. Yet God did not change his mind as the result of a disastrous human “fall”. If that were possible, Hegel remarks, then there would be no God. Hence that prophetic or mystical sense of ancient Scripture ever believed in and venerated by orthodoxy. Hegel’s general comment is that “The End is as such realised”. See here *Enc.* 204 to 213, on “absolute Cunning”:

Within the range of the finite we can never see or experience that the End has been really secured. The consummation of the infinite End, therefore, consists merely in removing the illusion which makes it seem yet unaccomplished ... This is the illusion under which we live. (*Enc.* 212, *Zus.*)

Hence “Death is the entry into Spirit”, he elsewhere affirms. This, however, is as much Thomist as it is Scotist, being development of Thomas Aquinas’s doctrine that while the world or mankind is related to God yet God has no real relation to anything outside of himself, such as temporal sequence, a day being for God “as a thousand years” and conversely, to cite the Apostle. This could mean, has to mean, that mankind “outside of” God is nothing, hence not ultimately *relatandum* or, equivalently, so to say teasing out an

implication of Aquinas's statements, that the Trinitarian relations are the only or, pre-eminently, real ones. Apprehension of this aspect of things in relation to a "fall" (of man as such) has to affect the traditional doctrine of original preternatural gifts, such as freedom from death, "concupiscence" and ignorance along with how this doctrine should be interpreted if not historically, as is *represented* in the Biblical "story" (on which, see *Enc. 24, Zus. 3*, again). Thus Hegel's philosophy does not overthrow but penetrates more deeply into these traditional theological elements, "understanding spiritual things spiritually", as is demanded throughout the canonical writings and in virtue of which we find the Christ himself declaring that "Greater things than I have done will you do" since, he adds, "I will be in you".

So, thus viewed, there are not two duplicating sciences but only science itself or knowing, wisdom, prudence, love or faith, no "heaven and earth" which, rather, "shall pass away", while "my Word" endures forever. This knowledge, of Nature's transitoriness, in Hegel's thought, is not divorcible from its having a purely phenomenal character unless and until seen "in God", as an "idea" (a term requiring further exposition) which, like all the ideas, as Aquinas too argues (*Summa Theol. Ia, Q15*), is identical with the Divine Idea which is "the true Being", as Hegel states in the final section of his Greater Logic. That is revealed to be the truth of philosophy, the true *sophia*, thus *sancta* indeed, to which the Cathedral at Constantinople is originally dedicated.

So much for the soul, then, it now seems. For if the soul as "ultimate form" determines the whole substance as what it then is, then we have the unity of Spirit, *Geist*, in all its manifestations. This, indeed, is the meaning of "absolute knowledge" in Hegel's system. It is the end, in either sense, of Self-consciousness in its assumption into or putting by in favour of that universal consciousness which "I" was or is "all the time". This is the "dignity" Augustine urges the Christian to acknowledge, however much he himself grasped of it. Quite some, I would think, in view of his insight into one *intimior me mihi*. For that "one" cannot but be I as more intimately or "deeply" I than I am to myself.

So as touching faith, when we say "by faith we know" we are often, in our finite subjectivity, saying precisely that we do *not* know. This was the kind of faith that Hume successfully mocked. But it is a simple refusal of faith in disguise since faith, Hegel shows, is a form of intellection if it is anything. As for love, with which we began, we would note that Hegel makes of volition, of love therefore, a form and even a more advanced form (an advance upon "cognition proper", namely) of cognition. So philosophy, that is to say, by the Christian dispensation, is as much (or as little) a sacred

science as is theology, which has based its separate existence upon premises unknown to St. Paul, Justin Martyr or the Alexandrine Fathers, in particular upon the later tendency to materialise nature and grace into two separate *fields* rather than two intertwined spiritual principles. This was indeed the reason why philosophy was dropped, in favour of this achieved *sophia*, which should rather be seen as fulfilling it, since only thus can philosophy come to its intrinsic fulfilment, as is necessary for truth and, therefore, human redemption. When, during the main Scholastic period, study of it was revived, the Academy re-opened, so to say, there was no intention of making it an alternative source of wisdom as it were on all fours with theology. Again, everyone knew the pagan Aristotle called his metaphysics *theologia*, quite rightly, i.e. it was not separate or alternative, ever, but, as love for the as yet unattained, potential merely to the ever actual. The first step towards the later unworkable dualism was that of assigning a separate status to philosophy, in the Arts faculty, for example, as if it were something substantive still, as handmaid, *ancilla* to theology. It could not be anything of the sort, being *the same quest*, undertaken first with love-longing, later in serene contemplation, to be reflected back, in concept rather than in time, since the longing is ever with us all the same, upon that initial longing, to be fulfilled namely, by its own concretely universal principle and not in this or that finite individual. “For you are all one in Jesus Christ” – that was the form this insight originally took, though earlier anticipations of it, and later ones for that matter, are not wanting. Earlier and later, Hegel would want to say, are “outside the concept”.



# CHAPTER ONE

## INCARNATION

One finds it suggested, e.g. by McTaggart, that Jesus “only” became, according to Hegel, “adopted” as the God- man, the truth being that *all* persons have this divinity, though, all the same, there needed to be *one* mediator of this truth. This appears to be different from the orthodox confession of Jesus as the Son begotten “before all worlds”, “by whom all things were made”. Nonetheless I want to explore the possibility that this distinction, between orthodoxy and the Hegelian view, is without a difference when viewed with respect to certain features of the account of *logic* that Hegel would establish as being *the* science, of logic. Here Absolute Idealism is presented as “the dogma of philosophy”. *Such* a “dogma”, it is implied, cannot be ruled out by some religious authority, which should rather defer to it as to the “perfect *Gottesdienst*”, nor even by God himself as there, accordingly, affirming or “loving” himself. That is, this view is on a level with “scientific” claims as to what we “really mean” when we say, in discourse (labelled for good or ill by Hegel as specifically “religious”), as “understanding spiritual things spiritually” (St, Paul), that Christ “ascended” into heaven (eternity) or that God did this or that on a specific or “certain” day. In fact both locutions, of adoptive exaltation or eternal filiation, occur in the body of texts attributed to Pauline authorship, but without much suggestion, if any, of the McTaggartian “only”.

Conversely, by Hegel’s logic again, but not only thus, the incarnate God’s death on that “good” Friday, but still more the succeeding resurrection, both being dogmas of faith, subvert if accepted the truth of historical and finite events generally as a real option for thought. God as God, the infinite, does not die or rise again, yet here a death and rising again, two events, is predicated of precisely God. It follows that they can be predicated only as appearances, precisely because they are events, which means that events as such are appearances, are not real or “conceptual”. The contingent fact, for finite thinking, that the temporally prior reality of such a faith played a possibly determinative role in Hegel’s or anyone’s achievement of such a thought does not signify once the thought is there as conceptually



established, if it is.<sup>1</sup> So the logical system of absolute idealism, for those who understand it, establishes the truth for thought of what is either already held and will continue to be thus held by faith for the believer or it may play a part in eliciting from one previously unbelieving a confession of faith. The case is similar after all to belief in God, since this is an article of the Christian Creed, even the first article, “I believe in God, etc.”, even though the teaching Church also proclaims that the truth of God can be naturally known by the enquiring mind and that with certainty *without destroying faith* (Vatican I, 1870)<sup>2</sup>. Note that I say that the death of incarnate God “on the Cross”, once conceived, subverts time and the phenomenal, as itself other than the phenomenal generally. “Subversion”, in this usage, always signals a logical operation. There is no *prior* reality, temporal or other; rather, what had seemed to be standing firm in the mind is shown to have been merely a representation, so not a thought at all in Hegel’s sense here. The acts of God, that is, have as such the character of being event-transcendent. The overcoming of the world is not the destruction of something that was there before. Hegel has to make this point, therefore and

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<sup>1</sup> This strict refusal by Hegel of truth to history and finite events generally, proclamations of which are thus, strictly speaking, not true but merely “correct”, is entirely bypassed in the theologian Hans Küng’s in general excellent study, *Menschwerdung Gottes, eine Einführung in Hegels theologisches Denken als Prolegomena zu einer künftigen Christologie*, Freiburg 1970. He, on the contrary, suggests History as an additional transcendental predicate in the Scholastic sense of this. A similar line can be found in Karl Rahner’s writings, more flagrantly in Bernard Lonergan, as we noted in the Preface above. Philosophers seem in general to be better theologians, therefore, than those currently viewed as being such, as seems good to preface to a presentation of Hegel as theologian. This situation can be seen either as the absorption of theology into philosophy, as we find in Aristotle, or in St. Justin Martyr’s dialogues, philosophy then set towards eventual *sophia*, Hegel’s ideal. This is also touched upon by Thomas Aquinas in his treatment of the intellectual virtues under the rubric of “connaturality” in the case of *sophia*, transcending prudence, science, understanding and, as regards the practical intellect specifically, both synderesis and art itself as a virtue (of intellect). *Sophia* is the absorption of philosophy into theology, the supranatural becoming connatural just in its superiority following very closely upon this, there being no reduction in either case. In either case, again (see above on Gentile) this is not “something thought” but thought thinking itself in and through just this “moment”, a facet of this one unrestricted pure act as total actuality. Taken in reverse, this means there is no God over and above the subject and it is just thereby, Hegel argues, that God is the supreme and unique Object.

<sup>2</sup> Hegel is not quite consistent on this point, I find, though I am quite prepared to take this as maybe opening a need for further development of the original statement, i.e. for re-statement of the thesis.

above all, about the incarnate Christ himself as inserted into history. “Even have we known Christ after the flesh yet we know him so no more”, exclaims the Apostle., while the entire mystical theology and the accompanying practical guidance found in St. John of the Cross’s works could well be seen as being based upon this truth, this insight. This is part, at least, of eucharistic doctrine as *mysterium fidei*, a or even *the* “mystery of faith”, as participating, namely, in that one “sacrifice” otherwise viewed as occurring or offered some time ago. Sacrifice itself, though, may be and is viewed as no more and no less than “going to the Father” (John’s Gospel) or, in Hegel’s words, “Death is the entry into spirit” or, in a locution now out of fashion, the separation of soul from “the body” and “that’s all it is” (Thérèse of Lisieux). But body. *Corpus*, Aquinas once remarked, is not a term for use in metaphysics.

To these views corresponds a view of the deep-lying “friendliness” of reality, obscured from within time but not as viewed as the whole of “logic”, one with its “method”, as Hegel understands this term, a method (*met’hodon*, according to the way) equivalent to metaphysics, which thus, in its speculative character, logic sublates, i.e. logic does not “reduce” to metaphysics, becomes here their explication or final rationale rather. Thus, as transcending temporality, logic is, becomes, *post hoc*, or “after” time in the sense of beyond it (logically), adopted, in the eternity of absolute knowing or transcendently. Thus it is equally from the beginning, which does not itself begin. This and *pre*-destination, also transcendental, which is to say, we now see, logical, cancel one another out as categories. More shortly, what God will be He is and was, is “the end as realised” or realised end.

Such a view is what is expressed, if gropingly, by such expressions as “the hidden Christ of Hinduism”<sup>3</sup> or talk of the Greeks as the “chosen people of reason” (Jacques Maritain) or, indeed, by all the attempts at a deeper, i.e. more rational, grasp of the “religious” mysteries (Christian or any other) by “mystical theology” as a genuine and established discipline taking for its matter the spiritual experience and consequent dissemination of the spiritual praxis, “understanding spiritual things spiritually” again, of those called in Christianity, whether it is “a religion” or not, “believers”, i.e. they are ultimately called to just this understanding. But the view can be applied to or derived from thinking. This is as such necessarily *bona fide* wherever it is found while, after all, and as it is taught in Christian theology, only God knows who has or does not have faith or any other virtue, which opens up this possibility, as in fact a necessity, that faith and thought are only

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<sup>3</sup> Title of a book by Raymond Pannikar, an Indian Catholic priest: Darton, Longman & Todd; London, 1964.

abstractly separable. Thus, in German, *Geist* means spirit or mind indifferently, while in English we say of any expression of a thought that it is “in good faith” just in so far as it is an *expression*, one might say rather a representation, *Vorstellung* thereof (such is the finitude of language) or, contrariwise: “Oh you don’t really believe that”. Faith, anyhow, is itself, along with hope and love, a virtue perfecting all the others, as supernatural prudence perfects, it is taught, even when seeming to contradict, natural prudence or as, in the traditional theological discourse, “grace perfects nature” generally, which is to say it duplicates it under a superior aspect. In this way “the Cross”, as noted above, perfects our concept of time and that by cancelling it, time being necessary for Spirit for “only so long as spirit needs it” (Hegel: *Phenomenology of Mind*, final chapter, viz. “Absolute Knowledge”). It would be wrong to take this last as a mere joke, if we consider, on Hegel’s part, since he implies the finitude of any temporal length or of any time at all, while the finite, he establishes, “is not”, on its own, having its being *in* God alone by an absorption in identity, God having “no other” (cf. *Enc.* 135), i.e. no other identity of or hence to himself. As infinite, that is, his other, all and any otherness, is the same as he, is “one with” him in just its otherness from him and this is the destruction of the finite and “the ruin of the individual”. So, of anything, as the speculatively true essence of dialectic (which otherwise be of little interest): “This also is thou, neither is this thou”. This is the concept of Absolute Unity as a “transcendental predicate” in the original Scholastic sense, preceding the predicates truth, goodness or, it is argued by some, beauty as itself, unity, immediately succeeding upon being as the only actual transcendental predicate, which is thus not properly a predicate, since it is falsified immediately as being thought (*pensato*) and no longer itself thinking (*pensando*)<sup>4</sup> as the actuality or act of (the) Concept, *das Seiende als solches*, with stress on the actively gerundival suffix *-ende*. The other transcendentals, as taught, say, by Aquinas, are *entia rationis* only, i.e. they too, the true and the good, the one, are really being simply, but as presented, for example, to the universalising faculties of mind (true) or will (good).<sup>5</sup> All otherness, in a word, is in itself analogical (and not merely “logically”), this alone ensuring both chaos of disorder among all atomic units and an equally unthinkable “coalescing” of all pluralities. One might cite Cajetan’s *On the Analogy of Names* as interpreting Aquinas (in *Commentary on the Sentences*) on this point.<sup>6</sup> These thus concur with Hegel in a “unity of

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<sup>4</sup> Gentile: cf. Note 3, above.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Aquinas, *QD de potentia* VII.

<sup>6</sup> The best account of Cajetan’s view that I know of is that by John P. Reilly, viz. *Cajetan’s Notion of Existence*, Mouton, The Hague and Paris, 1971. This book has

philosophical experience”, a theme defended in our time by Gilson or Huxley but previously systematised, in the sense of demonstrating its necessity, by Hegel. Hence also, it follows from the above, mere nature is the Idea in alienation as a “moment” of it along, indeed, with temporality and or space, both of these being, as *ganze abstrakte Aussereinander*, nature’s defining, indeed therefore, on Hegel’s premises, determining first moment as the *erste oder unmittelbare Bestimmung der Natur* (*Enc.* 253 and 254).

The view, of “realised end”, may not at first appear as self-evident. One finds Descartes asserting that God could change the laws of logic. This was indeed a common *theological* view during the late medieval ascendancy (inherited by Descartes) of the doctrine of the *potentia absoluta Dei*, the absolute power of God. Peter Geach mentions his encountering this quite often among his students “of the evangelical persuasion”. Nor, however, can the freedom of the Idea as presented by Hegel be taken as absolutely excluding such indeterminism, so to say, as a “moment”, in his special sense of a falsity from which, as in all cases, truth must result, it being *thought itself* which, alone, is the true being. Here we have the solution, indeed a *solutio* or “loosening”, of the objection, presented by John Macquarrie and others against “neo-Thomism” or, presumably, other “realist” accounts, that “it simply asserts that reason will never go against faith”<sup>7</sup>. Thus Hegel reconciles, in speculative “sublation” of them, the two one-sided views, exemplifying indeed his general “method” in dealing with the finite abstractness of the Understanding. What we call faith, that is, is the perfection of thought just as thought, in turn, perfects faith. Or, the submissive act of faith is an or the perfect rational act, while thought itself is anyhow spiritual or absolute. Thought must be allowed to “think itself”, this being its essence. The appearance of man as such, as the rational being, we must then finally say, is itself the “sublation” of time and not therefore “within” time. The Concept itself, that is, for its part, expands into

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as its thesis a sustained criticism of the better-known account of Cajetan given by Gilson in his article entitled “Cajetan et l’existence”. *Tijdschrift voor Philosophie*, 25 (1953), pp. 267-286. Cajetan, Reilly convincingly shows, used the later Scotist terminology of his opponents, such as Antonio Trombetta, language to express an essentially Thomist viewpoint on existence. Something similar might be said of Hegel, in relation, say, to Kant, I am claiming here.

<sup>7</sup> John Macquarrie: *Twentieth Century Religious Thought*, London 1971, SCM Press, Chapter 18, section 89. Cp. our *From Narrative to Necessity*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 2012, Chapter One, “Faith as Thinking with Assent”. An earlier version of this with the same title appeared as an article in *New Blackfriars*, January 2005, pp. 101-114 and is also in our *Unboundedly Rational Religion*, E-Book, GRIN Verlag, Munich 2008.

predication and “syllogism”, each of these but one thought or *verbum interius* and even the same thought, itself. “Everything is a syllogism” (Hegel). Man, that is, cancels evolutionary biology since this, *qua* evolution or “development”, is its own ever-becoming fruit in death of the seed (of the Idea, ultimately, of which also Existence is but a momentary category – *Enc.* 122-124). Death there “works” life here. Those in the frontline of life, of spirit, conquer by exhausting the ammunition of the enemy. More exactly, death is to be seen as “the entry into spirit” (Hegel), of which biological life as such is but an immediate representation while in the end only thought wholly “thinks itself” in necessarily self-knowing reality.

On this Hegelian picture, just as in orthodoxy generally, which it accordingly subserves, Christ is perfected in death, becomes Spirit, “a living spirit”. Only, the Body of Christ, in which all are included in a coincident self-conscious identity, called love, now gets seen as the eternal or necessarily destined “body of man”. “Behold the man!” *Ecce homo!* Perhaps indeed the evangelists were already aware of this, as also, earlier, the Apostle, when he wrote, to cite it again: “Even if we have known Christ after the flesh, yet we know him so no more”. This rejection of any “reversion to the primitive” (Hegel) in preference to present actuality, to the mystical or “whole” Christ, as when it is further said: “Now you are the body of Christ”, is simply maintained by Hegel. For such a reversion

is based on the instinct to get at the notion, the ultimate principle; but it confuses the origin, in the sense of the immediate existence of the first historical appearance, with the simplicity of the notion. By thus impoverishing the life of spirit, by clearing away the idea of the communion, and its action with regard to its idea, there arises, therefore, not the notion, but bare externality and particularity, merely the historical manner in which spirit once upon a time appeared, this soulless recollection of a presumably (*gemeinten*) individual historical figure and its past. (Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, tr. Baillie, Harper Torchbooks, New York 1967, pp. 764-5).

This confusion lies at the root of what we today are calling “fundamentalism”, somewhat inexactly or even confusingly. That is, immediate existence is not, and never was, even if or while the notion itself should appear as such an existence, “the simplicity of the notion”. There is a downgrading here of such existence. This must be born in mind when interpreting *gemeinten* here. Stronger than the translator Baillie’s “presumably” (it means rather something like “intendedly”) it does not simply, if at all, refer to the common-sense question about the historicity of Jesus but to the relevance, the causal efficacy, of such historicity or, rather, of history as such, to be seen rather as a gallery through which one walks “at a slow pace” (cf. *The Phenomenology of Mind*, final page), this phrase standing for the

elimination or transcendence in simultaneity of all moments, inclusive of the temporal. Hence Jesus is not, from the Hegelian standpoint, *abstractly* temporal any more than he is abstractly individual. He is *the* “Son of Man”. *Ecce homo!* Behold man or *the* man indifferently, more as a Platonic exemplar or form than as a universal. This is why the “right wing” Hegelian ontologists of the nineteenth century, Gioberti or the young Rosmini, some eighty of whose propositions were later, c. 1880, condemned by the Roman Holy Office, though he is now declared a saint, or W. T. Stace later, are often found, along with Scotus Eriugena or “the school of Chartres”, not to speak of Augustine or Malebranche, whatever we say about Thomas Aquinas, to have “missed the point of the question” of universals.<sup>8</sup> From the standpoint of Hegelian logic this question *is* pointless. Hegelianism, of this or other sorts, relegates it to being a self-contradictory moment in the development of the eternal result which is the Concept. We can say that for Hegel Jesus, our subject here, *results* from history just as the true Concept, as held by the Idea of itself, results from the falsity in finitude of all considered apart from him. That is, even though the Idea Absolute results from finitude and its falsity this cannot, on Hegel’s scheme, be a temporal resulting. It is, rather, as if the false is the *premise* and/or foundation of the true. We may compare with what Hegel has to say about Satan as the first instance of self-consciousness.<sup>9</sup> Jesus is thus, again, *solutio omnium quaestionum* (School of St. Victor, Chartres). The concept as such, concepts, Hegel would agree with John of St. Thomas (Poincot, contemporary with Descartes) in saying, has no reality but as a “formal sign” or sign only, even though ultimately of itself as Idea. So it is, as Phillips (cited above) rightly notes, that the divine ideas are each severally one with the divine nature (Aquinas), Hegel would say with the Idea. As Derrida saw it: “The sign and divinity have the same place and time of birth. The age of the sign is essentially theological. Perhaps it will never end” (J. Derrida: “Of Grammatology”: the phraseology recalls not only the evangelical Infancy Narratives but also Wittgenstein’s tip, rather than suggestion: “Essence as grammar”). So, indeed, one may well question whether the word “presumably”, in Baillie’s generally excellent version, is the best translation of *gemeinten* here, since it is just what Hegel does not presume in discussing what people in general intend or “mean”, in the pointedly subjective sense he rather brings out with his play on just this *meinen* as, in German, equivalent both to “mine” and “mean”. Hence in downplaying any dependence of specifically religious truth upon historicity,

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<sup>8</sup> Cp. R.P. Phillips, *Modern Thomistic Philosophy*, Burns Oates, London 1935, vol. 2, pp. 96-97. 103-104.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *The Phenomenology of Mind*, VII c.

upon events, Hegel downplays history and not religion, thereby differing *toto caeli* from what was condemned, e.g. at Rome in 1907, as “modernism”, seen as a total down-playing of absolute religious truth. The development of doctrine, to which Newman drew attention later, works in the opposite direction.<sup>10</sup>

As regards the Hegelian denial of absolute reality to history and the ephemeral generally, this, applicable to time itself in the first place, is nothing more than recognition that history, and a *fortiori* time, are but *moments* of the Concept, of God, false as having no reality outside of or abstracted from this concept. God, clearly, is not in time. That is, absolutely speaking, the End is as such realised, to repeat. It is only “within the range of the finite”, under the “covering” of objectivity, that “we can never see or experience that the End has been really secured ... This is the illusion under which we live” (*Enc.* 212, *Zus.*). Hegel will have read the Gospel accounts of the Transfiguration of Christ, many times no doubt, and he reproduces its implications here, arguing, however, strictly from premises logically anterior both to transfiguration, whether represented or “spiritual”, and to his own conclusions. “Before Abraham was, I am”. This is here presented as a strictly philosophical truth, utterable by anyone whose self-consciousness has advanced thus far. There’s the rub, for some, of course. Yet without the general possibility we could not have the particular instance, questions of special divine help being not germane, frankly representational even. This is the deeper or hidden meaning of the saying that “God helps those who help themselves”.

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As touching this body in which “You are all members one of another”, this Apostolic deconstruction or speculative contradiction of “body” and its limbs, in thought as in expression both, is exactly and specifically what Hegel designates as achieved self-consciousness, stressed by McTaggart, in his account of “heaven” or present (but not perceived) immortality, as the true or perfect unity, transcending organic life or the finite generally though, in contrast to Hegel, he deprecates mention of the infinite. Hegel’s defence

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<sup>10</sup> As this is developed as Absolute Idealism a religious outlook cannot but come to the point of seeing all “events” in the light of eternity, as themselves eternal realities or as just one, such as resurrection in death, death to self as life eternal of all in all, and so on. *Sumit unus sumunt mille*, as Aquinas had poetised the eucharistic communion, “where one receives a thousand receive”. This eternal event is the final sense of the *actus purus* of Aristotle, as it is equally the inner speaking of the one Word,

of “the true infinite” against McTaggart’s insufficient objection that we there transpose a term we “have” already in a different sense, however, stands. Infinity requires the identity of every member, every part, with the whole “body”, while Hegel is purposely correcting popular but also mathematical uses of the term. Furthermore, this establishing of the true infinite points, as touching indeed just this point, toward the logically necessary (divine) simplicity or absoluteness of the Idea, as thinking only itself, such as McTaggart would rather maybe have left obscure but, in the interest of final coherence, need not have done so. There is not of course, nor can there be, any such “body”, having limbs or members “one of another”. It is a speculative or self-sublating *representation* under the rubric of “the necessary picture-idea” (Hegel, in *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God*, discussing, as once Aristotle had done, how finite contingencies fall under eternal or divine necessity as thus eternally known). Similarly, St. Paul’s further use of it to explain diversity of finite functions in the visible community, teachers, prophets etc., has no immediate philosophical relevance, as does his saying, again, in sublation (*Aufhebung*) of this picture, that we are “all members one of another”, which, like “I in them and they in me” (John’s Gospel), cannot be pictured since apparently nonsensical, apart from the residual place-references signified by “in” or “of”, which fall short of the identities involved. Identity, for Hegel too, is *the* logical relation. To be “in” Christ is to be, finally, *alter Christus*, or Christ over again and yet not again. Compare here the picture (originally Greek but taken over with effect by Nietzsche), which breaks down as picture and is therefore precisely *not* this picture but speculative as picturing something else, viz. the illusoriness of time, or that the eternal return of time itself is therefore not a return but, rather, necessarily, the *same* time, so to say “de-timed”. That, in fact, is the “sublation” (Hegel’s *Aufhebung*) of time within the Idea Absolute, in God.

The difficulty people find in these conceptions is due solely to sticking to the term “is”, and forgetting the character of thought, where the moments as much *are* as they *are not*, - are only the process which is Spirit. (*The Phenomenology of Mind*, tr. Baillie, p. 777).

In fact, without time there is no returning anywhere, since nothing then goes away, so this “returning” too is a picture. The evangelical “I shall see you again” is thus representation (*Vorstellung*) for the “I am with you always”, resurrection, spirit or full self-consciousness, ultimately, manifested in and as the moment of the death (“It is (or has been) accomplished”, this being the sense there of the English “finished” (in some translations). In Hegel’s



final ontology there is and can be no events, therefore.<sup>11</sup> The Idea in its simplicity embraces all its moments in multiple but real identification(s), each of which is in turn identical with the other. This, also, is what finally might seem to cancel or overthrow the individual uniqueness of the incarnation, which is as much caused by its so-called effects as it effects these effects. It is in fact the key to everything and so not itself an individual event or even man. *Ecce homo!* Is the Latin, unlike the Greek, intentionally ambiguous? This man, namely, the individual itself, is ever logically ruined for pure thought, i.e. in truth, “I” being “universal of universals” (Hegel). This is and only this can be the key to the Gospel saying, “Greater things than I have done shall you do”, which could not be true except inasmuch as *no one*, no one individual, finally “did” anything absolutely speaking. Rather, “I in them and they in me”, while a moment is not a doing. This is key also to the talk of it being “in a little while” that you shall see me and then, again, “in a little while” you shall not see me. “What is this little while? We cannot understand what he says”, exclaim the disciples. It is precisely the Idea in its eternity as Hegel, more than anyone thus far, maybe still, captures. The nothing of truth as itself all (but emphatically not nothingness), the unreality of time, are but suggested by talk of a very small thing or while, metaphysics as such having no place in Scriptural, i.e. religious, discourse (as inter-mediate form of Absolute Spirit, between Art and Philosophy, on Hegel’s account).

The question arises here as to whether we must assert as logically necessary the final “salvation” of all persons as we know them, as Hegel’s exposition of the text from the “pastoral” epistles, “God wills that all men be saved”, seems to imply. It is not, however, beyond infinite power to will there to be beings who hate him eternally. This is the meaning of the Saint of Lisieux’s saying that “Every soul gets what it expects”, hence that “If you want God’s justice you will get God’s justice”, spoken to some of her crazy sisters in religion who dreamed of placating this justice by their petty mortifications, ignoring the prophetic saying, “I will have mercy and not sacrifice”. Note, though, that she only said “if”, leaving open a possible coming to one’s better self, as we say. This, either way, it is important to see, is the sense in which “All shall be well and all manner of thing”, whatever be the truth of this after all particular matter as applied to self. This is the point of Chesterton’s grandfather’s saying he would thank God for his creation even if he knew he were a damned soul (G. K. Chesterton, *Autobiography*). It would not signify, nor does it, for the point that thought

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<sup>11</sup> One may compare Cyril O’Regan’s discussion of this in his *The Heterodox Hegel*, NDU Press, Indiana, along with my “reply” in *The Orthodox Hegel*, CSP, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2014.

here has now reached, whatever we say about thanking God, creation and so on.

Closely related to this is the question of the relation of created freedom to divine or absolute necessity, determining all things in eternally Realised End, i.e. realised as such:

Within the range of the finite we can never see or experience that the End has been really secured. The consummation of the infinite End, therefore, consists merely in removing the illusion which makes it seem yet unaccomplished. The Good, the absolutely Good, is eternally accomplishing itself in the world; and the result is that it needs not wait upon us, but is already by implication, as well as in full actuality, accomplished. This is the illusion under which we live ... (*Enc.* 212, *Zus.*)

If this is so then why should not McTaggart's or similar accounts (e.g. that of Giacomo Rinaldi among today's Hegelians) of Hegel as positing our perceptions generally as illusory be acceptable? Here, anyhow, any absolute "freedom of indifference" is excluded, since infinity, the Idea, *necessarily* goes before or "prevents" (in the sixteenth century sense) us "in *all* our actions" (stress added). In God himself freedom finds its own identity with or as absolute necessity. This, the teaching of Aquinas, following St. Paul but arguing from philosophical principles, is entirely replicated in Hegel. Self-consciousness, so to say, simply watches, like the perfect chess-player or strictly probabilistic gambler, what is in itself "realised" *as* "end". The basic consideration here is that what Aquinas calls God, the Idea Absolute in Hegel (whether or not "for" Hegel), is First Mover (as in Aristotle) of every created movement of will or of anything else and thus *makes* the will and the will's action, individually as universally, mine and everyone's, free. The evil, where it occurs, is thus first in God (there is evil in God, Hegel reasons), where it *is*, in itself, *as the negative*. This seems, metaphysically, to be an improvement upon, or maybe further explanation of, Aquinas's seemingly feeble accounting for moral evil in terms of a specifically or exclusively finite dereliction of duty simply (what can fail at some time does fail), i.e. a simple negative abstract, therefore, as being *in no way* positive or just, not being at all, rather, and so not even non-being, which is something, e.g. an object of thought, whereas evil is "a sham-being" (Hegel). "Offences must come" – why, except that, as logical moment, the infinite must be allowed to offend itself? Thus, though, good and evil come to be posited as the same, in which case, however, "evil is just *not* evil nor goodness good" (Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, p.776). The opposition is sublated in the Idea. Although they *are* thus the same, however, it *must be said*, "just as certainly" or "with immovable obstinacy", that they are not

the same, Hegel here writes. Both are equally wrong, since both are equally right, he says, since, after all, “all judgments are false”, including this one. This, I would venture to assert, is the ancestry of the Nietzschean “beyond good and evil”, thus illustrating all the more “the unity of philosophical experience” (E. Gilson), whether or not this would exceed the historical Nietzsche’s own perception. High priests may utter truths in part or wholly beyond their own perception, in virtue of their office, while philosophers, as offering perfect or absolutely spiritual *Gottesdienst*, are the highest of priests (cf. LPR III, end sections). In fact, however, good and evil are here sublated, however obstinate anyone’s speech. All the same, Hegel does seem to have drawn back a little here. If this offends us then we must look rather to the discussion where he distinguishes the divine knowledge of evil from commission of the same, discussed, anyhow, expounded most profoundly, rather, in the same place (*Phenomenology of Mind*, VII C: “Revealed Religion”), where it shows this to be the key to Hegel’s whole theology of the incarnation, leading on to its redemptive effect as a change in man, not in God.

The case is similar, though, if we consider Life or other related general concepts, a fact which C.S. Lewis, to take an example, uses to bring out the emptiness, as he sees it, of F.R. Leavis’s constant appeal, in his literary criticism, to Life, giving this a kind of “semantic halo” all on its own.<sup>12</sup> The word “life” here is just used, Lewis claims, to mean “what I approve”. In fact it means everything and nothing at the same time, as is also the case with goodness in God when not paired with evil. So Hegel’s “There is evil in God” functions as establishing that neither good nor evil has meaning there, in God. Good is then, or there, just not good, evil is then just not evil, he says. Lewis offers the analogy of the chessboard, while Hobbes flatly states that God may justly afflict whomever he wishes, meaning clearly whomever he does in fact afflict: whomever, note, not just what can be explained positively via certain human canons. God, rather, IS, is true being, the Thomistic insight leading Hegel to say that “the factual is normative”, the ground-maxim of natural law theory. It is also the reason for Hegel’s claim as to the irrationality of questioning moral imperatives<sup>13</sup>. St. Thomas in fact explains goodness and truth as Being presented to (human) will and intellect respectively, i.e. and not as themselves, here approaching most closely to Hegel’s general critique of predication as such. God, anyhow, has no such abstractly separable faculties, whether or not we have them. Hence it is that God is only called good analogously while he *is* absolutely being, as we are not, being, collectively, *plura entia sed non plus entis* (more

<sup>12</sup> Cf. C.S. Lewis, *Studies in Words*, CUP 1967.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *The Phenomenology of Mind*, pp. 451-455 (Baillie translation, 1967).

beings but not more Being). Of course this can also find expression oppositely, such as in “There is none good but God” or, conversely, either than God is not being or that the divine being is finally freedom, rather, and/or the Idea, and that *this*, literally, actually Thought, is “the true being” (thus Hegel concludes his first *Science of Logic*). Hence our title here. We might compare the dialectic of Fatherhood. God as fathering is nothing but Father (of the Son), “act” (of or *as* self) in a word. All in all, then, by Hegel’s logic, truth and goodness retire before the Absolute Idea which is Being indeed (being human, however, he calls it anyhow there “the *true* being” at one point).

The enthusiastic utterances about *life* which occupied our attention in the last section are, let us note, a great novelty. The older writers know nothing of *life* as a flag, a cause, or a deity. Sober moralists like Seneca say, unanswerably, that the condition which makes all evil and all good possible can hardly be called good or evil itself (is a chess board a good or a bad move?).<sup>14</sup>

God, like Life, “makes all evil and all good possible”. We may seem, Lewis may seem, to approach the thesis of Maimonides, rejected by Aquinas, that God is good as the cause of goodness only. No, rather, the goodness of God, Hegel states, being the same as evil there, just is not goodness, nor is evil there evil. Verbal analogies may be drawn but Hegel does rule out or might seem here to be ruling out the Thomistic analogy of being. This though may well be, analogously(!), a kind of optical illusion. We are closer rather to saying that both the good and the evil in God are good! “Have we received goodness at the hand of God”, Job asks, “and shall we not receive evil?” In fact we are terminally reduced to saying, with Hegel as with Aquinas, that evil is simply a sham-being anyway<sup>15</sup>, not to be separated from its (good) context.

Evil is “only the absolute sham-existence of negativity in itself”. This judgment can only mean that evil is an abstraction set up by finite mind, i.e. erroneously. This, and not some Manichean fantasy, is what Hegel intends by saying that there is evil in God. The sham-being is known as such there, which is to say it is eliminated as never having been, as we eliminate a false hypothesis, exactly so. This, again, is to say that the very being of God, the Idea, *is* the elimination of evil or, as Hegel also puts it, in God “evil is just not evil”, though this destroys good as well. We have sheer actuality and that is indeed all, not by limitation but by infinity overflowing. God cannot

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<sup>14</sup> C.S. Lewis, *op. cit.*

<sup>15</sup> Hegel, *Enc.* 35, *Zus.*: evil is “only the *absolute* sham-existence of negativity in itself” (stress added).

share his omnipotence with anybody or anything, not even with evil (or good). At the metaphysical level evil is just a contradictory concept, therefore. Evil, or those following it, has and have to say, “Evil be thou my good”. This is why, again, there is no *sui generis* moral motive in Thomas Aquinas. The honourable good, e.g. morality, virtue, he declares, is called good by metonymy as leading to the only and entire good or, in truth, being.<sup>16</sup>

So, and similarly, the whole creation is very good and hence also is the “fall of man”, if there is or was one. Or otherwise it is like being eaten alive by a shark or like the millions gassed at Auschwitz. Afterwards you are unable to believe it happened, unless, that is, you see it as falling within God’s plan and providence for our time, as, as central to Christian consciousness and belief, the Cross of Christ, God incarnate, hands and feet nailed through, falls exemplarily within it. This is the deeper meaning of the parable of the tares, why they are to be let to grow together with the good seed “until harvest”. They are sham-being anyhow, and just in that way indestructible, as the zero or ever-abiding negative, outside God, though here too “the Outside is the Inside”. Augustine had accordingly identified human freedom to “sin” as a limitation absent from angelic (established “in grace”) or divine freedom as necessarily *free from* sin. That is, such freedom (to sin) is no freedom at all but freedom’s limit. The apparent contradiction here must be resolved *pro parte objecti*, on the part of the object *or of sin*. A pointer here is Hegel’s placing of sin ethically, so to say, above innocence, in his interpretation of the Fall of Man narrative in *Genesis* (*Enc.* 24). Really he places self-consciousness “beyond good and evil”, sublates, again, rather than subverts “morality”. We may apply therefore to philosophy, in its supposedly esoteric character (*sic* Hegel), the saying: “Power is the morality of those who stand out from the rest” (L. van Beethoven, who adds, in his *Notebooks*: “and it is mine”), i.e. it is what they have *instead*. This is why, in art, the breaking of an established law can become the “right” thing, such *epieicheia* being thus indeed the *absolute* spiritual quality that makes art present. Hence virtue transcends law as *ius* transcends *lex*, the latter being accordingly characterised by Thomas Aquinas as *aliqualis ratio juris*. What matters, Aristotle had himself declared, is *to kalon*, the beautiful action in its concreteness, action of thought, word or deed indifferently, one might further specify, or generalise – the two are the same here. Meanwhile Hegel repeatedly makes it clear that he judges the evil act insofar as evil to be non-being, in his treatment of crime and punishment for example. If there is God, this is his position, then

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<sup>16</sup> See our “The *bonum honestum* and the Lack of Moral Motive in Aquinas’s Ethical Theory”, *The Downside Review*, April 2000, pp. 85-110.

there is no evil. A dualism here is impossible. What is *represented* in the Gospel, validly enough, as a hard-won victory pictures precisely the eternal reality of the sovereignty of good, which is thus “just not good”, there being no evil to offset it. “God is light and in him there is no darkness at all”, the “encircling gloom” a mirage; misperception is McTaggart’s term here. We pray “O God without whom nothing is strong”, whereas when we add “and nothing is very strong” we fall back into this misperception. The Buddhists are wrong, he implies, to make Nothing “the universal principle, as well as the final aim and goal of everything.” It “is the same abstraction” (*Enc.* 87).

We may here, if we will, recall the evangelical promise: “You will be clothed with power from on high”. The perfect and yet necessary justice of God, as we may also put it, may at times or even frequently appear *to us* as the height of injustice while sin, we should recall, as implying *infinite* offence (finite offence would be less than interesting), has conceptual roots in a magical or ritual mentality. If you stumble while carrying something sacred, such as the Ark of the Lord, then God will strike you dead. This is inseparable in fact from the teaching on forgiveness, that the person forgiven has not sinned. Hence the prophet declares that your *sins*, though they be as scarlet, shall *themselves* be white as snow. Love then not merely attracts forgiveness but itself “covers a multitude of sins” while, conversely, the only sin is the “sin against the spirit” which shall not be forgiven. As to what that sin is, we have not much of a clue, I judge. It is certainly not “resisting the known truth”, which everyone does as a prelude to being forgiven, in fact.

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There is an implicit resituating of all language here, in Hegel, of all “sentencing” (judging). The Mediator, we may recall, shall have written only in sand, thus indicating the essential momentariness of Spirit (*pensiero pensando*) as against the deadly letter (*pensiero pensato*). We may recall here the fierce opposition of Greek poets, as such priests of Absolute Spirit, to the first employment of the graphic art by younger colleagues. This, in fact, is the import of “the Speculative” as the “stage of Positive Reason”, resulting from Dialectic and fixity of Understanding taken together, apprehending unity in opposition, actively disintegrating propositions, but above all the proposition as such, “in their transition” (*Enc.* 82). All this is what was thus first called for, as elicitable from it, in the Augustinian and Thomistic theological position referred to above, that God determines the will to any and every free act, be it good or evil (this finally rests upon Thomas’s position that God has no “real” relation to man, since man is not

“real” as God is), a position the Pope of a later day refused to categorically endorse (for whatever motive: e.g. he needed Jesuit help against rising Protestantism at Venice) at the consultation *De auxiliis* held at Rome during 1607 between Dominican and Jesuit theologians. It was the resultant atheism in Europe, therefore, that Hegel can be seen as setting out to correct. At the same time one may comment that the episode illustrates the impotence of religion when taking up an isolationist position against the findings of philosophy, especially of philosophy of religion or theology (many today would identify these two).

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Self-consciousness emerges as the decisive representation of the Concept:

Spirit is Spirit knowing its own self. It knows itself; that, which is for it object, exists, or, in other words, its figurative idea is the true absolute content. As we saw, the content expresses just Spirit itself. It is at the same time not merely content of self-consciousness, and not merely object *for* self-consciousness; it is also actual Spirit. (*Phenomenology of Mind*, p.782).

Every objectified concept, it follows, is figurative or representation, is formally a sign (*signum formale*) in the language of the *Ars Logica* (Q15, *De signis*) of Jean Poinsot, Descartes’ contemporary (better known as John of St. Thomas), hence needing to be considered as object only *via* a second “sign” or concept of itself. This is what Berdyaev called “the tragedy of knowledge” and it is the element of truth in Kant’s position. Yet consciousness must “know the object as its self” (*Ibid.* p.759). The *otherness* of the object, viz. the world, reality, God, “ceases when the Absolute Being *qua* Spirit is object of consciousness”. This is Hegelian self-consciousness, where “the object is in the form of self” since, in truth, “the object it has is the self”. That is, these two propositions are equivalent as entailing one another. The Franciscan “My God and all things” would seem adequate representation of it in the devotional key. “My God and my all” is thus a mistranslation of the original, as reported, *Deus meus et omnia*, though this too is doubtless Latinised from the Italian.

As Fichte in modern times has especially and with justice insisted, the theory which regards the Absolute or God as the Object and there stops, expresses the point of view taken by superstition and slavish fear. No doubt God is the Object, and, indeed, the Object out and out, confronted with which our particular or subjective opinions and desires have no truth and no validity. As absolute object, however, God does not therefore take up the position of a dark

and hostile power over and against subjectivity. He rather involves it as a vital element in Himself. Such also is *the meaning of* the Christian doctrine, according to which God has willed that all men should be saved and attain blessedness ... in His Son, *who is one with Him* ... All which is *only another way of saying* that the antithesis of subject and object is implicitly overcome, and that it is our affair to participate in this redemption by laying aside our immediate subjectivity (putting off the old Adam), and learning to know God as our true and essential self. (*Enc.* 194, *Zus.*, all stresses added)

Implied here, with “this other way of saying”, is the view that history itself, though doubtless first of all “sacred history” (the Bible), in the language of theology, is the revelation or unfolding, in what thus becomes the meaning of doctrinal development of the divine nature or is in fact, in Hegel’s words, that nature and person indifferently. Conversely, God *is* revelation, hence even, however, history, it follows, which is thus swallowed up or absorbed in that sacred history which came down into it. This is the Christian view which Hegel builds upon an earlier approach to it in Plato’s *Philebus*<sup>17</sup>. With this in mind one should note that Hegel makes the same criticism of Kant as is made by Foucault and his successors, that Kant offers more of an anthropology than a philosophy. Yet Hegel, building indeed upon Kant, shows how the mind, in infinite self-consciousness, reaches through to the Idea constituting itself as infinite or as the Idea. This is a philosophy not of man but of Spirit, hence of man *as* Spirit. The model for Hegel’s thesis, objectively speaking, is the Athanasian theology of the Incarnation, as it came to be called, as by no means a “conversion of the godhead into flesh” but rather a “taking of the manhood into God”. Moreover, it is entailed by this, given the infinity of God, of the Idea, that God as such is what human nature *represents*, as a “moment” of this same Idea. Human nature, that is, is a “picture-idea” (Hegel), the Idea *immediate* (*Enc.* 216) “for us”. It has no actual reality, as being an ideality only, just as, in truth, there can be no events, no time. McTaggart read Hegel correctly on these points at least. This means that the “assumption” of human nature, as a “taking into” by God, is posited as this is represented by the assumed subject, man, himself being ideal, again, except as thus taken up. This is his natural immortality, however we go on to parse the individual (*sic*) “his”. In God, in truth, there are no events, unless that God himself, Spirit, is event, as being, however, just this assumption in generation of human nature: yet there are not two generations of the Word. Hence we have the spiritual reading of Mary as

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. p. vi, above, note 1. C.S. Figueiredo: “The Logic of Incarnation: Hegel’s Use of Plato’s *Philebus* in the Shorter Logic and in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*”, in *Philosophy Study*, October 2016, Vol. 6, No. 10, 569-577. Cf. also *Enc.* 95.



the divine wisdom of God, in *Proverbs* as used liturgically, bringing forth or producing its Word, its “children”, herself thus representation. That is how she fits in as something more than merely ideal, as something absolute, i.e. an eternal focus of the Absolute, something like *das ewige Weibliche* of Goethe, while this seems just what was to be pinpointed in the definition close on two centuries ago now of Mary as “the immaculate conception” (though put, in picture but true picture, like all history, as in fact and truth herself as once upon a time immaculately conceived, just as her Son was once born). Word, when unique, and wisdom, when divine, are scarcely two separate concepts or Ideas, the Idea, recall, being found by Hegel to be “the true Being” (the German capital serving here as denoting the name of the divine nature rather than a “proper name”, two variants identified by Aquinas in just this one divine case. How could Being be proper?

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I add what might seem, but it is much more than this, a historical reflection. That Mary the “Mother of God” (*theotokos*) is “immaculately conceived” was defined as a mandatory truth of faith, for the Roman and, as it understands itself to be, universal Church, in 1854. Just four years later, in 1858, there is an appearance to an illiterate peasant girl in France, at Lourdes, of a figure, feminine, referring to itself/*herself* as “*the Immaculate Conception*”, “I am the Immaculate Conception”, while requiring that believers “pull themselves together”, so to say. My question: how does faith in Mary’s sinless Conception, if Bernadette had indeed heard about it or would have been able to distinguish it against other sinful conceptions, as all are or were, it seems presumed, including her own, get transformed into an assertion about a conception abstractly considered, which is immaculate or, literally, *immaculée*, stainless or spotless, unspoiled perhaps? And how is it that an unusual phrase is used which yet so clearly recalls, but without echoing, the recent definition, of which also she might hardly have heard, unless in some odd sermon? I mean, to repeat, that there seems to be a properly spiritualising shift from focus upon a historical but yet miraculous event, even though hardly perceivable in the bedroom or by the bed concerned, to an Idea, in the Platonically mystical Hegelian sense. As such it harmonises well with his own account of the relation of temporal to eternal realities. Mary is now the immaculate conception. This term inevitably shifts meaning, not referring in any clear way to some past conception, in sexual intercourse namely. At the same time, however, context points to a sublation of that whole “language game”, to use the latterday cliché to good purpose, into what, in absolute idealism, it actually represents, but through

the lens of *misperception*. This is what Mary, as Christ-God's mother, is, *mater ecclesiae*, in a word. Popular theological picturing will speak later of Mary as the neck, to Christ the head, of the Church, a hardly edifying locational-picture and hence, "mediatrix of all graces", meaning that she is always in the drama, the picture, of the dealings of Christ, of divine grace, with "the soul", with the I of self-consciousness. As pictured this is all a bit clumsy, as if to be passed over. What comes across positively, however, is the unity of man and woman as blueprint, corresponding to the divine image, in Any one soul, be it male or female, as a union of male *and* female. For this, in fact, is the actual statement today, for theology, as put across by Pope John Paul II and his future successor as Cardinal Ratzinger (Benedict XVI) as succeeding upon the earlier identification of this image as found "in the soul" or mind rather than in "the body", a reply to an in itself strictly speaking invalid question. The change, somewhat abrupt, harks back to the stimulus given by the Protestant theologian Karl Barth, arguing from Scripture, to this view of things, chiming in perfectly, as I have tried to indicate here, with Hegelian metaphysics, theologia for Aristotle, as indeed for Hegel.<sup>18</sup>

All this is rolled up, implied, waiting to be teased out perhaps, in the apparition to St. Bernadette. My point is that this, objectively, is what is offered to the faithful, a genuine "mother of God", with all the absolute ideality of a supreme reality. No doubt this cannot be abstractly divorced from the mundane history of a certain woman, as if character, still less appearance, played no role at all. Nonetheless the two, as substance and shadow, are not to be identified.

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Just this, anyhow, is the sober background to the Pauline exclamation, "I live, yet not I", just as the saying that God alone is good is first cipher, representation, for that goodness that God *is*, that goodness in turn being in part a representation (it abstracts from evil) of the Idea where all opposites meet as being truly all *in all*. In this sense though, i.e. once they are "the same", good is not good and evil is not evil, as Hegel himself points out. As for evil, it is the nothingness enclosed within being's very concept. Abstracted from this it becomes mere "sham-being", "the absolute sham-existence of negativity in itself" (*Enc.* 35, *Zus.*). For with God, the infinite, nothing can be accidental, inasmuch as accident itself becomes absolute there, with respect to just its accident (cf. Hegel's posthumous LPEG,

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<sup>18</sup> For further information and informed comment on this development cf. Fergus Kerr OP, *Twentieth Century Catholic Theologians*, cited above.

*passim*, on contingency, discussed below here). We may recall that this was in substance Aristotle's account of the truth of chance, of accident, in *Physics* IV. Necessity underlies (*substat*) it.

Hegel says explicitly that man is nothing but a neutral battleground, between the good and evil that are both found *in* God, as in fact identified in such a way that neither of them is self-identical, but abstract rather. This in fact would be the underside of our further reflection above that such an assumption, of man as divine eventuality (as distinct from event merely), could not, without loss of the appropriate grandeur, which is the same here as logical consistency, be posited as other than or subsidiary to that very eventuality, which is the Idea in final self-consciousness in which alone all are fulfilled. As for logic, by the very same reasoning, appropriately transposed, it is the very soul of the aesthetic. Hegel notes also that it is by Satanic impulse specifically, of the "son of light", that man comes into his own. He is thus virtually identified with "the true light", as being swallowed up, albeit uncomprehendingly, therein. Satan too thus disappears, a mere sham-being again, having "his hour" in a vanishing temporal moment only, as what seems merely, while God himself, the word, "reigns in triumph from the tree". Thus it is that we have learned to cease objectifying the Devil, evil being what it is, or is not, rather. Hegel sketches the background in *The Phenomenology of Mind* at Chapter VII C, again, of that work, the passage from dualism to monism once pictured as the dramatic yielding of the gates of hell now at last put as being the tranquil because forever absorption of representation in the Idea. The representatives or representations of evil vanish as miasma or early morning mist, it is repeatedly declared in Scripture. With all this Hegel nonetheless insists forcefully upon a fight against mere human and finite nature being "our affair", so we have here yet another example of opposites demanding and finding reconciliation, of the beloved Son forsaken, of "night more lovely than the dawn". "My only consolation is to have none". Such insights, it can seem, come at the end of the rope, beyond hope, as death is the entry into "life", into Spirit, Hegel sums it up, last becoming first, first last, "the things which are not" overturning "the things which are", as the Apostle declares. But what is this but a picture of "development", such as we have been discussing, small warm-blooded mammals unseating the huge reptiles, no amount of silver filling up the gold of the one entire Word? We must "go through that which we are not" in order to come to the same. But has not this ever, too, been the challenge of philosophy? Yet the silence implied here can itself only be shown (*gezeigt*), not itself said. That is, philosophy is not a matter of language, its sworn enemy rather. How many words are needed to make this plain? Silence deafens, eclipses hearing, as there is no grasping of reason

itself, holding all things (and all graspers). Such tranquillity though is itself also equally Bacchanalian revel.

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This account of “the incarnation” of God, we might almost call it the incarnateness (in view of what we say here about events), need not be regarded as deviant and is certainly not intended as such. We have only to think of the Gospel accounts, written down a generation or two later maybe, a time of transforming digestion of such “events”, even, by those who were not there, of an event called in the liturgy “The Transfiguration of Christ”. They would without doubt have been present to the Biblical Hegel’s mind and memory more than fleetingly while his philosophy was maturing, the self-consciousness within him returning to where it had never left, as is said there and in the liturgy, again, of Christ as exemplar, a notion at home too, or first, in philosophy and hence, ultimately, in nature: thus, “The soul has learned everything” (Plato, *Meno*), since “all nature is akin”. So too Hegel returns to Plato, never having left him, while Plato is further fulfilled in this re-revolution. Thus too all philosophy is “akin”, nature being itself *sophia* in alienation. For the relation of the triad logic–nature–spirit to the spirit’s three forms in series, viz. art–religion–philosophy see the final section of *Enc.* III. With the Hegelian thesis of identity in (all) difference the posited fallacy of “undistributed middle” loses, along with all such distribution itself, whatever application or validity it may otherwise possess.<sup>19</sup>

In this transfiguration as described the intention of the “synoptic” authors is clearly to indicate Christ as he actually and eternally is, “in glory”, as religion, but also theology, has it, a term or state difficult but not impossible to define or delineate. What is “in glory” would be one with the infinite just in its difference, would be in a sense therefore, as Hegel develops it, “cancelled” with regard to its initial abstract separateness in or as hitherto or first logically represented. To this “first” corresponds Aristotle’s insistence on thought’s basis in *phantasmata*, applied or transferred to Hegel’s assertion of God’s “coming” (this is a figure, used when speaking of a or, here, *the* Concept) to his perfection in sensory incarnation. This is itself here shown in or, rather, *as* a picture, glistening white garments, shining face, whether we attribute this to narrative or to what was experienced. It is the theology that counts, while by Hegel’s principles this theology becomes philosophy. The very word “transfigured” entails that Christ normally appeared “in a figure” or as thus *gemeint*, as discussed

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. the papers on this topic of distribution collected in Peter Geach’s *Logic Matters*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1972.

above here or as St. Paul says of the older account of Abraham, Isaac and Hagar: “Now these things *happened in a figure*” (I italicise this finest of translations, of which, if I might suggest, Moslems in particular might well like to take note). That is, the account is not just a written down or abstract allegory. It is the happening, it is history, or at least the assertion of this, that signifies and this after all is the denial of events that we have been discussing, viz. that they “signify” (*in their happening*, i.e. they don’t “just happen”, as we say, are not simply themselves). Is, though, the Absolute this or, rather, is it not precisely what is not this? With this “fault”, of texture, anyhow, belongs the possibility, for Hegelian interpretation, that “happening” itself is a figure. What we think happens doesn’t happen, absolutely speaking, which is to say that we can only speak about the contingent contingently. But, or so, that this translation might improve upon, develop, the original would of course be neither impossible nor remarkable, if textual translation has no other office, can never *be* merely correct. We may relate this to Christ’s saying to the twelve, “Greater things than I have done shall you do”, adding, however, “for I will be in you”, as here in the translative interpretation of the, of a previous, primitive record, even though not yet here properly “mystical” maybe. Orthodoxy anyhow, “stands or falls with the mystical interpretation of Scripture”, wrote John Henry Newman in his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* of 1845, a statement somewhat frowned on in much of today’s Scripture study, not in its finitude much concerned with the statement that “The letter kills”, a propriety not in itself, however, hostile to the speaker’s explanatory continuation that “only the spirit gives life”. Hence proprieties should be fulfilled “in spirit and in truth” and not with “certainty against the spirit”, as Hegel expresses it in the second or 1830 Preface to the *Encyclopaedia*.

But if Christ as it were “only” appeared in a figure (like me writing, delineating, this), just through being “historical” indeed, then the point is made and should be taken, concerning the divine incarnateness, whereby he might choose to become shadow and less than shadow, since “all flesh is as grass, which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven”, and just thereby be eternally concrete, having never left the place to which he then returned, using now the speculative language which first appears in religion. But no, such language is the soul of the *poetic* art first and foremost, and even of everyday humour: “Call for me tomorrow and you will find me a grave man”, says the dying Mercutio. It, the speculative, is simple extension of the original dialectic of being and nothing, the same in their difference, while the bare pun is our first awareness of this, our first representation of representation’s self-transcendence in and as the mind of man, which in fact belongs to no one but is “its own community”. Either way, poetry is, as art,

a precondition for religion as is the latter for final wisdom where it, and “religion”, are equally or as one fulfilled. In this sense, of origin, “Music is a greater revelation than the whole of religion and philosophy” (L. van Beethoven, *Notebooks*). This is Hegel’s point, in reverse, but at once reduplicatively, about the incarnation as sensory perfecting the becoming of God, of the Concept. So to regress is to advance, to advance, therefore, to regress, a point emphasised by McTaggart about the dialectic as such, using the figure of a “zigzag” motion.

So to speak of man as God or of God as man is punning. Like all good punning, however, it is, it represents, an advance towards truth, a deeper penetration of it, not therefore vain even though or because essentially playful, relaxed, as it might be. This may be regarded as an advance upon, or new angle of vision toward, the old theory of the “analogy of names” (Cajetan), again. When the philologist pursues the history of such terms he eventually finds it to consist in a chain of perceived *likenesses*, which may or may not be in origin onomatopoeic. The reason for these analogies, these logically controlled equivocations, is that there is an original analogy of all beings. Without it, says Aquinas, as we have noted above, all things would coalesce in one. All beings, he means. He writes *omnia* merely, however, neuter plural adjective without any corresponding or qualified noun, such as *entia* might *be*. Note, though, that in classical Greek, at least, the neuter plural would be followed by a *singular* form of the verb. This might indicate that “things”, thus neutrally viewed, might be anyway halfway or more to coalescing.

Thus it is a simple fact that for Hegel all beings *do* thus coalesce, difference being identified with identity, posited however as *concrete* and not *abstract*, put together (*con*) and not dragged apart (*ab*). The composition thus retained (*con*), however, still, as language or letter, *represents* (*stellt vor*) merely the final unity in identity of any two moments in the strict ineffability (it can’t be spoken) of spirit. It is a simple fact, nonetheless, that Aquinas affirms that any divine idea, which is to say any moment of spirit, is identical with the divine essence (*Summa theol.* Ia 15), which is itself, this idea, identical with saying that all these ideas, in and as which alone their “objects” exist or, better, are realised, coalesce in being thus identical, that all such moments coalesce or that, as affirmed in Hegel’s *Science of Logic*, the whole is the part, the part the whole. Note here that an idea can be propositional, or syllogistic, as much as it can be and is primarily “conceptual”, as in fact are equally these other two (judgment and syllogism), *verba interiora* namely. Each is one *verbum* and this underlines

the Aristotelian soundness, in logic as in metaphysics, of Hegel's philosophy of the Concept.<sup>20</sup>

It is therefore thoroughly misleading to ask or wonder if Hegel, had he lived today, would not have made science, in the sense of the collection of particular or finite sciences, rather than religion, the anteroom of Spirit, of philosophy, as many today thoughtlessly do, enshrining their thoughtlessness, or, rather, falsely absolutising it, in set theory and/or mereology. Hegel is quite clear and definite that a science such as anatomy, taken on its own, which, such taking, is what makes it a science, yields false information merely, while his view of mathematics as "outside the concept" has indeed been put across but as notoriously self-disqualifying<sup>21</sup>. These sciences work with wholes and parts in separation, they have or have been supplied with a special theory about just that, this being the contemporary successor, as far as logic goes, to the old doctrine of distribution, exposed, we noted, by Peter Geach especially, as fallacious in papers reprinted and collected together in his *Logic Matters* (see note 20, above).

One can best begin to grasp Hegel's meaning, as regards mereology, by closely studying *Enc.* 135 with the addition there. In general, the particular sciences, inasmuch only as *abstractly* particular, do not belong, either in form or in content, as does the content of art and religion indifferently or, finally, that of philosophy (taking *none* of these as textual), to absolute spirit. Or, Hegel's thought is the true and hence negative mereology or theory of part and whole. So mathematics especially just does not "belong to the notion", since as an exclusive point of view it coincides with materialism (cf. *Enc.* 99, add.). Of course Hegel is not setting out hereby to urge wilful ignorance of mathematics or anatomy. Rather, more comprehensively, he urges, endorses, inward renunciation of phenomenal life itself in the very act of living it, using it as though not using it. This attitude, with which the doctrine of duty above all else, as what is "our affair" (Hegel), coincides, negative as it is toward the natural or "unexamined" (Socrates) attitude or life, is closely allied with, can convincingly be argued to be, what has brought forth what we now call the

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. Aristotle's *De interpretatione* and especially Aquinas's commentary upon this short treatise. The subsequent medieval theory of *suppositio* (of terms) should be neither confused with more restricted theories of reference nor distinguished too sharply against a contextual theory of meaning, since it itself depends upon a theory of the context itself in close relation and, in reverse, continuity with Hegel's account of this, with absolute idealism, that is to say, or, more generally, as belonging with a speculative logic.

<sup>21</sup> Thus one finds it in Hans Reichenbach's classic *Philosophie der Raum-Zeit-Lehre*, Berlin 1927 (Dover edition *Space and Time*, New York 1957).

scientific revolution. Nonetheless, or just therefore, death, Hegel states, is “the entry into spirit” and what is called by transference the *life* of the spirit. Yet, just as life is within this discourse transformed, negatively, from its immediate signification, so is death conversely transformed, a process that is shirked if we persist in regarding it as the next stage merely in a finitely temporal sequence. “You who have been baptised have been baptised into his (Christ’s) death”. This Apostolic word applies, more or less, to the whole of Western humanity as historically prime, as enfolding at least the more previous or primitive strata of those thus summoned, bearers of the Idea in the latter’s ongoing process of active summoning of all to participation in it, such that those summoned later summon again those first summoning. It is thus that death is at work in life or, as it is put by those consciously active in the process, in just anyone who “works”, who strives according to “his lights”: “death works in us but life in you”. *Wer strebt, den können wir retten*, declares the angel in *Faust*, and who does not strive? Here sloth or “sadness concerning spiritual good” and refusal are equated, while happiness becomes *höchste Entfaltung der Sittlichkeit* (M. Grabmann: *Thomas von Aquin*, Munich 1959).

But if we thus understand death spiritually when spoken of in the Scriptures then we must at least pay Hegel the same compliment. It helps, for one thing, in understanding better his relative silence concerning the hope of immortality. For this too is to be understood spiritually, as “realised end” since, in fuller perspective, end as such is realised (cf. *Enc.* 212 add.), from the absolute and only valid standpoint, whence “all judgments” (save itself) “are false”, says Hegel in brazen self-contradiction, from which we are meant to understand that language itself is here being used in criticism of itself. One *can* so speak. If, *pace* Wittgenstein, one could not speak of it, then why would there be a need, a pressure, to *keep* silent?

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Since Hegel’s time three thinkers, not unaware of Hegel’s work, have moved us irrevocably closer to this more spiritual standpoint, viz. Marx, Nietzsche and Freud. In what I say here I am much indebted to the late Fr. Herbert McCabe OP or especially to his short work, *What is Ethics All About?* (USA), its original European title being *Law, Love and Language*, from the 1960s, although he himself put Darwin in place of Nietzsche in this triad. Each of these initiated a revolution, a word which is just another name for the irrevocable just mentioned. If a wheel has turned it has turned, and winding it back won’t hide or immobilise the deed or crime.

Marx made us aware of socio-economic realities without consideration of which higher ideals of love and humanitarianism can’t really get off the



ground, simply because they have never been on it. In this respect he inherits the realism of the Gospels, of the so-called “good Samaritan” or heretic. To this foundation, corresponding to art in Hegel’s system, succeeded, in particularised sublation of this individual indignation, Nietzsche’s disgusted debunking of all hope of an after-life, comparable rather, in his mind, with the leavings of the “after-birth”. He presents us instead with a kind of religion in negative mode, as affirming present life. Jesus did the same, however, though telling us in the same breath to hate it rather, and muted traces of this “higher” view exist in Nietzsche’s texts. They would have to be muted since it was the traditional presentation of Jesus against which he was reacting.

Finally, in synthetic fulfilment of both these angles upon reality, the psychology of Freud presented us with an internalisation of the same world-affirmation, in its very denial therefore. The universal lies incarnate in each individual personality (of children first), where consciousness knows it “first” as sexual ecstasy. This aspect of Freud’s discoveries was yet more remorselessly followed up by Wilhelm Reich, Freud’s pupil. The catastrophe theories of another pupil, Immanuel Velikovsky, have still to come into their own, in the original or as updated by Graham Hancock and colleagues, after ferocious persecution of Freud’s pupils, themselves psychologists, by established mediocrities and even liars. The unbearable and consequent repression (on the model of sexual repression) of historic catastrophes conceals a call for a general rising from the general understanding to a speculative view of empirical existence, a walking with death as entry into life, whether or not Velikovsky himself rose to this.

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That Marx’s call for the perfecting of socio-economic, i.e. of present human life, was first taken up at state-level in misty, schismatic and only semi-European Russia, where it was twisted out of all recognition, while it failed, after 1919, to take root in Germany, speculation’s flag-bearer, is illustrative of the unlikelihood of this threefold revolutionary cohort, two of them Jews, the third just moustachioed Friedrich Nietzsche, being able to fulfil the role of spear-heading this revolution towards greater spirituality demanded by Hegel’s thought. For a start only Marx had much knowledge of him, just enough to profess an intention to stand him on his head. Nietzsche, again, as coming next in time, can be seen as taking the place of religion, rather than philosophy, in Hegel’s original triad of Absolute Spirit, of philosophy as there prepared first by art and secondly by religion, the latter being what he most writes about. Of course Nietzsche, like Marx, is reckoned among

the philosophers. Here, though, Marx can parallel art, spirit's first form (in the Hegelian triad), as emphasising the material or "sensible", Nietzsche religion (second form), as being of prophetic mould. Thus, in despite of himself, he gave a greater impulse to theological (but hence philosophical) advance than almost anyone else. He is not treated of by Fr. McCabe, as are Marx and Freud. Even his greatest discovery, culled from his youthful burrowings into antiquity, whence it is borrowed, I mean the Eternal Return (of time), seemingly works against his own intentions. But what can be known of those? Are there such things? One does and says what one does and says, whatever one *means*, Hegel had said, punning masterfully upon the double sense of the German *meinen* and hence underpinning, in punning (underpunning?), his dialectical "ruin of the individual". For if time thus returns and is hence *the same time* (as before which is thus no longer before) then there is *no* time. Time is in the same position as the harpies, as McTaggart later said of matter, time's correlate.

Freud now puts these two revolutionary trends together, as Hegel had synthesised art and religion, though not equally, elevating them, and especially Nietzschean *power*, which was power of truth only because it was power *as* truth, having a family likeness there to Marxist absolute *praxis*. What he elevated them to was the orgasm, though it fell to his unjustly discredited pupil Reich to emphasise this. Now that was and is dynamite and there is no going back from it for thinking humanity, whatever Freud himself thought in his vaguely Kantian, even life-denying way. His was a severe mind.

It is one of Freud's earliest writings, his sketch for "a theory of the mind", from the 1880s, that is perhaps the most striking in its so to say Herculean effort to provide a systematic theory of thought or consciousness on a materialist, perhaps Empedoclean model, as in many ways repeated by Althusser some years later. Viewed from an absolute idealist standpoint, after all, what seems materialist need not be so in the ideological sense, since matter is itself then mythical, "in the same position as the harpies" (McTaggart), again. Materialism becomes no more than a moment of discourse, scientific or popular, on all fours with or itself more "scientific" than the indefensible dualism it replaces. This is foreseen in Aquinas's saying that "the body" (not even a concept for metaphysicians, he says, but only for logicians) is not necessary for the absolute happiness enjoyed by departed saints even "before" the general resurrection. He only just stops short of saying it is a logical construct, as he could hardly have done, however, given that orthodoxy was then and has been for centuries presented, in the credal statements, in dualist common-sense terms, for theology as for religion generally, following perhaps on the words of Christ

himself as recorded, “This is my body which is given for you”, which, all the same, one can hardly be forgiven for reading inwardly, so to say, as “This is me, who am and give myself for you”. In Scholastic thought, although it is arguably but one moment in Aristotle, the body was essential as principle of individual identity, which, however, is interpreted in Hegel’s absolute idealism as itself but a moment, reflecting after all, whether or not consciously or deliberately, the Pauline “I live but not I” and a host of other texts in the Johannine writings also:

“My dear people, we are already the children of God, but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed ... all we know is, that ... we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he really is” (I *John* 3, 2),

a text dear to McTaggart, who yet denied the reality of time there as if merely assumed, i.e. not questioned, by the ancient writer. Yet closer than the Scholastics to Hegel’s monism, however, we find this in Aristotle:

The proximate matter and the shape (*morphe*, form) are one and the same; the one existing potentially and the other actually. Therefore, to ask the cause of their unity is like asking the cause of unity in general ... the potential and the actual are in a sense one. (*Metaphysics* VIII, 1045b 18f., parenthesis added)

Taken in this light Freud’s formally materialistic model of the mind as to its content merits serious consideration, not as materialist but as not being dualist, a negative principle in Aristotle serving a philosophy of abiding substance. His discussion prepares the way for consideration of the first substance of all as what really is, the noted Aristotelian scholar Fernando Inciarte judges: *Akt und Potenz ... welche zugleich die Erörterung der allerersten Substanz als die eigentlichen Seienden als seines solches vorbereitet*<sup>22</sup>. This first substance of all, in Hegel’s system, is subjectivity, of individual or of the whole, virtually indifferently. Nor indeed, therefore, need Freud’s principle of orgasm, as interpreted by Reich, for example, be regarded as a specifically materialist “let down”, whatever else one may say about it. Integrally taken it is, at the least, a function of spirit, in and by which the person may rise to other such, including “higher” moments of renunciation, as is nowhere more clear than in Freud’s own life and writings. “Male and female created he them”, this being taken as, increasingly theologically favoured as, the integral divine image in man, we noted above,

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. F. Inciarte, “*Die Einheit der aristotelischen Metaphysik*”, in *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 1994, 1 *Halbband*, pp. 1-22, in English as a chapter in his (posthumous) *Substance and Action*, George Ohms Verlag, Hildesheim 2002.

spiritual life being thus insufficiently represented as “flight of the alone to the alone”, though this might serve better as representing thought’s thinking only itself, just as it might represent man’s or woman’s search for one another. “I go to the Father” says Christ, adding though that “I shall see you again” and take or bring you there as, again, integral part of an essentially circular process of exit and return, as it were in one, only this answering to love of the community, the other, the bride, as, just as, one’s own flesh, the king delighting in her beauty as she in him, as the Psalm has it. For this polarity is needed but for two equal extremes of mutual otherness, though the two doubtless are one, are equal, “under the law”. Spirit, as infinite, must, i.e. conceptually must, embrace all this in its final unity, thought thinking only itself. It is in this sense that creation is necessary to God, to the infinite, not with a necessity of compulsion, as St. Thomas distinguishes, but with the necessity of end, for “willing the end entails reason’s commanding whatever is needed to that end” since “otherwise a prince’s will is more iniquity than law” (ST Ia-IIae 90, 1, especially the reply to the third “objection”). Nevertheless Hegel’s logic finally transcends this teleological moment of thought inasmuch as the end is as such actual, i.e. realised, and never abstractly potential merely. The infinite, as itself will, never wills something *further* but is, inasmuch as it is anything, of necessity enjoyment. What “reason commands”, therefore, is precisely this, whatever be represented in “this passing show” (W.V.O. Quine) along with the commands of princes. “Be still and know ...”

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In fact it is noteworthy how much the lives of these three prophets, or two of them at least, are marked by great and immediately visible suffering. Two of them also, again, were Jewish. This two (out of three) may or might be taken, in Christian iconology, as a sign of the approaching end (though what is not that?), of fulfilment, inasmuch as there the Jews, “Israel after the flesh”, are set forth as the last to be “gathered in”, into the *ecumene*, the first being last. They will give up their separateness as did the greatest of them, their murdered Messiah, identifying with all. For obviously “the Jews”, from whom salvation, *quam olim promisisti*, comes, it being “of the Jews”, again, of “the seed of Abraham”, as promised, would not, if within that proclamation they are finally to be “gathered in” (Paul, Saul, of Tarsus), be gathered thus without making a decisive difference of some kind to the community and/or Church or “body of Christ”, speaking now theologically. And so we may add to Marx or Freud the figure of Einstein, of his transformation of nature as we apprehend it. The interpretation here may seem eclectic, even unhealthy so. But it is no different from the functional

use Hegel makes of Spinoza's Jewish descent specifically, though here negatively, in a measure, in presenting his own philosophy. We are rightly more shy of such aversion today, as if any response to this aspect must become as infamous as our recent nightmare, one, indeed, "from which we cannot wake" without great difficulty. So this section here should be viewed as a response to the three chapters devoted to this same question in and by St. Paul's *Letter to the Romans*, chapters nine to eleven. In philosophy, or for thought, nothing can be taboo.

The orgasm, anyhow, to break another taboo, in the wake of Freud, is immediate sign and motor of all new life, not renewal but new life, and that in death. Hence life is transcended in this its generation, as is written into even the lower natural forms, most famously the male spider. It is common to us all, even children who watch out for its coming increasingly consciously, craving to be affectionately tickled and hugged meanwhile. This can explain its proper momentariness, if we abstract from the joys and consolatory pleasures properly surrounding it. One feels as if one is in heaven, as perhaps ladies particularly, when lying prone, are prone to exclaim, and that indeed may be taken as precisely the connection. Our consciousness, namely, is in itself obscurational, until it shall disappear in the finality of a universal self-consciousness indistinguishable from Hegelian absolute knowledge. The orgasm, like thought, is not properly confined to this visible world or non-world of sense, of representation. Hence it is not in the usual sense sensation, which is intentional. For what does pure pleasure sense? The beloved? But she or he is precisely not a sense-object. It would rather sense love itself or, say, being, the Idea in its utter freedom, not this or that. This is thus a variation, in identity though, upon the classic thesis, of Hegel as of Aristotle, that thought "thinks only itself". Hence the well-being proper to "the rational creature", hence Freud's identification of it, of the aspiration to it, as undifferentiated *libido*, hence indeed previous condemnation of this ground-aspiration as "libidinous", to be wiped out and warred upon, as Hegel himself commends in regard to the purely or abstractly "natural" urges, though he also comments that one best overcomes them by indulging their momentary urgency, rather than by fasts, self-scourgings, etc. Nature is evil, he says, but only after giving such evil, and he means evil itself, a place in the divine truth, "sham-being" though it be. Here too he attains to his typical unity in opposition, transcending polarities of positive and negative, as infinity, the *not* finite and yet complete, perfect in its perpetual revolution, requires, no darkness without its own light. The light shines *in* darkness, in "the night more lovely than the dawn" (John of the Cross).

What being, then, does the orgasm, or any temporal instant as such, have? *The Phenomenology of Mind* begins by declaring that “the certainty of sense” is “the poorest kind of truth”. Without perception moving on to understanding (*Verstand*) sensations are nothing, non-being, though here already the dialectical interchange of subject and object is already involved. A sensation of nothing would indeed not be nothing but here we have, in contrast, sensation which is not of nothing but yet not a sensation of anything, just itself rather as the Idea or thought thinks only itself in, metaphysically now, primal act, *actus actuus* or act as such. Hence, perhaps, the terror of it down the ages. One can scarcely even remember it except as experiencing it over again, though this is the proper sense of any re-remembering, *anamnesis*. In that it ranks with the highest aesthetic experiences or even fugitive mystical ones, compared indeed to a blow on the back of the neck (John of the Cross), a momentary touching of “it” (Augustine) or, indeed, hearing “words it is not lawful to utter” (St. Paul’s version of the unutterable). Thus it approaches pure act, highest and “lowest” standing together, the mental and the visceral, philosophy as founded upon art and in its very fibre quintessentially aesthetic. “He’s a hedonist at heart”, writes Lewis’s Screwtape of God, known to us as the Idea. Screwtape is posited as a devil, but it is his author who here speaks his true mind, I have no doubt. “At thy right hand are pleasures for evermore” (*Book of Psalms*). Say pleasure, singular, rather, in that one instantaneous yet unbrokenly eternal contemplative act in which all, necessarily, is known, touched and tasted. “Taste and see how gracious the Lord is.” In art, in a flash, this is known, sometimes.

I add here the reflection that what the aesthetic and the mystical have in common, and I judge it is why the mystical is labelled erotic, though it is true of all love, is that the self-transcendence involved yet or essentially comes from within, as *self*-discovery, in the same instant and as in the only way it could thus come, whence the goal or end, the *summum bonum* alone desirable for itself, is touched or, necessarily, touches one, not to be forgotten. “What the spiritual man desires is contact”, a modern Carthusian abbot declared in one of his addresses to his community (in *They Speak by Silences*, DLT: London). This then is the moment of truth, easily spoiled if then cultivated for its own sake in divorce from what it would point us to. “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” Newman, indeed, deplored or was made uneasy by “the mixing of amorousness with religion” to be found in the poetry of his contemporary, Coventry Patmore. His concern, however, was pastoral rather than philosophical, as the deliberately oblique use of a negative term, “amorousness”, critical as indicating a frivolity divorced from true love, rather suggests. Or, the term seems only negative as

indicating the first general moment of natural, pre-critical or indiscriminate predisposition. Thus the general friendliness of a dog, as compared to that of the seemingly more reflective cat, is not universally approved, is seen as a lower stage. Freud himself, again, appears to have been of this temper, seeing it as essential to “civilisation”. Hegel, however, speaks of such discipline (of culture) as “spirit in self-estrangement” (*Ibid.*, VI B).

So if I claim that, principally, these three thinkers have moved us closer to a or to the more spiritual standpoint I am saying that the seeds sown by spirit have a natural potential for maturation. This general truth is in a sense “revealed” when the Mediator says, in speculative picture, “Greater things than I have done shall you do, because I shall be in you”, the spatial preposition here standing for an identity in difference. There is no reason, however, not to look for this developmental aspect that Christians claim as belonging to “religion itself” (De Lubac’s fairly Hegelian characterisation of Christianity), as also in other or individual religions wherever they be found.

Some would claim that the three prophetic figures mentioned indicate rather that religion has “had its day”, that the world has “moved on”. They have indeed provoked crisis in “the spiritual community” (Hegel, referring, though, to “Enlightenment” in general), which however lives on as living in or battenning upon such crises, as deaths enshrining renewed, even perpetual resurrection. The early fourth century Constantinian settlement, call it establishment, was proclaimed at the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council (1962-1964) as superseded, a philosophical or hermeneutical change represented as historical merely, though it is more than this. So of course those worldly and finite elements associated with it, such as the burning of heretics (one hardly dare say it) and much more else than at first envisaged, maybe, had to die, just as these had first had to provoke protesting revolts within that body, the Church, at times degenerating into schisms and excommunications, whether from north or east or south.

Here, however, arises a dialectic, of visible and invisible, well catered for by Hegel’s logic, by logic *per se*, he claims to show, as it was by Plato. The spiritual community is visible and organised, a fact, however, unable to affect the true status, discerned by philosophy, of mere visibility as such. What philosophy here discerns, in the language of McTaggart, which is also and indeed essentially Biblical, is that “Our citizenship is in heaven”, in the spirit. The rest is misperception, just as, Aristotle saw, thought thinks itself exclusively.

Some today would speak of “Christianity without God”. One cannot forbid such language. Eckhart had already prayed to be delivered from speaking too much of God, such speech viewed more perhaps as a

materialisation than a personalisation of deeply personal and indeed trans-personal Spirit. However, the God-language is not to be outlawed either and never could be, the earlier ever subsisting in the later, every “jot and tittle” thereof. Hence we have mystical interpretation as the norm, in Bible-reading (or anything else), while one can hardly deny that God himself must and can only be mystically interpreted as, indeed, “seen”. So Christianity claims, again, to be the true or “spiritual” Judaism, though a majority of Jews have not concurred in this. Here we see the first or logical identity of universal and particular, individual even, which is thus in a sense “ruined” (Hegel), just as the universal is crucified and killed in its universality, a martyr and martyred church, self-witnessing in its extinction, thought thinking only itself.

The Petrine office, of teaching and “confirming” all Christians, or just anyone, as their very foundation or “rock”, is declared to be that of the Bishop of Rome, as standing in for or perpetuating the Apostolic leader remembered as first presiding at Rome. This does not mean that the spiritual community will be forever centred at Rome, much as that might gratify the Romans, or even, *necessarily*, that Peter ever came to Rome, though I find not much reason to doubt this. He, his successors, might one day preside on Antarctica somewhere at a time when the mere name of Rome is all but forgotten, he remaining however as “the rock”, though here too is presumption, of the endless preservation of canonical texts or at least of some memory. The Mass, rather, is what is proposed as to be done “in memory of me”. That reality, under whatever name, appears therefore as an or even the essential of Christian faith, for the moment at least, if we conceive of such faith as ever moving more towards the “all in all” of Spirit, which is mind, thought, consciousness, I. After a nuclear war, to illustrate, popes might indeed reside in the Antarctic, or on another planet, the spiritual dignity, in some way supreme, having been conferred upon the particular city of Rome by mere accident, by a superficial judgment at least, somewhat as “babble” still recalls the defunct Babylon. Faith in the Bishop specifically of Rome, therefore, cannot be transferred to philosophy, as can faith in the “teacher of all Christians” identifiable in just that way. In fact we who are apostolically enjoined to teach and encourage one another were long before promised (in the *Book of Jeremiah*) that “all shall know the Lord” so that none need say to his neighbour: “Know the Lord”. There speaks the Spirit, in concrete universality. And *thus* it is that liberalism, in a Pope’s words (*Mirari vos*, c. 1830), “overthrows the nature of an opinion” but just thereby, one might say, even finite life itself. That is the spiritualisation I have been speaking of. “’Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished”, says Shakespeare’s most famous character, envisaging death as the end to all



life's or time's "whips and scorns", and how is this different from the hating one's life in this world placed as condition for salvation? It is not easy, that is, always to distinguish "death or glory" from "death and glory". Death, remarks Hegel, "is the entry into spirit", the entry though, not the substance. Being, that is, appears transcended in either direction without difference of opposites, while death remains "consummation" and that "devoutly to be wished" and indeed practiced. Such *athanatizein*, therefore, is Aristotle's recommendation for zealous philosophising. When we think we cannot thus wish, after Philip Larkin's vividly expressed example, say, then we risk abandoning faith and hope and hence spirit. One may not, though, judge whether Larkin, one spiritually alive indeed, did this. We only know he *thought* he could not do it, only know that Jesus *felt* abandoned on the Cross, for that *was* the Cross, after all. Whence then comes the joy we have all felt and feel? *Dum spiro spero*.

This about the Pope, though, reflects Hegel's word that there must be a concrete mediator and that that mediator must be one. Christ himself, just as person, is an institution, is the Absolute. Perhaps the most "concrete" Pope was Alexander VI Borgia, honoured at Valencia, Spain, his natal area, by a reverently sculptured statue, still to be seen there south from the city. He it was who claimed, not without success, to divide the newly discovered world, beyond the Constantinian perimeter namely, between Spain and Portugal, as a normative fact as, Hegel claims, all facts are normative. A fact of this sort, however, I mean the concrete mediator, has to abide, as the holocaust-principle did not. Good and Evil, though, become sublated in their inter-relation, Being alone remaining as the Idea absolute. Aquinas acknowledges this to the extent of saying that in any evil some good is sought, or that *malum est semper in subjecto*, ultimately in God, Hegel claims, since it is God who is Subject, whole and entire and omni-comprehensive. This does not mean that those who lived at the time and place of what is for now called *the* Holocaust were bound to take it as normal and hence normative. Its nothingness or evil would be shown, sound reason told them, by its inability to last, to be maintained. This was precisely the criterion affirmed by that wisest of Pharisees concerning the new and perplexing movement. If it was of God, if it was factual, it would last and therefore one should, as a general principle, "wait and see", not losing hold on certainties attained.

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As concerns movement, however, this early instance reminds us that that was what Christianity was, to start with, a movement, and that within the

Jewish and Palestinian world, and not a religion. It was the Jewish rejection of its claims that made it seem distinct and therefore a religion on its own. In fact it was part, as a distinctive turn of the screw or revolution, of that movement initiated long before by “Abraham and his seed for ever”. This aspect is not prominent in Hegel’s writings. It is implied, however, by the fluid blurring of the differentiated forms of art, religion and philosophy. Philosophy may be the perfect form for the content or for ultimate reality but this form interpenetrates with art and religion as they with it. Parmenides and Nietzsche write philosophy in poetic form; the Platonic myths blend in with the argumentation as having professedly, for Plato as for Hegel, the same content; the poem of Lucretius, or Francis Thompson’s *The Kingdom of Heaven*, is philosophical, is religious, is *art*; music, Beethoven, we noted, affirmed, is a greater *revelation* “than the whole of religion and philosophy”. Thus, Hegel teaches also, the part is the whole as the whole is also the part, insofar, for example, as anything de-finite or, as speech, necessarily finite, as anything is ever attempted to be said, e.g. in confessional professions, about it. This is why, for a very simple reason namely, Aquinas soberly states that “we know most about God when we know that we know nothing”, this fostering the counsel, the command even, not to judge. In religion, nonetheless, as distinct from final philosophy, one speaks, the Messiah speaks, of binding and loosing, but, note, specifically with reference to heaven or the Absolute. The Apostles shall not bind in the finite way people the world over do so. This, again, is why the only sin worth talking about, i.e. as unforgivable or non-remissible, as they say, is sin against the Spirit, of which, quite logically or consistently, an example cannot be given.

So Judaism perfected is Christianity, while the latter is Judaism, “a Jewish swindle” as an ex-Nazi (who wasn’t “ex” at all) put it to me. But then either Judaism is not a religion either, which is absurd, or religions do not remain religions, which is perfectly feasible. It is what Hegel’s system implies, as do the eschatological fabrications of the Scriptures. What I wrote above about the Petrine office may seem odd in a philosophical work, but how else is one to take a position between those who affirm that the world, for them reality, has passed on beyond religion and those who maintain, as I do, the integrity through change of “the movement” or “way”, as it is also called? Why though does this still matter, if one has come so far? Thus some speak of religionless Christianity or “Christianity without God”. Would one die for that? Would its law, the new law, be sacred? Well, Thomas Aquinas said of this new law that it was not written down at all but “poured into the heart” and I think that answers these two questions. “Greater love hath no

man than to lay down his life for his friends” and, again, “We love him because he loved us”.

So, is it then only by example that we are “saved” in and for life in the spirit, thought thinking itself in “beatific vision”, in reality union or unity even, of two or more become one? Taught by Hegel we reject the “only”. Nothing is only itself, in what is thus abstraction. Theologically, God speaks only one Word, language surpassing itself. McTaggart squarely rejected our “for” above. Spirit is for us, but we are not for spirit, he claims, or for God, as one was thinking (and saying) there. Yet the two are one, in “the body of Christ” where all are “members one of another”, i.e. are not such impossibly reciprocal members at all, but are each parts as each the whole, hence not parts, in that self-consciousness ruining the individual as, as such, abstract. Is this eschatological vision the “grain of truth” in Marxism?

Aquinas, as Philip Reynolds has pointed out<sup>23</sup>, nowhere explains how the sacred humanity of Christ can be, as he claims, efficient cause of our “salvation” to life eternal. One has perhaps to reclaim the roots of the concept of example in that of an exemplary cause. *Bonum est diffusivum sui*. It is in this sense that Hegel claims, though it indeed follows simply from absolute idealism as such, that anyone who thinks that justification or salvation follows, as it were magically, from some finite and hence necessarily contingent event (even though customarily decked out as necessary), has in that respect no understanding of his religion or of religion as a finite form sustaining the content of absolute spirit, thus itself exemplifying the very principle of incarnation. But if we see that the “event” called “saving” cannot be contingent then we must grant that

This self-consciousness does not therefore really die, as the particular person (Christ) is pictorially imagined to have really died; its particularity expires in its universality, i.e. in its *knowledge*, which is essential being reconciling itself with itself. That immediately preceding element of figurative thinking is thus here affirmed as transcended, has, in other words returned into the self, into its notion. What was in the former merely an (objective) existent has come to assume the form of *Subject*. By that very fact the first element too, pure thought and the spirit eternal therein, are no longer away beyond the mind thinking pictorially nor beyond the self; rather the return of the whole into itself consists just in containing all moments within itself. When the death of the mediator is grasped by the self, this means the sublation of his factuality,

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<sup>23</sup> Philip Reynolds: “Philosophy as the Handmaid of Theology: Aquinas on Christ’s Causality”, in *Contemplating Aquinas: on the Varieties of Interpretation*, ed. Fergus Kerr OP, SCM Press, London, 2003, pp. 217-247.

of his particular independent existence: this particular self-existence has become universal self-consciousness.<sup>24</sup>

The grasping of this, first by the mediator himself, who just *is* that knowledge, then by the faithful, i.e. it is grasped by them in faith, *is* the sublation of our own and/or the world's "factuality" as what such faith, not excluding knowledge as equally "grasped" or had, by the Mediator, mysteriously maybe, "overcomes", Hegel is saying. The concept of creation itself follows the same principle, that, namely, existence is contained in, covered by, the Idea, its actuality lies in its possibility, which is thus no mere modality (as it is in Kant). What is known to absolute spirit is just in that knowledge actual. The freedom, that is, is not merely rooted in but identical with the knowing. This is also straight Aquinas. Mind itself inclines, as will, to the good. They are not two abstractly separate "faculties". Knowing is making. The proof of this, for us, is the actual creation before us. This fact is the measure of the truth of empiricism. The actual and it alone, then, is normative. Thus the life and death of Christ shows us their possibility, the possibility of greatest love in self-conscious confidence; that is already enough, is, in spiritual effect, the supremely actual. Only that, indeed, explains prophecy, its possibility, whether in the crude, foretelling sense or in a hidden and spiritual meaning, whether of things or words indifferently. It explains, namely, that the content lies present to thought in a mode superior to the temporal. In this way hope, which is a necessary virtue, is compatible with certainty, with faith, indeed necessary to it, despite what is said of the *belief* of the devils (no one speaks of their *faith*, a virtue). Absolute thinking, then, of the saving or any other such act (or are there just two, which are finally one, the old and the new creation in Patristic iconography, as it might be called if writing and verbalisation be included under "signifying"?), is superior to as founding its representation, e.g. in the creation as realised possibility. To think is already to realise; all this is contained in Hegel's (realised!) notion of, his logically concluding to (q.v.), "realised end", of end in its concept realised. Nothing short of this is compatible with "belief in God", compatible with the divine nature itself. In this way the *optimum* is necessary or, as faith once expressed it, "All shall be well and all manner of thing". Such pious enthusiasm is only "sickening" (Hegel) where one fails to see, to set properly forth, the grounds for it. This philosophical vulnerability, as it may seem, is all the same overcome in *art*, absolute spirit's first or ground-form, where, already, the setting forth is what is set forth. This then has to be the case, after all, in philosophy also, which, accordingly, is thought thinking itself. This is one more reason why

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<sup>24</sup> *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 781.

what is referred to by “philosophy” being perfect form of absolute spirit is in no way a piece of writing, type, speech even or the like. Wisdom, indeed, speaks only itself and that is not judgment but concept, of this Idea itself, to which all syllogisms return, i.e. “everything is a syllogism” (Hegel). Wisdom, that is, condescends to, incarnates as, speech or judgment. Nowhere is this more true than in talk of divine judgment. Hence the evangelist declares that “this is the judgment: that men have loved darkness rather than light.” Its notion comes from *our* side, which is not a side at all.

It follows equally from this, however, that dying, death itself, is contingent, that “God made not death” in a yet more fundamental sense than the sacred writer there concerns himself with. It is here that our universal identity with the (universal) mediator, as the absolutely individual and personal (Hegel says this of God himself) comes into view, an identity, however, *post factum* logically speaking or simply a logical but at the same time and just therefore concrete identity, since it is just Logic which discloses “the true Being” (specifically, at the end of Hegel’s greater *Science of Logic*). This is not mediation’s belittling or cancellation but how alone it functions as, in representation, “efficient cause” after all, such that “I live yet not I but Christ lives in me”, the speaker there saying also to those whom he addresses or ministers to, “Now you are the body of Christ”. This is spoken also to those we think of as having lived before this revelation. It is why Christ is represented in religion, in faith, as having “descended into Hell” and/or “preached to those in prison”, something, however, that Dante in his poetic vision did not think of himself as able to represent, knowing that he, as individual, was not the mediator of “salvation”, whatever else he mediated, was not to see the mediator, the Christ, except as reflected in the eye(s) of his beloved, though Beatrice is surely more than this, if there be more. The philosopher, that is to say, has no difficulty with religious concepts as forming or yielding Absolute Spirit, bringing forth from his treasure things both new and old, not one jot or tittle of the old being taken away in such fulfilment.

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I return now to the view of Hegel as orthodox commentator upon faith in the incarnation, which I mentioned in the beginning as being our theme here. I shall be closely following the relevant or core pages on this theme in Hegel’s *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, especially pages 760 to 765, in Baillie’s English version:

Here, then, we find as a fact consciousness, or the general form in which Being is aware of Being - the shape which Being adopts - to be identical with its self-consciousness. This shape is itself a self-consciousness; it is thus at the same time an existent object; and this existence possesses equally directly the significance of pure thought, of Absolute Being. (p.760)

Here Hegel equates “the general form in which Being is aware of Being” with “the shape which Being adopts”, i.e. actively. That is to say, such knowing, *con-scientia*, which is even and only self-knowing, is determinative and, yet more fundamentally, self-determinative. Nothing can surprise it. It is its eternal self-realisation in and as absolute freedom, necessarily, as the relevant pages of Hegel’s *Logic*, in either version, further confirm. This tallies exactly with the theology of Thomas Aquinas as, no doubt, of Aristotle, freshly presented, however. Knowing as “awareness” might seem more stressed but I don’t think there is much in this, whatever the imaginative connotations of this more modern term. Consciousness “is identical with its self-consciousness”.

As a self-consciousness the shape adopted “is at the same time an existent object”. “At the same time” here actually means right out of time or eternally. This is, again, good theology. It is Hegel’s way of asserting that God has to be a person or super-person, “beyond personality”, which people often want to deny, seeing it as a finitisation of the infinite. Hegel asserts, to the contrary, that it is required, this “adoption”, for the infinite to be infinite. He asserts this at length in varied ways here. Thus, “this existence”, as an object, namely, “possesses equally directly the significance of pure thought, of Absolute Being”, we have cited above. This in fact follows from the mere fact that in Hegel’s logical doctrine Existence figures as a finite category back in the Doctrine of Essence, simply on a par with the other “thoughts” there posited and examined. There is no divorce, as between two “orders”, of Essence and Existence, only united in the “necessary being” or God, such as we find brought out in Aquinas or, yet more explicitly, in, say, Cajetan when in conflict with the contemporary Scotists. Or, rather, as further interpretation of this same truth here, in Hegel, just what has been divorced, as is the case with the opposed pairs in general of which logical thought consists and to which Existence (in fact Being) and Essence are no privileged exception, is shown as united in concept and, therefore, finally, in *the* Concept, the Idea absolute, which is “the true being”, God, just therefore being all, *Deus et omnia*.

He asserts it, that is to say, the necessity of this self-consciousness as personal, *in* asserting “the necessity *of* the absolute picture-idea”, that there must, namely, be a historic individual mediator, and *hence* history as a whole. Eternity, like infinity, is necessarily emergent out of time, since time

itself, and this is time's essence, what it is, is necessary condition, just as is self-consciousness as just mentioned, for Infinity's being a result and, in view of its one-way absorption of partial or finite concepts, and hence, as the only option, its own result as owed to itself as both Necessity and as badge of the rationality of (its) freedom. For it cannot just lie there as though by some inexplicable, so to say beneficent chance, like some great bomb left over from some previous conflict of factors less than necessary, Titanic or not indifferently.

The position, that is, belongs indeed with Hegel's analysis of Existence as a momentary category in the Doctrine of Essence, something therefore that thought and thought especially is able to deal with as being its necessary contrary within itself, logic, again, knowing its own limit and thus transcending it, toward nature and, finally, spirit or mind. In my beginning is my end, while it is not only the seeker, the worshipper, who must "become the path". The method itself, Hegel states, is the true Being and/or conversely (cf. *Enc.* 238). Object and this object supremely, as exemplifying all the rest, is known to Being as its Idea, of itself in projected alienation. Such alienation can without contradiction, of necessity even, take the form of a temporality limited at both ends, whereby the Word comes down from the heaven he never leaves. "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee", as the Roman liturgy frequently cites in this sense from Psalm 110, "The lord said unto my lord etc.". But being does not do things, so what it "has done" is realised forever as essential to it to the point, necessarily, of identity. Being is eternally generative, again necessarily, a self-producing form. Our instinct is to say "reproducing" but the simpler verb is the right one, since there is, necessarily, nothing "there" other than the producing act. It is this that "the eternal return of time" doctrine, in its final outcome, reflects.

What Hegel teaches us is to overcome the tendency of religion to divide up and separate these moments. As Aquinas put it, the divine essence is identical with every one whatever of its ideas, called *the* ideas.<sup>25</sup> So it is that this moment, as we want to call it, of incarnation, "possesses *equally directly* the significance of pure thought of Absolute Being" (stress added). We can see at once that individual self-consciousness thus identified is at one and the same time universal. Here we have Hegel's identification of the pictured historic mediator, who does things, with mediation itself as an eternal reality, hence with the transcendent and spiritual community, reflected on earth (where's that?) as a historical and visibly articulated body. It is in fact, though, more than body, a more perfect because supra-organic unity, where

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<sup>25</sup> Aquinas, *Summa theol.* Ia Q 15,

all are “members one of another”, i.e. where each is not a member but the whole and (the whole) Christ. “Whatever you do to the least of these you do to me”: this is not a merely moralistic utterance, we can now see. Membership, the limping Pauline metaphor, is in fact here transcended, along with any kind of abstracted “body” itself, just as it is in Paul’s saying “Now you are the body of Christ”.<sup>26</sup>

The absolute Being existing as a concrete actual self-consciousness, seems to have descended from its eternal pure simplicity; but in fact it has, in so doing, attained for the first time its highest nature, its supreme reach of being. For only when the notion of Being has reached its simple purity of nature, is it both the absolute abstraction, which is pure thought and hence the pure singleness of self, and immediacy or objective Being, on account of its simplicity. (*Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 760).

This passage, if coming from some contemporary “process” theologian, might be taken as literally meant. From Hegel this would be impossible, as could be shown over and over again. When he says the absolute Being seems to have descended and so on he means it did not descend (that the *descendit de caelis* cannot be taken literally, as if without the analogy proper to *all* language, such that the liturgy itself speaks of his coming down “from the heaven he never left”), whereas when he says that by so doing it for the first time attains its highest nature he clearly means it was, is eternally, never without it. This is corroborated by his statement that the end is as such realised (cf. *Enc.* 212 and the addition there). Christ, he means, is God’s self-revelation, *is* revelation, and that eternally. In fact, whereas Aquinas enquired whether God should have assumed human nature as such or an individualised human nature, along with several other alternatives, Hegel posits these two, for example, not so much as coalescing as that the first alternative is absorbed, as a matter of logic, in the second. The difference depends, in great part, on Aquinas, at least for purposes of exposition, holding to a realist view of time whereas in reality time is only real for spirit “for as long as spirit needs it”, as Hegel puts it, not without speculative humour (cf. *Phenomenology of Mind*, p.800, the whole paragraph). In

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<sup>26</sup> It is worth recalling that these things were said or written, in all probability historically speaking, before any of the Gospels, in particular that of John, the fourth, the doctrine of which they most directly anticipate, were written down or circulated. As theologian if not as witness Paul is very much “the first Christian” Nietzsche so disgustingly and yet so insightfully represented him as being, the disgust, however, really centring upon Paul’s disciples down the ages to Nietzsche’s own time and place. Nor does it really signify whether or not Paul, apostle and martyr, was “not a very nice human being” in Nietzsche’s phrase there.



thinking incarnation with assent man appears for the first time to himself as spirit, in self-consciousness as the Idea, where all are members one of another. It is only on this broader view of incarnation that woman is seen *equally* as the Idea, each bearing the lives of all upon her shoulders, as Catherine of Siena, speaking for many, expressed it, though in regard to the Church, the believing community, in the first instance. Realist Christianity, as we have noted above, e.g. when speaking of Lourdes, compensates for its lack here by an ascending series of definitions regarding the incarnate God's mother, not noticing or conceding that universalisation is thereby implied, held back by entirely abstract notions of sin and a "fall", such as Hegel shows to be pictured representations of finitude. Yet it is only by this Hegelian identification, of human nature as such with (any) individualised human nature, that the equal participation of woman, of women, in the new humanity, doubly required in view of the mentioned rediscovered *locus* of the divine image in man, viz. "male and female created he them", is realised and known without prejudice to the exclusively male proto-mediation of the Christ, all of whose graces given or conferred, among the believers or whomsoever, are now seen increasingly to be themselves mediated, in mediation of mediation, as they must be, by and through the mother that "bore", that mothered him, his having a mother, after all, being the prime guarantee of his actuality in and among us. Hegel refers, in true Christmas spirit, he too, to a fulfilment of the "hopes and expectations of preceding ages" and "the joy" of this. We, anyhow, may forget our mothers; he did not. "Woman behold thy son" but also, as said, *in extremis* above all mere extremes, to a disciple, John, "Son, behold thy mother". The equality of women, that "male and female created he them", demands no less than this in a viable Christianity, whether or not they should be "priests".<sup>27</sup>

Knowledge of this truth, too, or again, works against the in a measure abstract, and hence fabled representations of "sin" or "a fall". The whole of nature, rather, *abstractly considered* and not as eternally or, in Pauline thought, apocalyptically, "in God" as eventually "all in all", is evil, a sham-being, of which, therefore, the posited evil angel is "prince", who, says the mediator, "has nothing in me". The latter himself, rather, "was made sin for us", like the sacrificial goat in this case, as well as being sacrificial lamb, of old. Believers, however, are "dead to the world", to finite nature in fact, inasmuch as they are inserted into the body (of Christ), into the nature, with which they severally identify and are identified, "baptised into his death",

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<sup>27</sup> I take the liberty of expressing these co-ordinated reflections upon religious praxis from Hegel's own example, in particular the virtual diatribes against the Catholicism of his time and place at least with which his *Encyclopaedia* could be said almost to terminate.

each as all, which is simply the shape of mind itself, *logos*, philosophy will finally declare and demonstrate, as Aristotle had already identified philosophy as practising death (*athanatizein*) to all but itself. The difference here from Manichean dualism, in Hegel, is that evil is simply identified with and/or parsed as finitude or thus, virtually, denied. I went by and lo, he was gone, says the Psalmist, and that repeatedly, of “the wicked”, the “tares” that shall be “rooted out”, i.e. harvested and burnt, as in the later parable. God, even, just is “a consuming fire”, precisely as nemesis of “the wicked”, as of all that is wicked in us or anyone, thus one’s or my “salvation” or happiness simply, who “forgiveth all thine infirmities” while, Hegel’s “point”, not merely *point d’appui*, but final point of rest and that indeed first and last in one. It is a finished or realised process that his philosophy re-traces merely.

It is in this direction, finally, in consideration, namely, of the role and dignity of woman in particular, that the answer to Fr. Jamros’s objection to Hegel’s Christology, with which we began, lies. In this sense too religion self-abrogates as an imperfect form of spirit, this latter ripping the temple veil away.

For this reason it must be said that nothing is known which does not fall within experience, or (as it is also expressed) which is not felt to be true, which is not given as an inwardly revealed eternal verity, as a sacred object of belief, or whatever other expression we care to employ. For experience just consists in this, that the content – and the content is spirit – in its inherent nature is substance and so object of consciousness. But this substance, which is spirit, is the development of itself explicitly to what it is inherently and implicitly; and only as this process of reflecting itself into itself is it essentially and in truth spirit.<sup>28</sup>

There is here a concealed assertion of the necessity of contingency, as of creation and of the visible and changeable. As Aristotle and Aquinas had understood, a truer representation, again, than was dualism of the unseen eternal *vis a vis* the visible and temporal is the continuous sliding scale down

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 800-801. Confer also and compare, as a so to say Church authority, this being that to which Fr. Jamros, to cite it again, appeals in his article (Daniel P. Jamros: “Hegel on the Incarnation: Unique or Universal?” in *Theology and Philosophy* 56, 1995), the eventual Roman cardinal’s, now “officially” Saint John Henry Newman, *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* of 1845, apparently written as an Anglican independently of direct Hegelian influence, Hegel who in his turn wrote as a Lutheran while set to become, with Newman indeed, much more than a “cardinal”, give or take a century or two. “My time will come” (Anton Bruckner’s tranquil and now fulfilled assurance) is, *after* all, the hope of all.

from pure act (spirit) to pure potentiality (once called matter). Not only abstract matter, however, but the whole of particularised nature, as correspondingly open to or spoken of as sense-experience, which is, accordingly, “just this pure abstraction . . . for which being is the immediate” (p. 760), comes out as “in *esse* and *posse* null” (*Enc.* 50). This is Hegel’s gloss upon Aquinas’s statement that material being is the proper object of natural or created human intelligence. The absolute Idea itself results from it, rather, as from its own self-positing beginnings:

What is called sense-consciousness is just the pure abstraction; it is this kind of thought for which being is the immediate. The lowest is thus at the same time the highest; the revealed which has come forth entirely to the surface is just therein the deepest reality. That the Supreme Being is seen, heard, etc., as an existent self-consciousness, - this is, in very truth, the culmination and consummation of its notion. (*Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 760)

This passage cannot be understood without assent to Hegel’s later propounded thesis that the Idea is “the true being” specifically (final section of the greater *Science of Logic*). This is what was meant by the “taking of the manhood into God”, as distinct from an impossible “conversion of the godhead into flesh”. This “manhood” is thus taken as being otherwise or in itself nothing and thus the creation is completed, or brought to where it was always set towards. Being first brought to nothing, it is just therefore raised up, as predestined bride, in the powerful Scriptural image:

From heaven he came and sought her  
To be his holy bride.  
With his own blood he bought her  
And for her life he died.

All this is included in the assertion, discussed above, of Christ’s humanity as cause of grace, salvation, happiness and the rest, an exemplary cause indeed. It is the full humanity of “the Supreme Being”, Hegel’s deist target here, which is thus revealed, which reveals itself. And yet: “Art thou he that is to come, or do we look for another?” Hegel himself considers this question, in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Part Three. By his own logic, however, the objective reality of the “presumed (*gemeinten*) historical figure” of the past cannot be what is in question, since it is outside of the notion. The past is as such forgotten, since as held in memory it is present. Present, however, is the whole Christ, head and members. The image limps, as if the members were stuck on to an already completed Christ. In fact, rather, each is in all and all in each, “I in them and they in

me”, a prayer, whether “high-priestly” or not, for unity, for each one to utter (cf. *John* 18).

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Hegel now returns to the “peculiar crazy contortion” (p.756) from which he had previously distinguished his view, now setting the latter forth more positively as demonstrated assertion that God exists objectively and not merely “is” as a mere *ens rationis* or that thought, upon which philosophy concentrates, as absolute idealism makes explicit, is not just some segregated philosophical province but is the vibrant self-conscious supra-composite totality “on account of its simplicity”, is “objective being” (p. 760). Nothing complex could be the “totality”, that is, since this is what brings us to being as that “with which science must begin”, as prefaced also to Hegel’s science of logic, both as such and in the treatise thereon. Where spirit or mind is everything, namely, it is no mere “being of reason”, as might be, for example, its pure phenomenology as object of Hegel’s treatise thus entitled. Yet the fact is that mind’s phenomena are the finite representations of time and history, inclusive of human lives, as we say, treated of therein, this being the truth underlying the classic saying, “Call no man happy until he is dead”. To assert complexity in the totality, anyhow, is to misunderstand how the Father is said (also or especially by Hegel) to come fully to himself in the Son, in Christian terms, as necessary crown and term of otherwise alienated creation (the Scotist point, so to say). More fundamentally, to thus assert ultimate complexity is to misunderstand the meaning of Becoming in Hegel’s system of logic, confounding it with the representational and time-bound picture from which that word is taken, a derivational feature merely, as this is of all words in their material aspect and source, even the word “god”. Complexity, that is, is itself complex as we represent it, is not the Idea. One thus, in passively submitting to language’s “bewitchment”, denies or sabotages the *spiritual* function of linguistic universalization generally, confounding meaning (*meinen*) and use. Words, are used, or should be, to transcend their meaning by their use in a spiritual context, i.e. that of thought, which has to be identified. A thought, e.g. “The pack of cards is on the table” (example from William James), takes up no time or space, as every or any sentence, including that one, does.

It is first through its being “seen, heard, etc.” that “the Supreme Being” is known as “an existent self-consciousness”. This is, again, “the culmination and consummation of its notion”, *whereby* it “is given and *exists* immediately in its character as Divine Being”, which, it seems

implied, one might otherwise have conceived of as indifferent to mere existence, as no more than a kind of ideal limit to thought, as rather, in Hegel's system, that which characterises the finite only or on its own, as null, abstract, like (contrary to his intention) the five dollars existing in Kant's pocket (cf. *Enc.* 95: "This *ideality* of the finite..."). Yet existence, even or especially of the infinite, is, in fact, itself a moment of the notion (*Ibid.* 122-123), though one of the "poorest", Hegel will add, thus signifying relative indifference to the question of God's existence, on the proofs of which he was later to lecture. Meanwhile

This immediate existence is at the same time not solely and simply immediate consciousness: it is *religious* consciousness. This immediacy means not only an existent self-consciousness, but also the purely thought-constituted or Absolute Being; and these meanings are inseparable. (*Phenomenology of Mind*, p.760)

That is, this existence is immediate inasmuch as it is "absolute", loosed (*soluta*) in thought from any conceivable more deep-lying connection. As religious it would pertain to, be a, indeed *the*, form of, absolute spirit. The immediacy belongs to the existent object itself, just here where "object is in the form of self" (p.759). This is what the "crazy contortion", or the clumsiness of those who interpret Hegel in terms of it, such as Findlay, misses. The object is in the form of self, not as being reduced to it but as having taken it eternally to itself, as is manifest and notionally perfected in the sensuous appearing, here too as "its own result", first and last together. This expression, when put as "alpha and omega", is the alphabetical Scriptural form of the Greek "eternal return" of time, the two temporal assertions coalescing spiritually. That, and not something else, is philosophy, wisdom, the speech of the perfect among the perfect, to which we cannot less than whole-heartedly aspire and can do no more either.

The object, then, transcends itself in its union with that from which it was abstractly or first distinguished. In self-transcendence the object is, becomes, itself as moment. The same can be said of man, of the elements of logic or of all spiritual truths coinciding in this their capacity as moments, but without the truth itself becoming logic in the latter's abstract separation, retained even in Hegel's system of thought but finally overcome in his philosophy of spirit. This latter is what we have here, even though set forth firstly within "the phenomenology of mind". Large sections of this book are in fact repeated in *Encyclopaedia* III, "The Philosophy of Spirit".

"The Self is Absolute Being". This "light-hearted folly" Hegel derives from Greek comedy as the final liberation of man, of spirit. There is something English about this (though as effect is cause, rather) or, more

truly, Shakespearian, as there is indeed in the relaxed figure of the protagonist of the Gospels. “Lord here are two swords”; “It is enough”, he answers. “Call for me tomorrow and you will find me a grave man”, says the dying Mercutio, again, spirit being somehow unconcerned in this present *contretemps* or joke. He goes, like the Son of Man, “even as it is written of him”.

Comedy is also the final solemnity, surpassing tragedy:

This immediacy means not only an existent self-consciousness, but also the purely thought-constituted or Absolute Being; and these meanings are inseparable... This unity of being and essence, of thought which is immediately existence, is immediate knowledge on the part of this religious consciousness ... For this unity of being and thought is self-consciousness and actually exists; in other words, the thought-constituted unity has at the same time this concrete shape and form of what it is. God, then, is here revealed, as He is: He actually exists as He is in Himself; He is real as Spirit. (p. 761)

Compare, or rather contrast, Nijinsky saying “God is fire in the head” (*Diaries*). Fire, spirit, can indeed *be* “in the head”, Hegel claims, as the final Being (cp. *The Science of Logic*, final page) nonetheless, inverting the world (*ibid.* p.203f. on the *verkehrte Welt*).

The ultimate Being is spirit: in other words, it has appeared, it is revealed. This first revelation is itself immediate; but the immediacy is likewise thought or pure mediation, and must therefore exhibit and set forth this moment in the sphere of immediacy as such. (pp. 761-762)

This sphere is, at least partially, the sphere or world of sense. Immediacy, though, like existence, belongs all the same or just thereby, rather, to the concept, the notion, and is thus mediated, like, say, the thought of thoughtlessness, as a thought, “at second level”. This indeed is *self*-consciousness. Note here, though, the extension of revelation conceptually to all objectivity as such, sense, world, religion, self-consciousness, indifferently, from which it also follows that God *is* revelation, revelation God.

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So “this other”, as Christ in the Gospels is presented to immediate, i.e. individual self-consciousnesses (Hegel does not himself use the plural form here), or as they experience him indifferently,

does not yet know spirit to be its own; in other words, spirit, in its form as an individual self, does not yet exist as equally universal self, as *all* self. Or again, the shape it assumes has not as yet the form of the notion, i.e. of the universal self, of the self which in its immediate actual reality is at once transcended, is thought, universality, without losing its reality in this universality. (p.762)

This does not contradict the teaching about Christ's omniscience, "in the heaven of his soul" as Maritain expressed it in his *On the Grace and Humanity of Christ*. Viewed in a Hegelian perspective this very teaching denies that "the hereafter" can be correctly conceived as succeeding or "coming after" *within* the one temporal dimension. As enclosed within that not everything can be known, one *writes* only in sand, e.g. if one writes words such as "not as yet". Even or especially the Mediator himself has to be "transfigured", we will now show, though one must simultaneously preserve awareness that all such "events" are *thought* and thus known eternally, there being no other knowledge. Hence possible amnesia gives the lie to our claiming to know anything *now*, this "now" as such being anyhow discredited by Hegel's critique. It seems implied, also, in the text cited above that the individual self, i.e. any such, is set towards universality "without losing its reality in this universality", this being nothing more in fact than the aspiration of any genuine student of philosophy, anyone set, in art or religion also, upon the contemplative way of absolute spirit. How indeed could it be otherwise? And yet this privilege of, as it seems, mind as such is yet not to be thought, Hegel insists, without a personal mediation, to some, all or just one indifferently, from the Idea, which is infinity itself and which is set also to go to the fullest length of self-abnegation in this its energy, its passion, of will or love, whereby the end, which itself is in and indeed here by itself ever adhered to, does as it wills with each of its own and no further explanation is to be looked for in regard to this, each having his or her "appointed place". The Idea, in its ultimate representation posited as "absolute knowledge", knows each and all through and through along with and indeed in its own thoroughly known, reflexively apprehended self-apprehension without end, in utterly immovable peace only able to be posited in and by our difference from it. What must be true, however, to sum up, given these definitions, these insights rather, is that "reality is friendly" (Leo Elders SVD). One has but to yield to it. The end is realised, intrinsically, is Hegel's message. Such passivity will underlie the most seemingly frenetic or daring of human actions, this being *recta ratio*, as also the most evil or malicious, leaving natural catastrophes not worth speaking of in the same breath, except as they witness to the alienness of natural life, like the pains of animals (from which the tender-heartedness of the mechanist philosophers, Descartes, Malebranche, beating his dog daily in

“proof” of his denial, so shrank as to deny its reality even as phenomenon!), to or from the notion. Not only, otherwise, is nothing “worth the candle”. It cannot even be described, is indeed nothing.

Hegel chooses to use what we might call the temporal metaphor in his account of “this universality” (cf. the above quotation). It has a “preliminary and similarly intermediate form” (p. 782). This form is “not at once the form of thought itself, of the notion as notion”. He is talking here about the “religious” conceptualisation of events, of experience. This does not give, “as yet”, “the notion as notion”, being rather concerned with what it sees, *by contrast* (with thought), as “actual reality”. This latter shall thus have its own “universality”, though this is rather a mere or relatively quantitative and thus far unspiritual “allness, the collective totality” of the selves, as this clings to the idea of a *community*, such as the one hundred and forty four thousand of the Scriptural *Apocalypse*, symbolic though it be (this reservation can also be applied to the *threeness* of the Trinity, he finds). A counterpart to this reasoning about the religious mode, though yet itself would be in the same mode, would be St. Paul’s concerning the vision of the end (of time), when Christ shall “deliver the kingdom to the Father” *so that* “God shall be all in all”. The assertion “and time shall be no more”, incidentally, is highly speculative contradiction, when not a mere joke. That is, it employs “the temporal metaphor” (future tense) to deny time’s truth. This is in fact the true *method*.

Hegel speaks of this preliminary universality “in actual reality”, this conception, as “the elevation of existence into the sphere of figurative thought” (*Vorstellung*), this being an intermediate sphere necessary precisely as mediation, however, as we pass, for example, from art to philosophy, from the world in its beauty to God. Implied is that existence normally belongs with immediate experience merely, since he speaks of an elevation, from bottom to middle, so to say. Thought, on the other hand (third stage), transcends, yet includes, can include, existence. He compares this to how we *perceive* “things”, a thing (this is entailed in the more common idea of perceiving *that* this is a thing), after first just *sensing* a “this”. He conceives such a thing as “not yet the universal of understanding”. “Things” would thus be like Aristotelian beings, “said in many ways”. Such is “the collective totality”.

He refers now directly to “This individual human being ... which Absolute Being is revealed to be”. It, he, goes through the same process, in reverse as one might say. He is, Hegel affirms, “the *immediately* present God”. Just therefore, in line with what we have said above, “His being passes over into his *having been*” and has to do so. He cannot live in this finite world without breaking its *conceptual* bounds. But nor, therefore, can



reason as such – we have a genuine inversion of Kant here. It explains religion’s “glorified Christ”. This first, imperfect form of mediated universality signals the advent of “spiritual consciousness”, risen in spirit, as Hegel says, as he first rose, appeared, necessarily, in the sphere of sense. Consciousness *must* first know the individual and not itself as spirit. Absolute idealism, we recall, is “the ruin of the individual”. Here immediacy “acquires its negative moment”, in the necessity of mediation, of a general withdrawal from the immediate of both parties. We get, therefore, the “universal self-consciousness of a religious communion”, the stress being on “self”, *in the world but not of the world*, to quote the Scriptural exactitude here. The substance of this, however, is “universal subject”, where all are “members one of another”. It is thus supra-organic, yet not at all “the individual subject by himself”, who is one with it, rather, but the individual “in the consciousness of the communion” for which he or she “is the complete whole of the individual spirit”, an *alter Christus* as seeded within him or her, again. I vary Hegel’s text a little here. Here again, anyhow, we can apply the theme, “not by conversion of the godhead into flesh but by the taking of the manhood into God”, as returning thought to what, thought now sees, it had never left, though this may seem to the imagination a slow process, while to mind it is already or as such accomplished, again. This is the sense and substance of “the life of faith”, ever renewed in the sacred remembrance of anticipation, overcoming “the world”, in Christ’s words. “I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord” (a Davidic psalm: nothing changes really).

St. Paul rebukes, anathematizes even, some who were saying the (general) resurrection had already occurred, precisely because he knew they asserted this as within unilinear time, in the Jewish apocalyptic manner. They would not have been asserting resurrection’s eternal truth, as we have outlined it. Perfect speech, adds the Apostle, here and/or elsewhere, is only to be spoken among the perfect. This might recall the Roman Holy Office’s 1860 rejection of certain Hegelian “ontologist” propositions as “not safe for teaching”. Philosophy, no more than theology, can have nothing to do with such an attitude, but remains pastoral for all that. “I, if I be lifted up above the earth, will draw all men unto me”. Such is the narrow but “royal” road for those made “kings, priests and prophets”, as history progressively, i.e. serially more fundamentally than temporally, reveals. It leads to that state where no man can say (shall say) to another “Know the Lord” since, in Jeremiah’s prophetic words, himself speaking in that middle, pre-speculative register we mentioned, “all shall know him”. Such is the authentic Israelite will. Meanwhile the “masters in Israel” should see to it that they understand these things, the things of the Spirit, of its “birth in the

soul” (*Gospel of John*, 3). This new birth, however, is a baptism into death, in which philosophy does not merely participate since it, death, “the entry into spirit” according to Hegel, is rather its highest or truest form, death, that is, to all else (Aristotle’s *athanatizein*) as knowing “only” itself as including in superseding all. This is the Hegelian claim, that “this is eternal life”, one of knowing, namely, as, after all, Adam once (upon a time) “knew” his wife and, may one suppose, she him. Nothing is lost. Rather, from such knowing a whole world succeeded, million upon million.

And yet was I sore adread  
Lest having thee  
I must have nought besides.

The point is, there *is* nothing besides.

All that I took from thee I did but take  
Not for thy harms,  
But that thou mightest seek it  
In my arms.

The poet is a philosopher! They all are, spirit knowing its own as form of all forms and *thus* the content. But just so are philosophers, with Boethius Severino, lovers, in (theological) virtue of what they virtuously profess (cf. Socrates’ words in praise of love, “divine madness”, and of the lover in Plato’s *Phaedrus*).

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Pictorial presentation constitutes the characteristic form in which spirit is conscious of itself in this its religious communion, This form is not yet the self-consciousness of spirit which has reached its notion as notion; the mediating process is still incomplete. (p. 763)

Being and thought are still only externally connected. The universality of sensuous immediacy as thought is still *pictured* sensuously, spirit thus falling short of its notion as notion in full self-knowledge, which alone is self-consciousness. Still “there is a defect”, namely that

spiritual life is still cumbered with an unreconciled diremption into a “here” and a “beyond”. The content is the true content; but all its moments, when placed in the element of mere imaginative presentation, have the character, not of being conceptually comprehended, but of appearing as completely independent aspects, externally related to one another.

Here Hegel opens the field, not merely to mystical ecstasy, which is simple perception in and of the Concept, but to the representation of its content in philosophical language, that of “the notion as notion”, absolute religion *ipso facto*, or *qua* absolute, transmuting its own form. Must the philosopher then, himself or herself, perform, undergo, such a transmutation? That is not really a notional question, does not pertain, we shall not answer it. Perhaps some are born philosophers, though we have no right to just assume the truth of birth, personal identity and so on in notional context. One would, though, have to say this, phenomenologically, of the or any Christ at least, it is worth noting. The question anyhow does have at least a notional aspect, inasmuch as the content of the imperfect forms (of absolute spirit) of art and religion concur with philosophy’s, again, as, according to Hegel, does even the understanding of children (his version of their angels beholding the face of the heavenly Father). So we have here a sort of critique of the usual devotional life of believers, as seen from the outside at least. Consciousness, theirs too, “must necessarily pass to a higher plane of mental development”, be ever beating upon “the cloud of unknowing”. That is not, it seems implied, the vocation of a special few, as must be that of the academically trained philosopher. Yet there is a certain tension in Hegel on this point, depending upon the unspecialised tending to assume to themselves in this area the equality he would show himself willing to grant, but with a difference. He will not surrender the specialised quality of philosophical thought – it is a Socratic position, conversing with and forgiving all without sacrificing consciousness of grade and rank, as Christ distinguished the apostles from “the multitude”. “Friend, come up higher”. This injunction applies continuously, in a motion that is itself rest or perfection in imperfection, and which will one day have us lay down our pens, swords, ploughshares, computerised typewriters and so on. For mind is *capax Dei*, which, the infinite, it *thus* naturally desires, nature doing nothing in vain. So, this argument runs, mind, of poet or peasant, will get it and so, further, it is there to be got, not in some finite when or where but, if at all, here and now as “realised end”, as being infinite substance. “To them that have shall be given” and, in this capacity, we do have, spirit as such has. “Only connect!” Yet not all “have ears to hear”.

The truth of Absolute Spirit, however,

consists not merely in being the substance or the inherent reality of the religious communion; nor again in coming out of this inwardness into the objectivity of imaginative thought; but in becoming concrete actual self and being *Subject*. This, then, is the process which spirit realizes in its communion; this is its *life*.

That is, there is no premium upon “inter-subjectivity”; subjectivity, rather, is the life of each and conversely. The community can only possess it by disappearing into it, in *Aufhebung*, all in all, though at the level of pictorial theology this is still put in reverse order, the subjects put as not giving way before Subject. “Now you are the body of Christ”, the plural pronoun still sustaining the speculative displacement represented by the phrase “members one of another”. The promised, the conceptually envisaged “entry into the joy of the (your) Lord”, despite the societal metaphor, represents the new because eternal, trans-ideal identity more nearly. Short of this “the mediating process is still incomplete”. Here Hegel either overcomes or further fulfils Christianity, depending on the point of view, on whether or not that view of the movement, of Christianity in particular, is essentially that of a religion, as one may indeed still *say* it is on occasion, as Hegel does (speaking of its dogmatic and legal or disciplinary aspects) or, ultimately, that of a movement, of *the* movement which is spirit as such or *absolute* religion (ultimately philosophy itself as, he says, *höchste Gottesdienst*), revelation declaring its absolute self. As development develops it becomes, as what it always was, continuous displacement (as when one edits and re-edits a text), transcending even this final *picture* of movement, correctly defined by Aristotle as *imperfect* act, act of what is potential as itself potential. One avoids the temporal qualification “still” as having no place in science. Compare here, in its difference, the Maoist notion of continuous revolution.

So, the “synthetic connexion” of being and thought here remains defective. We have, it seems, almost to finally forget about being and maybe thought too, in the life, rather, of spirit, of mind. Mind minds, simply, and is thus not mind, speculative truth being not mysticism but “very much the same as” mysticism (*Enc.* 82 add.). The subject is the verb, act. This life of spirit refuses to be “cumbered with an unreconciled diremption into a ‘here’ and a ‘beyond’”, again.

Here, in regard to being as thought and conversely, lies a difference in identity between Hegel’s and Aquinas’s account of the “transcendental predicates”, being, unity, truth, goodness, beauty even and maybe a few more, though Aquinas too gives unique place to Being in this his list. They are so called as applicable predicatively to everything. Hegel, however, reduces all uncompromisingly to Being alone, even as Aquinas had qualified truth as Being with respect to mind, goodness as Being with respect to will (*bonum habet rationem finis*, goodness has the intelligibility of End, which is a *category* we have found Hegel assessing as ultimately finite and so not “transcendental”). This relates as affecting the duality of theory and practice, too easily made absolute by some Thomists, since practical reason is defined by him as an extension or even deflection of

reason as such to *operanda* or things to be done. Thus the explication of practical reason as paralleling theoretical reason, as in his account of “natural law” and its “principles” (such as *bonum est persequendum*) is for Aquinas too a representation merely. He is in agreement with Aristotle, rather, that “theory is the highest praxis” as itself absolute and exemplary, namely, such that even the converse, though this is not said, that praxis is uttermost theory, must hold. It is thus that Hegel paces love or will in a place superior to “cognition proper”, i.e. it remains a cognition and thus tends to devalue that concept itself in favour of a higher, right at the ultimate threshold of the Absolute Idea.

So for Hegel good and hence evil disappear from metaphysics, along even with truth abstractly considered, unless one should rather say that truth, as corresponding to Mind specifically, absorbs Being rather, this being the meaning of his statement that the Idea is the highest being. Still, I have said enough here to indicate final agreement between the two thinkers, both grounded in Aristotle’s maxim as cited. Aquinas, however, follows a theological method and not only that. His declared intent, rather, throughout, is one of teaching “beginners”, whereas Hegel declares that the world and its representation is of no immediate concern to “the priesthood” of the college of philosophers whose task, the contemplation of truth, is not in relation to the perishing world outside or any organisation, however sacred, within it. Even the believing community he treats of has its citizenship in heaven, a Scriptural figure that Aquinas, of course, in no way rejects. Put differently, McTaggart rightly interpreted Hegel as removing any objective distance of “heaven”, as if literally “future”, from the subject. This is the divine or absolute point of view in regard to which Aquinas too firmly states that God has no real relation to us his creatures or to the creature as such, though we may and do have this to him. God knows, his ideas consist of, nothing but himself. Thought thinks only itself, with which each and any of the ideas is identified. It is “our affair”, however, exclusively, as Hegel does not fail to state, to correspond to this.

Yet, as Hegel himself says, again, it is “the idea of the communion and its action with regard to its idea” which mediates this *notion* of spirit and (its) life, even though its *truth* is of course more fundamental than this finite notion, if one should abstract from its, the communion’s namely, being “taken into God”. “For this truth of Absolute Spirit consists in becoming actual spirit and being *Subject*”, again, as both one and many. “I in them and they in me”. This is what spirit, or mind simply, realises *in* this communion, which thus must be absorbed and not “one-sidedly” denied, retained in being put by as one passes, necessarily,

to a higher plane of mental development, where the absolute Substance is not intuitively apprehended but conceptually comprehended and where consciousness is for itself brought to the level of its self-consciousness ...

Here, just here (p.765), Hegel begins his laborious presentation, which is a re-presentation, of Trinity as, together with incarnation as here treated, the only rational account of God, he says. There are thus “three moments” constituting the life of spirit, these “moments”, though, not, it may be seen, reducible to the fourth century misrepresentation of them as Sabellian aspects merely.

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We “begin with the form of pure substance” as “content of its pure consciousness”. That is, thought and being are indeed one and that not “synthetically” or in the manner of a necessarily finite composition. The form is its own content, as Hegel paraphrases Aristotle. Thought as such, he appears to say, descends (his metaphor) “into existence, or individuality”, as intrinsically infinite, which it would not otherwise be. Assertion of the *logical* necessity of “creation”, ultimately, though, of incarnation, is here, as in the Logic, implied. Here there is consciousness (whose?) “of passing into otherness”, the otherness of “the process of imaginative presentation as such”. This is put as a second “stage” of the eternal process of spirit he will call Trinity, thus signifying an unmistakably theological claim (about theology, however). The presentation is both God’s and man’s (i.e. it is “as such”), distinction having been excluded by his previous account. Trinity is a presentation precisely with respect to its popular association with the number three, inviting many to tritheism. Yet “There are three who bear witness in heaven”, one reads in a Johannine and Scriptural letter. Hegel in interpreting, however, speaks of a *return from* presentation within this presentation of three “stages”. The discrete conceptual divide is yet fluidly one, as indeed true of the Logic as a whole:

The third stage is the return from this presentation and from that otherness; in other words, it is the element of self-consciousness itself. (p.765)

There is a plain analogy here, we may discern, with symphonic music as of infinitely disparate parts, temporal moments or even or especially moments of time itself, and just therefore heard “all at once” (Mozart in a letter) *at the same time* as heard successively in this “moving image”, while this is indeed, we may then reflect, the character of thought itself, in time but not

temporally analysable, as if a predicate temporally succeeds upon its subject, with which it is identical.

What of this “otherness”, though? It is ourselves, it seems, from which we escape into self-consciousness, into spirit’s own life. This escaping, however, is here put as a return, as we find in Origen. It is, necessarily, an “escape *from language*” (I take over this term coined by the late Fr. Herbert McCabe OP), a Wittgensteinian silence therefore remaining also while we continue, as it seems, to speak, but *of it*, as free or rational beings, with, indeed, rational necessity. The denial of “the world” as representation remains essential. The situation is after all an analogue of the prodigal’s return to the father’s house, as is the angel become evil, to which Hegel will shortly turn, analogous by his account to the resentful elder brother in that parable. Be that as it may! The return then is within God, within thought, first of all, as simultaneously a new departure, analogous in turn, or is it not merely metonymous, to the demand, by protagonists of “natural law” to “become what you are”.

Hegel now introduces this non-notional term “three”, as applied first to the “moments” constituting spirit’s life as “in imaginative thought ... taking on a determinate mode of being”. This is an image but in the context of the whole world, into which spirit thus descends, as being put thus as an image. The incarnation is God’s descent into what is not (i.e. as if it were), “in *esse* and *posse* null” (*Enc.* 50). *That* is why it is an image, why, as we say, God “came down from the heaven he never left”. It is not unorthodox, though that consideration is an aside from our philosophy here. The picture-thinking of dogmatic theology, as of ecclesiastical declarations and the like, consciously permits itself such paradoxes, imitating Scripture, which includes fable and myth without explicitly distinguishing them from the historical narrative or interpretative statement it also contains. This is summed up, in Scripture itself by apostolic statements such as that to “the Galatians” that “these things (concerning Abraham and his sons) happened in a figure”, as we have already noted, or, again, that “spiritual things must be understood spiritually”, as, it is implied, neophytes do not always immediately grasp. Yet theology permits this only in part, since it also itself interprets Scripture, whether “mystically” or by speculative reason generally, even though its own formulations prove equally to need such spiritual interpretation very often. This type of interpretation, again, naturally extends to what are simultaneously taken as, in this phenomenal or “fleeting” world, actual events, rather (or just) as in a philosophy of history such as Hegel’s. Alternatively, as Aristotle expresses it, there is no “science” of contingent history (Hegel will stress the necessity of contingency itself or as such, recalling Aristotle’s own account of chance in

*Physics IV*). The principle there, then, as Aquinas expressed it, was that literal acceptance is where possible to be preferred to interpretation. I say “was”, because “spiritual understanding”, itself, we have seen, named and enjoined by the same apostle in *Scripture*, has come of late to be ever more explicitly recognised by the spiritual community itself, through its representatives in Council or individually, as *the* way to receive what is taught to be God’s own word, the norm, in one rather ugly word. “The letter kills”. It is not at all certain that Aquinas’s criterion, which, however, might rather be taken as a pedagogical principle for catechists, more than partially coincides with this. So it has often been the fate of true philosophy to be set aside by the spiritual or believing community as a whole as being “not safe for teaching” (see, again, the rejection on that head by the Roman Holy Office in 1860 of several Hegelian and/or “ontologist” theses as “not safe for teaching”); but as Hegel says (LPR3), philosophers, who are not teachers but thinkers, can’t help that. In fact, all the same, this problematic is examined at the beginning of Aquinas’s major *Summa* (of theology), where Aquinas has an article asking “whether one man can teach another”, something Jeremiah had prophesied would disappear “on that day” (i.e. teaching has no place in eternity, in “notional thinking”).

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Thus Hegel seamlessly conjoins speculative and hence mystical treatment of Incarnation and of Trinity, put as separate “articles of faith” by picture-thinking, but not by speculative thought of mystics or philosophers, whether they be Christian or no. That is, Christianity itself offers itself as the perfection of all religious and indeed philosophical striving (there is no denying it does that) of absolute spirit. This, however, is fundamentally refuted, whatever the intention, or at least denied by a dogmatic positivism refusing all identification (including at times even mere synthesis) with fundamental spiritual, i.e. philosophical, truth.

Such positivism seems to arise out of a misplaced stress upon phenomenal history, inclusive of *existence*. What thus exists, Hegel points out, is “the first historical appearance” *qua* appearance. This (for or to us) immediacy gets confused with “the simplicity of the notion”, of what we are after. It becomes abstractly separated from “the idea of the communion and its action with regard to the idea”, what theologians (and not only they) call “the whole Christ” (e.g. Mersch, compare also the mass of Patristic texts assembled as the Appendix to de Lubac’s *Catholicism* of 1939). Even that, however, is still “pictorial”, not the final notional truth of “the certainty of self-consciousness”. What thus appears is the “anointed” (and not merely or



literally “appointed”) mediator, *Christos* or *Messias*, who is or was to come within phenomenal history as manifestation of what is knowable as eternally necessary by active intellect, i.e. spiritually. Such is Hegel’s claim, his account of the slogan, “Jesus saves”. For the religious mind happiness (*beatitudo*) and salvation are synonymous terms, denoting “blessedness”. Thus Hegel applies this to thinking as such at *Enc.* 159. As the Greeks had it, again, “Call no man happy until he is dead”, the naïve “until” being overcome or absorbed by Aristotle’s enjoining of constant death-practising (*athanatizein*) in and by thinking as also, in specifically religious representational thought, Hegel’s “picture-idea”, in and by the active sacramental figuration of baptism, reckoned by faith as effective, into Christ’s death, Christ’s accomplished “entry into spirit”.

It is noteworthy, thinking of these things, that the regular formula of baptism does not use the purely personal name “Jesus” at all, as it well might have done. It is and was not considered essential, that is to say. The terms “Father” and “Son” are used, however, though these too are deemed “pictorial” by Hegel. One might compare this with the more usual term “analogical” as more specifically referring to picture-association, as “analogy” does not. Referring anyhow to the mere cult of Jesus “in the flesh” in this connection Hegel comments:

By thus impoverishing the life of spirit, by clearing away the idea of the communion and its action with regard to its idea, there arises, therefore, not the notion, but bare externality and particularity, merely the historical manner in which spirit once upon a time appeared, the soulless recollection of a presumably (*gemeinten*) individual historical figure and its past. (p.765)

He sees a confusion, that is, between this immediacy and “the simplicity of the notion”. Regarding names, however, while the name “Jesus” is not used the candidate is baptised “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”. Nonetheless, as Thomas Aquinas points out, the Holy Spirit “has no proper name” (he suggests *donum*, meaning gift, as candidate<sup>29</sup>), while it is precisely into the Spirit that one is baptised, as is confirmed by the subsequent sacrament, regarded as completing baptism in fact, of, precisely, confirmation, conferring spiritual gifts from “the strengthener” (Lat. *confortator*, the old translation as “comforter” being thus somewhat misleading now).

Hegel speaks here of a descent into “existence” or “individuality”, their “synthetic connection”, as he twice calls it, being “the consciousness of passing into otherness”. This process, including the “descent”, is “an

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<sup>29</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* Ia 37.

element of thought”, of spirit, that is, as “content of its pure consciousness”. As such, it even or primarily, as “passing into otherness”, denotes the eternal generation of the Word, capturing the pictured import of this Trinitarian terminology as being ultimately self-consciousness as such, whether seen as elevation of the latter or as reduction of the former or as both. Rather say both, as what is here also seen is the oneness of creation with this generation of the Word, as included necessarily or absorbed into this eternal generation, only reducible to creation insofar as Being might be reducible to Nothing, the first, utterly superseded, but ever preserved, moment of Hegel’s Logic. Existence meanwhile, one recalls, is just one categorical moment of the Doctrine of Essence or middle section of Hegel’s system of logic. Existence is part and parcel of pure consciousness. The point is Anselmian and Cartesian, while Hegel rebuts Kant’s criticism of the reasoning by appeal to his Hegel’s whole system, within which existence is but a “poor” predicate and not a different category or logical “order” altogether (as also in Cajetan or Aquinas, who appeal to Aristotle’s statement that there is no genus of “the things which are”, thus founding analogy theory). Hegel replaces this idea of two orders, of essence and existence, with that of the two logical “moments” of being and essence, united in the final Concept, where God is being, as in Aquinas, *ipsum esse subsistens*, and not merely necessarily existent, where Being, as part and parcel of the same identity, is the method, the pure Concept relating only to itself, this very relation, while remaining plenitude of Being, the concept grasping or conceiving itself, Being as the concrete and “intensive” totality:

*Die Methode ist der reine Begriff, die sich nur zu sich selbst verhält; sie ist daher die einfache Beziehung auf sich, welche Sein ist. Aber es ist nun auch erfülltes Sein, der sich begreifende Begriff, das Sein als die konkrete, ebenso schlechthin intensive Totalität.* (Hegel; *Wissenschaft der Logik*, Suhrkamp 6, p.572).

For this Gilson, in *On Being and Some Philosophers*, and others dub him an essentialist, not taking note of the resolution of this moment of Essence, in closest consort indeed with that of Being, in the Concept or Absolute Idea (of absolute idealism).

What is implied here, as is confirmed by this last citation, is that thought, self-consciousness, self-conscious spirit, these expressions name one final reality, call it truth, which is superior to what we call existence, a word carrying with it, as Hegel notes, a clear suggestion (*ex-*) of alienation, as what is “natural”, of (alienated) nature “out there”. Thought, again, *descends* into existence; “or individuality” he adds, linking this, the incarnation, with the necessary beginning in sense-immediacy. Does he

mean *God* begins there? He does not deny it. “With what must science begin?” The logic, both logics, begin and end with Being, as what the absolute or pure idea is, and this Being is simple immediacy (EL 86) or “just Nothing”, again, as not mediated by anything, the “notion implicit” only, while, we have seen, when made explicit by logical method it is, rather, everything, but everything understood as in the sense of negative theology, just whereby it is identical with each and every idea, in a necessity annihilating pure or abstract possibility, as a moment of this Absolute. Thus, also, the implicit is the explicit. That is what makes it implicit. In a figure, we are the path we tread, the path, therefore, is we, sole object of any possible knowing. Know yourself, therefore, and you know all. The Oracle had no intention of restricting Socrates to moral philosophy only, whatever we say about the particular sciences in their genuine if, in their abstract particularity, impotent striving after ultimately absolute knowledge.

Yet, as to Being:

The Absolute Spirit, as pictured in the element of pure essential Being, is not indeed the abstract pure essential Being; rather, just by the fact that this is merely a moment in the life of Spirit, abstract essential Being has sunk to the level of a mere element (in which Spirit lives). The representation of Spirit in this element, however, has inherently the same defect, as regards form, which essential Being as such has. (pp. 768-769)

Hegel appears here to be pointing to the falsity of all judgments, as he has established this in his system, in comparison with the concrete or actual, Spirit’s self-appointed vocation, so to say; self-cancelling “otherness ... lies in the very notion of Spirit”. This knowing in not-knowing, therefore, is its very own self-revelation.

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It would, though, it can be shown, be a mistake to take this thought of absolute knowing beginning in sense-immediacy as a reduction of the Idea of God to some form, however contradictorily conceived, of “finite mind”. Rather, infinite or absolute mind is necessarily identical with each of its moments and is “its own result”, even. All determination is on the side of the Idea, of God. Nature as such, in fact, is an absolute determination just in being the Absolute’s self-determination, “from all eternity”. The restriction is not, therefore, absolute restriction, although such as it is it is absolutely imposed. This must therefore apply *a fortiori* to that *kenosis* of incarnation *pictorially represented* by most theologians, as they should but do not always seem to understand, as “change in God”. *Kenosis* again, “self-

othering”, is the very life of spirit itself. Being becomes, makes itself, nothing, so as “to bring to nought the things which are”, which are thus revealed as only having “seemed” to be. So not only hope but, just therefore, faith and knowledge, are of the “things which are not”, which are, however, (be)coming. This, in perhaps ecumenical or conciliatory spirit, we might indeed call “the future of Hegel”<sup>30</sup>, future, however, as “eternal return”.

The same applies, though, to any and every rational individual or person. Hence we are “members one of another”, as parts which are wholes in the transcending of both of these conceptual moments towards Spirit as final Idea which “is essentially the simple Self” (p.770). In effect Hegel’s thought here coincides in outline with that of Aquinas, who interprets the Trinity in the light of the necessary simplicity of what is absolute or infinite. The perfect “spoken” Word proceeding as begotten or inwardly conceived, as also the Spirit (as “third person”) “breathed forth”, he teaches, not only necessarily proceed but in this proceeding are necessarily identical with as not differing from or falling short of that prime infinite, with “simple Self”.

This, in fact, this universal syllogistic identity, to amplify our earlier suggestion, may well be the truth lying behind the steady dogmatic development by the teaching Church of the supposed privileges of her called, since the earliest, comparatively, of these “last” times (Ephesus, 431), to employ the eschatological figure of eternity, “mother of God”, *theotokos*. In encountering “even the least of these”, even my self-effacing mother there, you encounter me! So she is now proposed, not as such defined, however, as “*mediatrix* of all graces” (“male and female created he them”). This development too, it is claimed (I do not say sit is taught), follows immediately or logically from well-known evangelical statements. Well, maybe the event at the Cana wedding, when “the mother of Jesus was there” directing the proceedings backstage, at the beginning of his ministry, had taught him something, he still growing perhaps “in wisdom and stature” (does growth ever stop? Should it?). So this least one is the first of us last ones. Thus the next step, I once heard a well-known theological publisher dismissively remark, will or would be the immaculate conception of St. Anne (the mother’s mother traditionally), or of anyone. This is not inconceivable, we know so little about unobservable miracles! It is not, however, in the least germane, if her revelation as *the* immaculate conception, dilated on above as to what it might mean, for spirit, is to be taken seriously. We cannot know how doctrine will develop until it does, as this very example well shows. There might be many, even a multitude, of such steps, for all I or we know. We cannot know in advance, Hegel insisted,

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<sup>30</sup> Title of Catherine Malabou’s book (with an exhaustive preface by Jacques Derrida).

even if, were we ever to be transported to some future state of, say, “the Church”, we would at once concur in all the developments. For thus we understand, if we do, our past, bearing in mind that not every passing phenomenon of earthly church life is a development, as is what abides (cp. The speech of Gamaliel in *Acts*), not always easy to pinpoint though while time goes ever on and a thousand years (e.g. of medieval excrecence) is equated with a day.

Thus, as another example, consider the adage, *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. This can bear both an exclusive and an inclusive, e.g. that we are all members of the body, of the Church, even universalist sense, and, in fact, even both at the same time, e.g. if we would suggest that where there is no salvation there is no person. Similarly the “baptism of desire”, reckoned “necessary for salvation” (Augustine ought really to have known better, one thinks), now gets extended, by highest authority, to “all men (all those) of good will” and who exactly is not that, given that it now is seen to include even those thought necessary candidates for Limbo, become for the generality a metaphor for nowhere? Or who exactly are *not* the murderers and adulterers mentioned as non-inheritors in Scripture? “Thou art the man”, Nathan’s dreadful word to David, is maybe as far as we can get here, hoping to be included in the mystical coherence where we shall “bear one another’s burdens”. The point is, this is the soil in which Hegel’s speculative logic has grown. Thus Hegel asserts that this revelation, as absolute religion, to the shepherds at the manger or wherever, of “what Absolute Being is”, is equally “the discovery of themselves therein”, i.e. of the “hopes and expectations of preceding ages” gathered there (p.761), while by his theology what we hope for we have, not as presumption but “in spirit”. “Every soul gets what it expects” (Thérèse of Lisieux’s simple approximation to Hegel), since the expecting is the getting, as knowing transcends existence, by our interpretation earlier. Here Hegel’s general account of sin and “the Fall of Man” (as at *Enc.* 24) may well show the way. By this account sin is just what we *are* as finite, when taken in abstraction from spirit as itself thinking each one of us, or from the “whole” we must as it were “rejoin”, the circle returning, in dying, Hegel stresses, to our natural alienation as thus separately finite and so, in that separation, merely ideal (*Enc.*95).

So in becoming incarnate, phenomenally visible, from inception and not just as revealed on the Cross itself, the Word, spirit itself, was, is, “made sin for us”, in alienated finitude, in what is the natural othering of itself *qua* spirit, supreme instance of “this Bacchanalian whirl of concepts”. As such sinners we are utterly justified, once we know with believing self-consciousness. This is what Hegel wishes to say with his “Good and evil are

the same”, which he would yet draw back from, since all judgments, again, even this one, are false as “one-sided”. “The letter kills”, Scripture yet more drastically, itself by letter, script, declares. This is also implied, again, in Jeremiah’s saying all shall “know the Lord”; so no script is needed, unless in sand. “Offences must come”, indeed, yet we are, when we are, personally responsible for them. Woe to us! The final truth here, however, was well expressed by that Jewish gentleman who, when pressed, asked simply: “Why shouldn’t God forgive me? After all, I have forgiven him.” The joke here, precisely as joke, is not a joke, like all good jokes. All this should help to explain why Hegel’s passing over to (revealed) religion, in *The Phenomenology of Mind*, is made to hinge, perhaps not unsurprisingly otherwise, upon pardon or forgiveness, the “beautiful soul” or uncommitted dreamer thus only tangentially or insufficiently “romantic” (if we attend to Hegel’s positive uses of this term), seemingly falling short of this until he learns, if ever, to forgive.

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To conclude this first part, considering Hegel’s theology of incarnation, it would be well, before passing to his treatment, hardly separable, of Trinity, to emphasise and hold to the matchless exactitude of his own presentation, rather than remain solely with having taken his words as an invitation to our own less precise but especially less profound presentation, not open to any kind of self-transcendence here, of newness in authentic discovery.

Section C of this Chapter VII, then, begins with a certain downplaying of the Jewish background as compared with the Greek. Hegel will later correct this emphasis in some measure, moving with Germany herself out of the eighteenth century classicism of his youth, although it serves good purpose here all the same, while we should remember that it was mainly the Greek-speaking Jews of Apostolic times who gave the most prominent response to the Christian proclamation, such as Stephen or Paul. The Greek Septuagint translation of the Scriptures was widely in use, just as seventy Jewish scholars were easily found, in or around Alexandria, to set this great project in motion in the first place. Nor can the influence influence of Philo himself upon Christian thought, as it were externally, be entirely discounted.

Here, anyhow, around 1800, Hegel states that “This incarnation in human form of the Divine Being begins with the statue”, within “the religion of Art”, or with the “outward shape of the self” (Baillie, 1967, p. 751). In the cult, though, outer and inner become one, as they are in Hegel’s logic. But this is a passing over “to the extreme of self”, in the spirit, “perfectly certain of itself in the individual existence of consciousness”, i.e. not yet proper

self-consciousness in the universalist sense Hegel finds in this phenomenon of mind, or how we appear to ourselves if we would but look.<sup>31</sup> Fusion of inner and outer, anyhow, is more typically Jewish, in the “mystical interpretation” of Scripture or Scriptural typology generally, the Wisdom literature particularly, to which John’s Gospel can certainly be assimilated, along with much of St. Paul’s thought and writings, with all of which Hegel was deeply familiar, soaked in it in fact, apart from his having begun as a theological seminarist, something he might seem at times to be trying to “live down” or ignore simply, first step towards forgetting.

So with the cult, in his Lutheran church-attendance for example, the Jewish element comes in, as part of what Hegel here sets out to explain and interpret, while through Art “spirit has passed from the form of substance into that of Subject”. To practise art, he implies, is to become self-consciously active. That is what enables him to see it as a form, the first, even foundational, of “absolute spirit”. It can, after all, be an art in which all participate, and this not as some kind of exception. Hence he calls it the *religion* of art, as, in his apprehension, practiced in the first instance in some, at least, of the ancient Greek city-states

Actual incarnation, then, he goes on to see, to construe, similarly as a protracted movement, i.e. it really does begin with the statue, which will later come to life, like the stone man in *Don Giovanni* or, differently, the *picture* of Dorian Grey. His thought, that is, gyrates around the divine art as creator of life (out of death, it may be, as in Ezekiel’s vision of the “dry bones”). In that way we are all art-works, though the life itself is not *added on* to the idea here. Hegel is, rather, explicit that the Concept, as Absolute Idea, in its final or eternal shape, is the proto-form of life in the sense, not merely of potentiality but of Act, pure and perfect, transcending temporal process, “Realised End” as he will later say, although putting even this as a category in transition towards “the true Being” of the Idea and/or Concept transcending, as of itself only, all merely intentional conception, however. Life itself, though, natural life, with which *we* start off in our process of identification with Thought, is “but the Idea immediate”.

What art attains to, “completely”, is a vision, an experience, of this unity of inner and outer as already or ever in place, however. This just is the passage, by or in art, hence of art itself, to “the extreme of self” which is “the spirit, which is perfectly certain of itself”, for Hegel necessary to proper self-consciousness where indeed the individual self is swallowed up in,

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<sup>31</sup> For a first attempt of mine to interpret this pressing phenomenon of self-consciousness, while still innocent, I should rather say ignorant, of Hegel, see my “Other Problems about the Self”, *Sophia*, Australia, vol. 24, no. 1, April 1985, pp. 11-20.

finally, Absolute Knowledge (cp. Aristotle's *athanatizein* as the way thereto, inwardly or deathlessly, the negative Greek prefix would suggest, ruining ourselves). "Ruined", again, is how Hegel himself finally puts it when emphasising the untruth of our immediate individual feeling, its philosophical realisation. This is emphasised again and again, this self-certainty, which Hegel relates essentially to *faith*, recalling perhaps the Biblical "Whatever is not of faith is sin", misses the mark or target. This indeed is the sense of the Jesuit motto, *Age quod agis* – do what you are doing, i.e. believe in it. It is typical of the artist, of what we mean by his inward inspiration which he has to follow. "Seems, Madam? I know not seems. But I have that within which passeth seeming." This, surely, is the significance of the character Hamlet, Prince not just of Denmark but of the Spirit. Yet he does not escape his tragic destiny for that, is in truth rather "ruined", by Shakespeare's genius, while Hegel could well add to his duos of united opposites, being and nothing, good and evil, etc. that of bliss and sorrow, as in the evangelical "Your sorrow shall be *turned into joy*" or, indeed the Cross as *spes unica*, whether it is we ourselves who hang twisted upon it or not, in what is "a far better thing that I do now", to paraphrase the character in Dickens who lays down his life to save another (*A Tale of Two Cities*), but that not in a tale merely, though so it begins, Object becoming Subject. Thus, consistently, in true self-consciousness we shall know, do know, all things, for the very reason too that object there is become subject and conversely. Thought knows only itself, Hegel echoes Aristotle in saying, repeatedly, while, or therefore, as he intimates, reading him is a good way of understanding "the mystics" or the mystical, rather, which Wittgenstein was not able to eschew without himself touching upon it. This paradox had found its explanation in Hegel already, however, the mystical being simply identified with "the true reason world" in "speculative truth", no reduction of either being implied (*Enc.* 82, *Zus.*). The same outlook, or spirit, is to be met with in the commentaries of John of the Cross (upon his own "Spanish poetry").

In a word, here "all essential content is swallowed up", in mind's knowing only itself, which Hegel calls here "light-hearted folly", knowing it will be thus judged. Or, rather, in being light it is, precisely, and this is its burden, its sense, heavy. "The Self is Absolute Being". That is what it comes down to. It is the only answer to the riddle, as it otherwise must be, "Why do just I exist?", a riddle to which there can be no answer that leaves intact this "just I", as a subject that is not the object, the world, Hegel says. It is our job to remember, to reconstruct, all this, mind pounding it to an absolute simplicity indistinguishable from self, in a final unshakeable "at-homeness", surveying perhaps "the wondrous Cross", the whole paradox of



“loss and gain”. The self there is no longer “the accidental element” which the child imagined, or did he think the opposite, which is the same, viz. Newman’s “myself and God”? For they are not really two, could not be that, it is implied by these words. This, indeed, might be diagnosed as Hegel’s project, viz. banishment of the “and”, everywhere, “here” itself becoming everywhere, part whole. The self is God’s willing of *himself*, again, without reduction of the latter. Henceforth “nothing appears in the form of objective Being, spirit”. Thus, in this, self-consciousness, “has lost its aspect of consciousness”, i.e. as of anything apart from its own, to which all that we might call consciousness becomes simply analogous. This, though Hegel does not functionally employ the term “analogy” as such, is why his system is not one of “psychologism” at all, is its most complete destruction, rather than a mere embarrassed shoving of it aside by those wishing to appear a finitely “objective” merely, fit objects for their finitely salaried repute within society at large.

Nothing else, incidentally, than this interpretation, this philosophy of the self as not-self, would follow from Augustine’s *intimior me mihi*, affirming “one closer to me than I am to myself”, ruining the individual far more fundamentally, say effectively, if we consider Augustine’s thousand year and more influence, than did the power of the (Roman) Emperor upon which Hegel long dilates, upon, namely, that spiritual aspect in which that Emperor appears as definite forerunner or “representation” (*Vorstellung*) of the Pope and papal “power”, the Petrine “rock” of Scripture, power, *potestas*, i.e. not a potentiality but a “being able” (*pot-est*), divided in precisely a union, only able to be wrongly conceived by the faithful or other generality, of the temporal and the spiritual. His power, rather, was and is, inasmuch as it may be anything, as and over the spiritual, whatever his status as a “temporal” ruler, in principle a mere badge of, again, spiritual independence of temporalities.

All that has happened, so to say, in this affirmation of “the Self as absolute being”, which Hegel sees foreshadowed or, rather, first appearing, in Greek comedy, actually in prelude to general “pardon” or forgivingness, the hinge on which the transition to religion and its theology, for this Christian thinker, turns, is that substance “has dropped to the level of a predicate” and that without altering anything. God, the Absolute Idea, has been identified (anew) with “the true Being”, as of logic, of reason, in saying which Hegel does not become “post-Christian” since the very *form* of this movement is precisely that, movement, development, as Newman was to show, though historically rather than philosophically, in the next generation as prelude to being adopted by the believers of our own. That is, every Christian in his thinking thought (*pensiero pensante* in Gentile’s system)

succeeds upon what is already thought (*pensato*), whether or not Gentile thus applied his idea here. All thought, namely, was and is on the road to this, not as to a terminus but as to a heaven it never left or leaves. Such, too, is McTaggart's interpretation of Hegel, or so one may interpret McTaggart, as his executor C.D. Broad failed to do.<sup>32</sup>

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“The Self is Absolute Being”, the proposition, “belongs to the non-religious, the concrete actual spirit” (p. 750). This last phrase is Hegel's delineation of the difference, of his getting *behind* religion and the human impulse thereto. It is Absolute Spirit that defines spirit's or mind's search for its own depths, of which religion, like art, is an in a sense transient form only, though it will be sublated in the final wisdom, its concrete obligations, like the honour and participated enjoyment due to art, remaining.<sup>33</sup> Hegel's word “non-religious”, however, or therefore, uses “religious” in its abstracted sense and not as it must be in “life”. The proposition, anyhow, is in the philosophic form, just as one might say of much, very much, of the content of Augustine's *Confessions*. Nor does the latter refer much to *religio*. What comes up with Augustine, rather, is something called “the rule of faith”, *regula fidei*. There is no antecedent necessity, however, to think of this as excluded from the purview of philosophic wisdom, just as we will now find Hegel affirming faith in Jesus Christ precisely in his own philosophical mode, something seriously meant: i.e. it will not be found part of some hybrid thing some would call “Christian philosophy”.

Also, in his eyes, the affirmation of the Trinitarian God is neither a “theological” affirmation (in the sense of Saint Thomas) nor a thesis of “Christian philosophy” (improperly rational, because inspired by faith), but it stems directly from the philosophical order, and the task of showing the truth of it belongs to philosophy.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> For this, see P.T. Geach, *Truth, Love and Immortality: an Introduction to McTaggart's Philosophy*, Hutchinson, London 1979.

<sup>33</sup> It was in this sense that a Jesuit priest, one Fr. Turner, lecturing at their headquarters at Farm Street, London, in the 1950s, stated that “poetry is necessary for life”, confirming this when asked from the audience if he really meant it. Poetry, of course, is found in Scripture itself, as necessary to religion namely, so there is no mystery about this. The three forms of absolute spirit make up one human journey in three stages, one arena where one passes back and forth without losing one's furthest reach so far. Religion, therefore, needs the further philosophical journey for understanding itself.

<sup>34</sup> Georges Van Riet, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

So we have to recall what form of spirit it is which gives expression to it”, to the above proposition, viz. “The Self is Absolute Being”. This form, the philosophical, “will contain at once the movement of that proposition and its conversion, which lowers the self to a predicate and raises substance into subject”. What then is gained? Merely that we ascend to the philosophical while remaining religious, the stance of “scientific” *theology*, in fact, while if substance itself becomes subject it is, in its abstract usage and sense, overthrown, which is precisely the aim and import of absolute idealism. So substance is not merely “reinstated”, which would simply throw us back into natural religion, as treated of previously (at Section A of this seventh chapter), Hegel remarks. This broader view, rather, is such that

This conversion is brought about *for* and *through* self-consciousness itself. Since this latter *consciously* gives itself up it is preserved and maintained in thus relinquishing itself, and remains the subject of the substance; but as being likewise *self-relinquished*, it has at the same time the consciousness of this substance (i.e. “the Being which was substance”). In other words, since by thus offering itself up, it produces substance as subject, this subject remains its own very self. If, then, taking the two propositions, in the first the subject merely disappears in substantiality, and in the second the substance is merely a predicate, and both sides are thus present in each with contrary inequality of value – the result hereby effected is that the union and transfusion of both natures [subject and substance] become apparent. In this union both, with equal value and worth, are at once essential and also merely moments. Hence it is that spirit is equally conscious of itself as *objective* substance, as well as simple self-contained self-consciousness. (p. 751, first parenthesis added).

In other words, in being God I do not reduce God, as if I could, bringing him down from heaven, so to say, but am taken up into the divine, as it were prolonging the first movement of incarnation. The explanation, that is, will transcend the moment of “efficient causality” prominent in Aquinas’s account even though he nowhere shows how such efficient causality, of our salvation and/or reception of grace, operates therefrom thus efficiently.<sup>35</sup> In short, God incarnates himself, “not by conversion of the godhead into flesh but by the taking of the manhood into God” (*Athanasian Creed*, version c. ninth century). This act, moreover, as Hegel’s whole account is set to emphasise, cannot, as divine, take place temporally, as if by some change in God, but is the eternal truth of what is, ultimately, our self-consciousness, again, but not by reduction of or to this latter, which is rather identified as

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<sup>35</sup> I refer again to the article by Reynolds in *Contemplating Aquinas* (ed. Fergus Kerr, OP), SCM Press, London, 2003; UND Press USA, 2006.

the act of acts whereby the divine is seen to be not ideal but actual. This will involve him in a kind of philosophical critique of the “religious” account of the *kenosis* all the same involved, so to say eternally, as a divine self-humbling, the Pauline *picture*.

Spirit, here, has in it two sides, which are above represented as the two converse propositions: one is this, that substance empties itself of itself, and becomes self-consciousness; the other is the converse, that self-consciousness empties itself of itself and makes itself into the form of “thing”, or makes itself universal self. Both sides have in this way met each other, and, in consequence, their true union has arisen. The relinquishment or “kenosis” on the part of the substance, its becoming self-consciousness, expresses the transition into the opposite, the unconscious transition of necessity, in other words, that it is *implicitly* self-consciousness. Conversely, the emptying of self-consciousness expresses this, that implicitly it is Universal Being, or – because the self is pure self-existence, which is at home with itself in its opposite – that the substance is self-consciousness explicitly *for the self*, and, just on that account, is spirit. Of this spirit, which has left the form of substance behind, and enters existence in the shape of self-consciousness, we may say, therefore – if we wish to use terms drawn from the process of natural generation – that it has a real mother but a potential or an implicit father. For actual reality, or self-consciousness, and implicit being in the sense of substance are its two moments; and by the reciprocity of their kenosis, each relinquishing or “emptying” itself of itself and becoming the other, spirit thus comes into existence as their unity. (pp. 755-756)

Hegel here as it were coyly refers to the tradition of the “virgin birth” of Christ, declared by most theologians, whether or in what way we believe it or not, not to be necessary for the concept, which will be the reality, of the God-man as in the Chalcedonian definition of two natures. Here, at the same time, though, these two natures correspond to the self-emptying substance and the self-emptying divine consciousness in one, but now, rather, as two *moments* of spirit. Implied, though, is that this was always, is ever, the case, i.e. it is an interpretation, of Chalcedon for example, meant as saying *it* better. It means though that the man emptying his substance (“I do always those things which please him”) is also and equally divine. He *would* also be so, however, as the one designated mediator and nothing else. Everything he will do is mediation, the Scriptural “sanctification”, or nothing is. For we are not and could not be speaking of a man who came from somewhere else and happening to be equal to this super-human task of reconciliation, sanctification indeed, whether he be “born of a virgin” or not. He convinces by his quality as of one “graced” from the beginning, or gracing himself as one might also say. But then he is more than graced, he just is “the Word made flesh”.

This attending of the new birth “of spirit as it becomes self-consciousness”, the “birth-place” even, by “an expectant and eager throng”, embodying the “hopes and expectations of previous ages”, seems *necessarily* to result from a decay of “the religion of art” in, firstly, the ancient world, in the transition from Greek to Roman life, the latter identified with the abstractly empty consciousness of despair in Stoicism. It seems also, however, to be a constant in repetition of the movement of spirit. Thus the lament of Hölderlin as applied to Hegel’s own time, the very words and phrases of his poem, are used here for the ancient parallel. By this Hegel’s philosophy too would in some sense correspond to the incarnation itself, as similarly prefaced, we have just noted, nearly two millennia before. It is thus interestingly suggestive when a modern Hegelian, G. Rinaldi, in his *The Philosophy of Art*<sup>36</sup>, speaks similarly of a decay of art in some sense necessary in just our own time, after, now, that same period, which we now tend to see as roughly contemporary with Hegel, namely that great “Romantic” (Rinaldi’s term) flourishing of art, typified, for Rinaldi, in Beethoven and Wagner or, I would myself add, Bruckner. This too, he finds, has admitted of no further comparable development in this our age of great works of spirit concerning Hegel and philosophical thought generally, leaving us with only plucked fruits from the tree of integrated spiritual life. The “religion of art”, that is to say, enjoys select periods of flourishing on the threshold of a new general lease of spirit succeeding them, just as Hegel also sees in the period of religious painting, i.e. art, at the Renaissance, that time, as presaging or, rather, being a decay of *religion* as here so to say “recalled” *as past* in art, up into the Enlightenment thus prepared. Although, that is, art, maybe a movement in self-emptying indeed, is born to die, ourselves retaining but the kindly remembrance of that with which we can no longer identify, yet religion too, as phenomenon, shows traces of the same process, after first sinking back into merely representational art, no longer “used” in active liturgy, for example, as were and are the icons of old. In the main, however, an efflorescence of art is there to usher in a new age, its lineaments being first indicated by this efflorescence as its sign. In this sense we are ourselves post-Romantic, i.e. a type, or antitype, of the romantic, as the latter is proto-type of the former. One might apply this to the incarnation, the mutual self-emptying, *kenosis*, of man and God again, just that in which they are “oned”, i.e. in one person, where first the full stature of God is shown, therefore, just by *his* becoming an object for sense, but during a short if privileged time, after which will follow a time of consolidation and expectancy, yet to end, but, as Hegel shows in detail,

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<sup>36</sup> G. Rinaldi, *The Philosophy of Art*, Whitelocke Publications, Oxford 2020, forthcoming (cited above). I cite here from the author’s “abstract”.

necessary for the full apprehension of what preceded. He will remove himself from us as he removed himself from “heaven”, without leaving either heaven or us, however. “If I go not away the spirit will not, cannot, come unto you”. Conversely, as Hegel puts it, death “is the entry into spirit”, for us as for him (the going away is inseparable from this death, its true form in fact<sup>37</sup>). The fruit plucked for us from the tree by the kindly maiden is more essential for us than the revelational, even happy time it recalls. Otherwise why does Hegel think that she bothers, one might ask? So the Roman, unhappily Stoical period, in all its ambiguity of abstractly civic achievement and failure, appears as necessary mediation of incarnation *after* the great Greek achievement. In principle, then, one might continue the analysis on this pattern into the Christian future beyond the end of the whole Constantinian age preceding just our own time (e.g. at Vatican Council II, 1962-1964), although the lineaments of such an ordered analysis, the materials for it, are found in scattered fashion throughout Hegel’s book, beginning with “the unhappy consciousness” as, for him, characterising, rather onesidedly, the “age of faith” we rather onesidedly call “medieval”, back in Chapter IV since it is not there cast under the rubric of religion as such, is in fact applicable beyond the particular history of Western civilisation which Hegel takes as model for his analyses.

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Spirit, then, “comes into existence” precisely as the unity of the two moments of self-consciousness and substance, this, self-consciousness and the “implicit being” of substance, in the reciprocal *kenosis* he has described. This is truly *existence*, Hegel states, even this, though, a term not exempt from question. In Hegel’s logic, accordingly, it is a finite category within the “middle” section of “the doctrine of essence”.

Insofar as self-consciousness, in a one-sided way, grasps only its *own* relinquishment, although its object is thus for it at once both existence and self and it knows all existence to be spiritual in nature, yet true spirit has not become thereby objective for it. (p. 756)

It is required that “being in general or substance”, from *its* side, should “be also emptied of itself and become self-consciousness”, despite the unity of

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<sup>37</sup> Cp. the dying Thérèse’s word to her sisters: “Death is the separation of soul from body and that is all it is”, i.e. not the horrors we imagine out of our misplaced sympathy for the flesh, she would imply to them. Yet Jesus sweats blood in anticipation all the same.

existence mentioned above. There is a clear distinction between existence and such being *as* substance (i.e. not as being *qua* being, in Aristotle's phrase). But this would be to make, to generate, spiritual reality "merely from the standpoint of consciousness", leaving spirit with "merely a fictitious or imaginary existence". "This imagination is fantastic extravagance of mind", reducing the self-consciousness, the knowledge even, manifested in past periods of human development to something equivocal, unreal as we say. Such an attitude is "a crazy contortion of consciousness". Could we possibly be guilty of it, one has to ask oneself? Could Hegel be, has he been, for all his protest here, thus guilty?

Charles Taylor, for one, finds difficulty here. But it comes down to this: if it be granted that absolute idealism, whether or not systematically self-conscious as here, is the only consistent posture for the religious mind, viz. in poetic form, that "in God we live and move and have our being", then if we posit incarnation of the divinity it must be possible to show it as consistent with the thesis of absolute idealism. If this cannot be shown, or if it cannot be denied that it is not thus consistent, then either absolute idealism or incarnation must be dropped. The latter is impossible for Christians. Can this mean that they must then deny absolute idealism, as in fact many theologians seem to feel bound to do, for example Küng, Lonergan and even Rahner. Küng wants to make, surely absurdly, *historicity* one of the "transcendental predicates", along with unity, being, truth and goodness, whatever he can mean by that exactly. Or should one rather ask what he means by historicity, which certainly the absolute idealist does not deny simply? It has simply to take its place among all our finite representations or appearances, of which indeed it is the merely collective name. The theologians take scandal there, wishing to affirm that Christ's humanity is or was real and not mere appearance. They fail to notice that where such a doctrine has been found heretical it is because, as in the early Docetism, this is by contrast with a more real humanity attributable to all other men, with whom Christ would in consequence not be numbered. But if all men are as such appearances this does not apply. Christ, we must then say, appeared as an appearance, having that life which, Hegel says, "is only the Idea immediate". The theological point, rather, has to be that Christ was "like us", however we are, real or unreal or something else. These reflections are closely related to our thoughts on "the immaculate conception" above, relating it, indeed, to the Absolute Idea or Concept.

Taylor, anyhow, seems to fail to conceive of this solution, a failure indeed generating the problem to be "solved", so that he is not, therefore, really entering into the religious mentality he means to find lacking or overcome in Hegel. He speaks well of "the ongoing cult of the whole people" as a

“two-way convergence” in sacrifice, again, where finite and infinite mutually surrender their particularity<sup>38</sup>, tracing from this the development, *via* staged tragedy, to “a universal subjectivity” (“general” might have been a better term) where “the old gods have lost their numinosity”, nature is “reduced” and the pieties are in general “seen through” by those who become leaders of what is now a mere mob, this process transforming or deforming civic life. All this is exactly as Hegel describes.

The religion of art thus ends in the triumph of the self-conscious whose certainty of self makes it master of all it surveys; all universality returns to it, and it recognises no essence outside itself.

Hegel recognises truth in this, however, and in a sense turns it round. It had of necessity to be, this unhappy self-consciousness, desiring salvation if at all “from afar” (p. 207). To “rediscover a cosmic spirit”, however, Taylor sees Hegel as presenting the effort for this only from man’s side, as himself embodying “the cosmic spirit”.

The ultimate self-understanding of *Geist* will come in a community which fully understands itself as his vehicle. ... It is unclear whether Hegel believed that such a human community based on the total clarity of speculative thought would ever come to be ...

Now I would maintain that it is not our brief to decide upon what Hegel or ourselves *believed* or believe at some or other particular time, if only because the answer is unknowable and not merely “unclear”. Hence as a question it lies outside the Concept. Revealed religion, Christianity, “reflects these basic truths” in unclear or representational form, Taylor states as Hegel’s view, rightly enough. God, Taylor affirms, “must live his life through men”. Here Taylor makes of man a necessary being, unlike Hegel, who identifies divinity with self-consciousness, as of the one, in Augustine’s words, closer than self to self, closer than man to man, as we might put it. “Put not your trust in man, nor in any child of man”, reads the Psalm. The difference may seem over-refined, however, as if a difference in sameness, as we find, again, in Hegel. Such a man, in fact, has a divine life and, true, there is necessity in this, but from the notion’s, from God’s side.

Yet Taylor says rightly that *this point* “could only be made by the appearance of a real God-man”. He makes of this, though, a concession to

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<sup>38</sup> Charles Taylor, *Hegel*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1975, p. 204.



how men “then were”, whereas “In the fullness of speculative thought we can now grasp the truth that God is identical with each man”. This is at best extremely clumsy. God, and it is Hegel’s view, becomes thus identical through the real activity and destiny of one actual mediator, in whom we live as he lives in us, if we be granted that grace, though there are various forms and stages of this divine indwelling, whether purely naturally or in friendship, for example, not as servants but as sons, as is said right from the beginning. Of course there is an element of representation in any attempt to express this, just as there is, however, in what Taylor brings forth. He speaks, even, of “the singleness of the divine subjectivity” being “represented in the uniqueness of the Son of God”. Why should he not really be unique, as the Idea itself is unique and hence the most universal?

At the same time, though, it is true that God does not actually become, the dialectical becoming shows forth what he, the Absolute Idea reached at the end of the logical process, ever, as absolute, is. In this sense the so-called “work” of Christ is trans-historical and just therein the mystery of faith. He and his suffering, or joy, and death, or life, are themselves revelation itself, Hegel says, just as is God himself. In liturgy this is put as manifestation of divine glory, or epiphany, the feast following upon as interpreting that of the Nativity or Christmas. In this perspective he is put as “the lamb slain from before the foundation of the world”.

Taylor refers to “Hegel’s claim that something really happened, that substance itself became self-consciousness”. Yet he himself rationalises away this real happening as men “reaching a certain stage of maturity”. The question, though, is what was that stage? Scotus, for example, declared the incarnation necessary, once given man, “fallen” or not. But that doesn’t mean, nonsensically, that the incarnation was the same as what it was *for*. Given Christ, simply, man can no longer, or simply not, be thought on his own, in abstract separation from divine Thought itself. Man is because he thinks, this being Hegel’s “true reason-world”. The something that “really happened”, as we see things, cannot then be equated with some change in God. To that extent there is a certain misperception in us before or until we learn to see, not merely substance and subject in the eternal give and take of mutual self-emptying, in Christ, but this dance, as it might be represented as, e.g. by Dante, as the perfection precisely of movement’s imperfection in one and the same truth, to say no more for now.

Taylor finds it “hard to credit”, accordingly, that Hegel is talking of “the perception that this man, Jesus, was God”. We have of course to be careful to grasp the exact sense in which Hegel does so speak, not blankly deny the possibility. It is in fact an entirely orthodox sense, given compatibility of absolute idealism with orthodoxy. On this view, of course, all history, even

our own, is representation in some sense, and one can even question the reality of events as of time itself, as is recorded of Jesus, or St. Teresa, saying that we must hate our lives in this world, where we stand in need of “transfiguration”. Taylor seems sure that Hegel “did not even believe in the incarnation in the ordinary sense, since ultimately Jesus is not God in any sense in which other men are not”. We need simply substitute “vulgar” for “ordinary” here, meaning by contrast that he had a *theologically grounded* belief, one for example free from popular “tritheism” or, for that matter, monophysitism or Nestorianism. As for the “not God in any sense”, nothing in Hegel’s account denies that “we (i.e. ‘other men’) love him *because* he loved us”, representation though this be, as are love, truth and goodness themselves, ultimately, for Hegel as for Aquinas, who calls them rather “beings of reason”, as contrasted with being itself, the ultimate transcendental<sup>39</sup>, which in Hegel is identified with the Absolute Idea or, rather, the Absolute Idea with it<sup>40</sup>. Regarding Jesus, then, as identified by Hegel as the necessarily concrete mediator, distinguished from the “expectant and eager throng” round his “birthplace”, we certainly have a sense for his unique divinity, identified though, however closely, with his action, that of the Concept, indeed, by his gift, as religion without falsity represents it, we share in it, in the Concept. Gift, all the same, is a concept taken from finite human life. What it represents is the full extent of self-consciousness as eternally self-determined in the perfect unity wherein no one “member”, say rather moment, has being or sense apart from unity in identity with all otherness, with, primarily therefore, as we must say, *the* others. This is what both Taylor and I are trying to catch or get hold of, necessary as it is to think it. In this sense we have not yet, to use the metaphor of time, become what we are. It is shown forth, however, in the communion, at once the communal sacrifice (however we interpret this term: Taylor gives quite a good account of it in the context of the Greek “religion of art”), as taught in religion, of the in whatever degree believing

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<sup>39</sup> Cf. Aquinas, *QD de potentia* (Disputed Questions on Potentiality), VII, which discusses transcendental predication or the “transcendental predicates”, e.g. being, one, true, good.

<sup>40</sup> *So ist denn auch die Logik in der absoluten Idee zu dieser einfachen Einheit zurückgegangen, welche ihr Anfang ist; die reine Unmittelbarkeit des Seins, in dem zuerst alle Bestimmung als ausgelöscht oder durch die Abstraktion weggelassen erscheint, ist die durch die Vermittlung, nämlich die Aufhebung der Vermittlung zu ihrer entsprechenden Gleichheit mit sich gekommene Idee. Die Methode ist die reine Begriff, der sich zu sich selbst verhält; sie ist daher die einfache Beziehung auf sich, welche Sein ist. Aber es ist nun auch erfülltes Sein, der sich begreifende Begriff, das Sein als die konkrete, ebenso schlechthin intensive Totalität.* (Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik II*, Werke 6, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt-am-Main 1969, p. 572)

community, whether this be narrowly referred to the eucharist or Mass or to our common life together.

So no, we should not “recall Hegel’s early writings on Jesus”, whatever they were. In general one might say that if Hegel were found not to be orthodox he would lack all interest or topicality as a theologian. The way would be open for the Marxist materialist interpretation or similar. And here we may leave Taylor’s in many ways helpful and insightful text, but not in this way as cited here. Earlier Taylor had said that “Hegel insists on the reality of the incarnation as an historic event, and distinguishes it from the various mystery religions which merely *imagined* the presence of spirit in the world”, as we saw. He had no need to have gone back on this. Hegel calls this “crazy” or “contorted” (*Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 756).

In general, spiritual writers such as St. John of the Cross discourage any picturing meditation upon the humanity of Christ beyond a certain point. We should “interpret spiritual things spiritually” (St. Paul), just as we can extend *ad lib.* the idea of things “happening in a figure”. Figure, namely, is where happening belongs. This is what Taylor, it seems to me, does not conceive. To see it one has first to conceive of God as God, the divine and absolute, the Idea even.

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Understandably, Taylor does not pursue his study of Hegel on the incarnation in much further expounding of this account of it here in *The Phenomenology of Mind*, since it is all on pages 210 to 213 of his book, as concluding his Chapter VII, “The Road to Manifest Religion”. Rather, he returns later to religion as it is treated of in the *Encyclopaedia*. Hegel’s account here, we know, was written under difficult circumstances, including a pressure of time. But nowhere else is incarnation as such so directly treated and that is our subject here. Hegel continues (p. 756 of the *Phenomenology*):

If then this meaning of the objective is not to be bare fancy and imagination, it must be inherent and essential (*an sich*), i.e. must in the first place arise in consciousness as springing from the very notion, and must come forth in its necessity. It is thus that self-knowing spirit has arisen; it has arisen through the knowledge of immediate consciousness, i.e. of consciousness of the existing object, by means of its necessary process. This notion, which, being immediate, had also, for its consciousness, the shape of immediacy, has, in the second place, taken on the form of self-consciousness essentially and inherently, i.e. by just the same necessity of the notion by which being or immediacy, the abstract object of self-consciousness, renounces itself and becomes, for consciousness, ego. (pp. 756-7)

We see here that what Hegel objects to in Neo-Platonism is precisely its esoteric character, its claim to “an inner, esoteric meaning”. Nor does this contradict his later claim that philosophy as such is esoteric as compared with religion (*Enc.* III). By a necessity of the notion this notion itself becomes, in the course of maturation, self-consciousness and this is in principle exoteric, one form of it only, though maybe the best or “right” one, being the Augustinian realisation of the “one closer than self”. By contrast the formalisation of this process, in philosophical terms particularly, or in mystical or psychological literature generally, is esoteric, as he claims in the later text, as within the reach of a few. Thus Neo-Platonism appears to deny this self-consciousness as the natural fulfilment or development of, say, a human or conscious life. It makes of religion itself, which is “for all men”, Hegel explicitly states, something esoteric.

One can of course hesitate here, wonder whether philosophy cannot be thought of, at least as *sophia*, since this is an intellectual *virtue*, in the sense of St. Thomas, as “understanding spiritual things spiritually”, as by a certain connaturality with them such as is not yet found in the virtue of *scientia*. Be that as it may, Hegel parallels philosophy with mysticism and there is a majority school of thought among theologians that sees the mystical way, whether ascetical or affirmative or both on different occasions, as the call to and fulfilment for all, for all Christians it is usually said and maybe that is where we need a term similar to Rahner’s “anonymous Christians”. Yet not all Christians, St. Thomas at least seems to teach, are called to the “contemplative life” externally viewed, typically entered upon by “entering” a monastery or, the term’s technical sense, entering upon “the religious life”. Despite this variability of the terms used the thought stands out clearly. All have to develop their *sophia* if the intellectual virtues are truly such, virtues, one of which cannot be had without having all. In support of this, in the “table” of virtues prudence is put now as a moral or cardinal virtue, now as an intellectual virtue. The two lists are not abstractly distinguished. Yet one can and must still maintain that philosophy carries with it its own special training, professional in the sense at least of religious profession or similar to that more than to having a job, or position rather, at a university. Here again it is the traditional teaching that spiritual services, such as teaching, cannot in justice be paid for, though the communicator may need his *honorarium*. Marx is inexact obliterating the distinction between this and servile labour, though the latter indeed has its own dignity, “he who sweeps a room as for thy laws” practising, ideally, high contemplation.

The view that contemplation, the mystic way, is for all in principle finds its justification in the thesis or doctrine of the gifts of the Spirit, traditionally seven and given to all, in baptism as concluded in “confirmation” in

traditional sacramentalism, both of which, it is now fully realised, can be “of desire” as universal moments in spiritual life. One has to wonder how, or if at all, the ever wider application of this insight will affect the central position of the sacraments of the Christian Church, members of which are the chief promoters of these theories. That they too will need to be gone beyond is suggested by Augustine’s inability to find anything “saving” for unbaptised babies. Something may just be “dropped”, as limbo, the doctrine or fable, has been dropped, by those put “in charge”, whether it be they or we or both sets indifferently, clergy and “laity”, who believe that. That there are no laity, though, the insight, is another facet of the same general doctrinal or spiritual movement, not without some slight parallels to the rise of Absolute Idealism in philosophy. We may be laity in the *represented* world of life, which is “only the Idea immediate” but in spirit, McTaggart’s heaven, we are all priests, having been made to be that by incarnation of spirit in one concrete man and all that follows from that. Why not a woman, some ask? Firstly, since “in Christ is neither male nor female”. It doesn’t matter that “he” was a man, that he thus *has* lived as participating in “our” immediacy. Or, he is, so to say, his own bride. The maternal element tends in religion to be reserved to the figure of his mother Mary, also finally “the immaculate conception (we have been suggesting), yet there are passages, in *Isaiah*, attributing it to God, as Christ himself compares himself shamelessly to a hen sheltering her chicks, if they would but permit. Today, similarly, it has become the fashion to assert that the Holy Spirit “is a woman”. Well, she just isn’t.

So much, then, for the two senses of “esoteric”, differing in their sameness, they too. Hegel moves on, interprets rather. The passage quoted above continues:

... Ego. The immediate entity (*Ansich*), or [objectively] *existent* necessity, is, however, different from the [subjective] thinking entity, or the *knowledge* of necessity – a distinction which, at the same time, does not lie outside the notion, for the simple unity of the notion is itself immediate being. (p. 757)

This is what the “crazy contortion” he condemns does not distinguish. Thus it fails to achieve absolute or *esoteric* knowledge. This can be said without commitment to the traditional view that “few will be saved”. We have, though, to enter by the narrow gate, or upon the narrow road, one by one, and that is aristocratic in the sense of choosing the best, even if all in the end should do it. The distinction, then, parallels that between being evil and knowing evil, as God must do and which, Hegel claims, does all the same mean that “there is evil in God”, notionally considered. It also parallels the distinction between consciousness and self-consciousness, which effectively

cancels consciousness (of the subject) altogether, and yet it is the life of God. Hence Hegel says, flatly, that death is entry into spirit, “separation from the body” in traditional terms, not necessarily “dualist”. It is only so, that is, if we are persisting in regarding “the body” as something more than representation (of spirit).

Hence, to swing round, “the notion has itself the shape of immediacy, is existent necessity, is ... different from the [subjective] thinking entity, or the *knowledge* of necessity”, again. It is what acts “in” us. Yet this distinction is itself *within* the notion, “the simple unity of the notion is itself immediate being” or the Absolute Idea of and in necessity, as what is natural to it in its infinity. It is, as incarnation expresses or embodies, “what empties or relinquishes itself”, of necessity again, as it perfectly comprehends. In fact the comprehension is and has to be the relinquishment. The latter is not really then that extra act of self-emptying, contrasting so with his divinity, on the part of the man Jesus, highly exalted as he eternally is, under the name which is “above all names”, i.e. itself unnameable; unnameability is, we have to say, his name, or how we may refer truly to him, who is, Hegel states, “the concrete actual world-spirit” thus *first* knowing itself in taking on “the form of self-consciousness”, something human. This “first”, in the infinite or ever actual, cannot then truly be “first” as if *after* some more original foundation in being, or only “then” first (*dann erst*) in a quasi-temporal sense. It, he, absolute spirit, is rather his or its first or fundamental *truth*, which is not merely a truth “about” him. This is what is meant by Hegel’s assertion, even with a bit of deliberate *Vorstellung*, that “Absolute Spirit has taken on the shape of self-consciousness *inherently*” (emphasis added), this that “*appears* now as the belief of the world” (emphasis added). It is actually “inherent”, any such taking on being inseparable from The Idea as a whole in its being. It is just *our* maybe not knowing about it that makes it separate, a “free” work of God, as if in a *libertas indifferentiae*. Hence it is just in his speaking of “the belief of the world”, or in relation to the religious *representation*, that Hegel speaks in this way of the “first then”. That God actually comes, as we do, “in the flesh”, yet the flesh itself, Christ’s or ours, since “all flesh is as grass”, belongs to “the things which are seen” in St. Paul’s words, while it is “the things which are not seen” that are eternal, as is that “body of Christ” which “became”, again, “a living spirit” or that which it ever is and was. So, in the fourth Gospel, “Before Abraham was, I am”. Philosophy here endorses this as under the *Notion*, the absolute idea of the mediator, unique as actual and actualising. For the notion has also “the shape of immediacy”, is not itself mediated. Here too would belong McTaggart’s stress upon the unreality, as *Vorstellung*, of

time, which he accordingly set out to refute<sup>41</sup>. It is, that is to say, in entire accord with Hegel's own perhaps more tortuous presentation.

That Absolute Spirit has taken on the shape of self-consciousness inherently, and even therefore consciously to itself – this appears now as the belief of the world, the belief that spirit exists *in fact* as a definite self-consciousness, i.e. as an actual human being; that spirit is an object for immediate experience; that the believing mind *sees, feels and hears* this divinity. Taken thus it is not imagination, not a fancy; it is actual in the believer. Consciousness in that case does not set out from its own inner life, does not start from thought, and in itself combines the thought of God with existence; rather it sets out from immediate present existence and recognises God in it. (757-758)

For, in fact, “The moment of immediate existence is present in the content of the notion”. As self-consciousness “its object is thus for it at once both existence and self” without existence and “true spirit” having to “become thereby objective for it” (p. 756). Its object, one might say, is truly itself as subject, this being the nature of spirit, knowing or, as thought, “thinking” only itself. What this means is that thought, in particular Hegel's thought here, comes to a point where the categories of subject and object are transcended, as they are in the Logic. So given that they are “sublated”, as the German term has it (*aufgehoben*), yet they are at the same time *cancelled* (and this is in fact included in the meaning of *aufgehoben*, as Hegel points out) as a contrasted pair. This point may be regarded, as death is regarded, Hegel says, as “entry into spirit”, though there are probably a series of entries, like the successive differently coloured chambers in Poe's gloomy tale, merely succeeding upon at least the serial structure of Dante's great poem in this, however. Philosophy, though, is indeed an *athanatizein*, as Aristotle put it (in *On the Parts of Animals*), yet, I would confirm, cheerful in great measure, since, as he adds, “a little of this is worth more than all the rest”. In all this, though, it is true spirit that empties itself into self-

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<sup>41</sup> J.M.E. McTaggart, “A Refutation of Time”, *Mind* 1905; cf. Michael Dummett, “A Defence of McTaggart's Proof of the Unreality of Time”, in *Philosophical Review*, vol. 69, cited by P.T. Geach, in his book on McTaggart, if in the end sceptically. He writes: “So even if McTaggart's arguments against the reality of time appeared conclusive, even then, since by his own pattern of reasoning we can construct *what appear to be* equally conclusive arguments that the unreality of time leads to contradiction too, we had better stay with the common-sense view” (*Truth, Love and Immortality*, London 1979, p. 103). This illustrates the finitude, the lopsidedness, so to say, so to say, of Geach's project of presenting McTaggart's thought in abstraction from its Hegelian roots, perhaps influenced by McTaggart's own attempts to start again from scratch with his *The Nature of Existence* of 1927.

consciousness and not only the latter that does so with its one-sidedly subjective “standpoint”.

Pure self-consciousness, namely, can only “make itself universal self” subjectively. It could never be efficient cause of this in reality, so as to “save” humankind for example (and this was Philip Reynolds’ point about “atonement theory” or the “purchase” of grace, we noted above). The self-emptying, *kenosis*, is essentially, that is notionally, mutual and thus it must be thought, as it were, vibrantly. Hegel’s model is indeed music, which only confers rest by more or another “movement”.

In short, we do not uncover or discover this, which is “Absolute Being *qua* spirit”, *Geist*, “if consciousness does not know the object as itself” (p. 759). The “object is in the form of self”. “If I did not exist, God would not exist” (Eckhart), that is what it comes down to, but the God who thus exists, is known, is such that if he, God. “did not exist I would not exist”. There we have the movement, the to and fro, the self-contradictory subject-predicate relation of identity in difference, presaging the unity in identity of matter and form, “anything or everything”<sup>42</sup> able to signify now, *quasi materialiter*, Aquinas explains, as subject, now *quasi formaliter*, whether or not it is a form, an alternative not anyhow applicable to a term used as term, whether or not the term “term” signifies or (materially) “is a form”. Rather, when put as a predicate, the individual signifies *quasi* formally, this being the basis for Hegel’s further conclusion, in the course of logic’s unfolding, of course “speculatively”, that Matter and Form are as such or categorially the same, are one, in the Idea finally. It is the shortcoming of Frege, under some interpretations at least, to have ignored the *quasi* as guaranteeing the freedom of knowledge, binding mind to nothing, or we must stipulate that he should not be read as saying that an individual cannot be a or the predicate.

Hence logic is always concerned with thought and not, firstly, with what it is or might be correct to say. The latter view quite misses the notion of *form* it takes as supporting what it calls formal logic. In fact the logical, thought, cannot be subjected to forms external to it or, to put it another way, linking up with self-consciousness in a way having nothing to do with what is dismissed as psychologism, one has to see it for oneself before proceeding, in a non-negotiable self-consciousness. Thought is its own form. Nor is this a matter of “styles of thought”. There can be no such thing. Thought, active, the Idea, is the true being and that alone is logical method as Hegel expounds it. The method is just this self-thinking body of truth, not

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. Henry Veatch, “St. Thomas’s Doctrine of Subject and Predicate”, in *St. Thomas Aquinas (1274-1974), Commemorative Studies, Vol. II*, PIMS, Toronto 1974.



something to be applied, to what? It reaches its end within itself, as what equally begins the whole process.

But one has just to *see through, absorb, sublimate*, these various predications:

The Subject itself, and consequently this pure universal (just mentioned in this text) too, is, however, revealed as self; for this self is just this inner being reflected into itself, the inner being which is immediately given and is the proper certainty of that self, for which it is given. To be in its notion that which reveals and is revealed – this is, then, the true shape of spirit; and moreover this shape, its notion, is alone its very essence and its substance. Spirit is known as self-consciousness, and to this self-consciousness it is directly revealed, for it is this self-consciousness itself. The divine nature is the same as the human, and it is this unity which is intuitively apprehended (*angeschaut*).<sup>43</sup>

That is, this unity, of the divine and the human, is apprehended whether we know it or not, whether we formally express it or not, whether we think it in those terms or not. It is not as important as, say, C.S. Lewis thought, whether we speak of God or of the life-force or of, indeed, Absolute Spirit. “Deliver me from speaking too much of God”, prayed Eckhart, of course to God. Some deference to religion, in piety, there should be. Or, rather, it should be maintained at maximum level, “religion and nothing but religion” being “the business of philosophy”, in Hegel’s words. Yet in the end it is philosophy itself that is the *höchste Gottesdienst*, in sober truth, St. Paul’s “wisdom from above”, while “from below” there could only be a pseudo-wisdom, such as Kant’s dogmatic empiricism perhaps, “more of a phenomenologist than a philosopher”, as Hegel said of him<sup>44</sup>. Hence to read or write philosophy is to enter in on a period of “spiritual reading” or *lectio divina*. Once accustomed to this one recognises its traces in mystical texts generally, including the Biblical, just as one finds philosophy re-tracing the lines of just these texts, often enough, even while, it may be, steering clear of using the term “God”, as Hegel himself recommends but does not keep to. Hegel goes further:

Here, then, we find as a fact consciousness, or the general form in which Being is aware of Being – the shape which Being adopts – to be identical with its self-consciousness. This shape is itself a self-consciousness; it is thus at the

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<sup>43</sup> Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind* (tr. Baillie, 1966 edn.), pp. 759-760.

<sup>44</sup> To fully appreciate Hegel’s estimate of Kant in its full negativity the primary need is to have read over or to recall periodically the section “The Critical Philosophy” in Hegel’s *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, paragraphs 40 to 60.

same time an existent object; and this existence possesses equally directly the significance of pure thought, of Absolute Being. (*Ibid.* p. 760)

I am, that is to say, at home in the wardrobe of God's essentials, where each is equally the wardrobe itself. The puzzle as to my own existence and the why thereof thus evaporates, That is its answer. In this way indeed the least is the greatest, the last first, and a thousand years infinitely less than a day.

The absolute Being existing as a concrete actual self-consciousness seems to have descended from its eternal pure simplicity; but in fact it has, in so doing, attained for the first time its highest nature, its supreme reach of being. For only when the notion of Being has reached its simple purity of nature, is it *both* the absolute abstraction which is pure thought and hence the pure singleness of self, *and* immediacy or objective being, on account of its simplicity. (*Ibid.* p. 760)

This "first time" is of course eternity, ever "in act", here supremely *revealed* as thought in singleness of self, as I, as only thus actual. This immediacy to and in self, as reached at the end of the Logic, is "objective Being", if one so will. Here then, or therefore, alone is man "first" revealed to himself. *Ecce homo*. Such is Hegel's philosophical claim. It can only stand if the fulness of "the whole Christ", in the words of the theologian Mersch, be admitted. "Now you are the body of Christ" (St. Paul). *Sumit unus sumit mille*, "where one receives a thousand receive" (Aquinas, on *Corpus Christi*, the then newly established Church "feast"), *mille* standing for the totality of those "members one of another", *in*, i.e. one with, the Mediator as *he* is, has to be, in or one with them, as it were "the angelic (here human) host" in "singleness of self", whether one or a thousand "a matter of indifference" (cp. p. 771).<sup>45</sup> In this sense the mediator's *life* is laid down *for his* friends, i.e. this is the meaning, the wisdom, *sophia*, of the religious representation, this in the sense at least that life as such is a representation, is "only "the idea immediate", as one's own to be "hated" as a condition for coming to the truth or, in representation *thereof* again, for being his "disciple", whose "truth shall make you free". The expression thereof, among the finite "members", as bringing to a head or close "the religion of art", is mutual forgiveness, again, finally, however, a representation as belonging to the *phenomenology* of mind, of the idea knowing only itself. Not to forgive is to fall, subjectively, away from being, then, not to be, *therefore*, object, not

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<sup>45</sup> I cannot but recall to myself or to the reader here my earlier reflections upon "the immaculate conception" as a phrase applied by a personal being (thus appearing, whether truly or not is not the question here) to herself.

to have that final object which is self or subject, again, or to lose the mutuality in unity delineated by McTaggart as well as by anyone else.

This, the unity in simplicity, relates immediately to “what is called sense-consciousness”, “just this pure abstraction” comments Hegel, the “this” referring back to the just mentioned “simplicity” or “pure singleness of self” or the “I in them and they in me”, at once unique and, *in* that simplicity and singleness, which is of the Idea as Act, universal, not by mere efficient causality, however since the Idea itself or as such is “realised End” itself effected, beyond End therefore as it is beyond Necessity or any other such abstraction or “category”. Likewise, sense-consciousness is “this kind of thought for which being is the immediate”, *reines Denken ... für welches das Seyn, das Unmittelbare ist.* – i.e. such consciousness is *the* immediate, nothing in the original corresponding, explicitly at least, to the translator’s mere “kind of”. Sense-consciousness is pure thought, Hegel says.

The lowest is thus at the same time the highest; the revealed which has come forth entirely to the surface is just therein the deepest reality. That the Supreme Being is seen, heard, etc., as an existent self-consciousness, - this is, in very truth, the culmination and consummation of its notion. And through this consummation, the Divine Being is given and exists immediately in its character as Divine Being. (p. 760)

One might think to have here the kernel of Hegel’s logic-constituted philosophy of history, ancestor after all said and done of the Marxist “iron laws” of matter. For Hegel, however, “This immediacy means not only an existent self-consciousness (just so far it goes already beyond Marxist theory), but also the purely thought-constituted or Absolute Being; and these meanings are inseparable” (parenthesis added). “What we [the philosophers] are conscious of in our conception – that objective being is ultimate essence, - is the same as what that religious consciousness is aware of”. Hegel has just said that such immediate consciousness of existence is itself “religious consciousness”, as naturally evoking awe, for instance at least. The materialist absolute is counterfeit, if made dependent upon this “at least”. Matter, by Hegel’s logic, is subsumed into form, as subject into predicate. And yet the world is God’s so to say immediate idea. The false, that is, mirrors the true, as against “Frege’s logical Manicheism” (Peter Geach’s characterisation), while horrors have been perpetrated in the names of both, i.e. of the false named as the true and of the true itself but on this point falsely taken, again, here giving us also identity in difference, as, Hegel will go on to imply, outrageously though it might seem, of Satan and Christ, of “the prince of this world” as declared by the self-declared King “not of this world”, calling for the “faith which overcomes the world”

precisely as rational or “notional” principle, Hegel will endorse. Faith, the “theological” virtue, that is, as not separable, even if distinguishable, “in the way of distinction”, from the specifically intellectual virtue of wisdom, *sophia*, just as, he claims, in the words of one of his more acute readers:

the affirmation of the Trinitarian God is neither a “theological” affirmation (in the sense of Saint Thomas) nor a thesis of ‘Christian philosophy’ (improperly rational, because inspired by faith), but it stems directly from the philosophical order, and the task of showing the truth of it belongs to philosophy.<sup>46</sup>

Hegel continues, right into the core of his own philosophy, at least “own” as something Aristotle, say, could not well have expressed:

For this unity of being and thought is self-consciousness and actually exists; in other words, the thought-constituted unity has at the same time this concrete shape and form of what it is. God, then, is here revealed, as He is; He actually exists as He is in Himself; He is real as Spirit. God is attainable in pure speculative knowledge alone, and only *is* in that knowledge, and is merely that knowledge itself, for He is Spirit; and this speculative knowledge is the knowledge furnished by revealed religion. That knowledge knows God to be thought, or pure Essence; and knows this thought as actual being and as a real existence, and existence as the negativity of itself, hence as Self, an individual “this” and a universal self. It is just this that revealed religion knows. (p. 761)

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I return to Taylor, the better to complete my own account, but hopefully his too, as it were contrastively. I think Taylor does not help himself by judging that we should first “recall Hegel’s early writings on Jesus”, If for no other reason than this would not be what Hegel would have wanted. His later writing is designed specifically to correct, or in some sense improve upon, the earlier, without that he might want or need to digress into self-flagellation after the manner of Augustine or Newman. Let others criticise him if they must. Or, we can say he was comparatively free of any fear of being regarded as a heretic, though I would imply no judgment upon the susceptibilities those other two, prudence dictating different things in different circumstances. Taylor, we might think, has more fear of *not* being

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<sup>46</sup> Georges Van Riet, *op. cit.* p. 81, using the term “faith” in a more immediate sense than that we have just been outlining, however, where faith goes on to disclose reason, the Idea, to itself, discovering its own credentials of the one as of the other as one principle, the sense in which Hegel sees the obedience of the child as belonging equally to “the true reason-world” (*Enc.* 82, *Zus.*)

seen as one such. Such is the situation of philosophy today, as Hegel had already noted for his own time (in *LPR* III).

Taylor has just said (p. 209): “if I am right he (sc. Hegel) did not even believe in the Incarnation in the ordinary sense, since ultimately Jesus is not God in any sense in which all other men are not.” I have already criticised the clumsiness of thought and/or expression here, the dogmatic ambiguity of the final clause, - not God for whom? Not *any* sense? “I am the vine, you are the branches”: he, Jesus namely, must there have been more deeply mistaken than “any” other men, rather, unless some or all of them too could say this. Perhaps they could, yet Hegel insists there must be but one concrete mediator who leads them to that, though this is anyhow not very prominent in Taylor’s account. One would have to think, rather, of such figures as Catherine of Siena, who said she felt she bore the whole weight and burden of the then fourteenth century Church upon her back, or take up the theme of the *alter Christus* generally. “I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me”, said the Apostle accordingly. This “in”, as governing “Christ”, “one another” or similar, generally signifies an identity in spiritual being, real as contrasted not with material so much as with phenomenal being. “Now the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal”, teaches the same source, who, like Catherine, if differently in a measure, being formally an apostle while she was “only” apostolic”, claimed to have “the care of all the churches”.<sup>47</sup>

Regarding these aspects of the Christian phenomenon, so to say, one might feel surprised at Hegel’s saying here, as we just quoted: “God is attainable in pure speculative knowledge alone, and only is in such knowledge, and is merely that knowledge itself, for He is spirit ...” When he adds that this knowledge is “furnished by revealed religion” he means of course as fully assimilated, which, as I argued above concerning mysticism, is the normal or, it is the same, ideal consummation of such knowing, this being indeed, as “the true reason world” (*Enc.* 82, *Zus.*), “very much the same as ... mysticism”. One reads Hegel as one would read a work of ascetical or mystical theology. That is what it is, theology and contemplation or acting philosophising are become one, the two associated disciplines for pursuit ultimately the same. Socrates made this point early on by saying, effectively, that without love one is not a philosopher, is despicable in fact (*Phaedrus*, the English translation’s title, also that of the dialogue itself, of Joseph Pieper’s study, *Göttliches Wahnsinn*, i.e. divine

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<sup>47</sup> Compare further (why not?), as “in the same vein”, the words she herself claimed to have heard “from yonder, or deep within: “I am He who is: you are she who is not”. A traitor to her sex, while bearing all on her “back”, again? What dignity could be higher, though?

madness<sup>48</sup>). The organised Church, the whole arrangement of society, Aquinas claims in the *Summa contra gentes*, exists for this eventual contemplative wisdom, “if one would but consider”, he says. And so Hegel adds here:

The hopes and expectations of preceding ages pressed forward to, and were solely directed towards this revelation, the vision of what Absolute Being is, and the discovery of themselves therein. This joy, the joy of seeing itself in Absolute Being, becomes realised in self-consciousness, and seizes the whole world. (p. 761)

This mystic way, in its various forms, religious, pietistic, philosophical, through and within art, is, according to mainstream and/or Biblical teaching and tradition, taught as being the fruit of the traditionally sevenfold “gifts of the Spirit” bestowed upon all who believe, in however wide a sense one may think to interpret that condition (this is a main theme of modern theology as “ecumenical”). It is the way, in germ, to “absolute knowledge”, with discourse upon which Hegel ends the book we are considering. This knowledge he defends as both esoteric and yet, in “the true reason world”, open to all. It is esoteric as in the care and concern particularly of its priests, the philosophers or any other ministers of Absolute Spirit. It is not esoteric, however, in the sense of being their exclusive property, since it is essentially universal, participated in even by children and “citizens” generally, as he says at *Enc.* 82, *Zusatz*, again. Note that he concludes the main text there thus:

The logic of mere Understanding is involved in Speculative logic, and can at will be elicited from it, by the simple process of omitting the dialectical and “reasonable” element. When this is done, it becomes what the common logic is, a descriptive collection of sundry thought forms and rules which, finite though they are, are taken to be something infinite.

Today we speak, rather, of logic and *its* philosophy. From this standpoint one might regard Hegel’s thought as just one competing account of the latter, inasmuch at least as all he writes stands or falls with his system of logic.

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<sup>48</sup> It may be of incidental interest that Pieper chose this topic, taken in great part from this earlier study, from amongst his numerous published works, of philosophical *eros* as treated by Socrates, as the theme for his address at his ninetieth birthday celebrations held at Münster, his birthplace and where he had been “external” or honorary professor at the Westphalian university there, at which I was present and heard him, in 1994.

This conception of spirit knowing itself to be spirit, is still the immediate notion; it is not yet developed. The ultimate Being is spirit; in other words, it has appeared, it is revealed (i.e. as being Being). This first revelation is itself immediate; but the immediacy is likewise thought, or pure mediation, and must therefore exhibit and set forth this moment in the sphere of immediacy as such.

Looking at this more precisely, spirit, when self-consciousness is immediate, is “this” individual self-consciousness. It is a one, an excluding unit, which appears to that consciousness, for which it exists, in the as yet impervious form of a sensuous other, an unresolved entity in the sphere of sense. This other does not yet know spirit to be its own; in other words, spirit, in its form as an individual self, does not yet exist as equally universal self, as *all* self. Or again, the shape it assumes has not as yet the form of the notion, i.e. of the universal self, of the self which in its immediate actual reality is at once transcended, is thought, universality, without losing its reality in this universality. (p. 762)

There is not much of this in Taylor’s account. Hegel is clearly thinking of Christ’s death and consequent (as contrastable with, say, “subsequent” merely) resurrection, his becoming “a living spirit”, in the words of a Pauline epistle. *all* self in Hegel’s words. Taylor says: “The Incarnation in this sense is a real event, and also a crucial stage in our religious history” – this sense is “the fact that here Substance becomes self-consciousness”. But this, for Taylor, seems not much more than a shift of attention *in Hegel*, from an earlier “man-centred view”. He refuses as it were to credit that Hegel, like Aristotle, is writing theology, which he considers falls within the compass of philosophy, Trinity, incarnation and all. Taylor, however, cannot really back up his claim that “the incarnation is a real event”. However, even if Hegel, say, does claim that it is this yet I would want to argue, that he would do so against a background of the general unreality of events as such. By this Taylor’s claim is rather, more modestly, that the incarnation, in which Hegel, he asserts, did not believe “in the ordinary sense”<sup>49</sup>, is no less real than any other event.

Taylor adds again, “And, moreover, God is identical/non-identical with all men and not just this one individual”. One can only insist that Hegel’s stated view here throughout is that God *is* identical with “just this one

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<sup>49</sup> On page 210 of Taylor’s text the name of Pentecost is somewhat barbarously misspelled, twice in the same way, as “Pentacost” (also on page 495, twice). This suggests more than a printer’s oversight or error, rather that Taylor himself is not too well at home in this fairly prominent area of his chosen field, a handicap surely. He might want to reply that a faith-commitment, assuming that I profess such, is equally a handicap. But I have only argued that Hegel’s writing is consistent and more with such a commitment.

individual”, *through whom*, syllogistically over a middle term, “all men” become logically the same. I have already here supplied the textual evidence of this. Yet he rightly sees, apart from the questionable “events”, certainly for Hegel, speaking of incarnation, death, resurrection and Pentecost, that “For Hegel all these events belong together”, as religious representations rather than as events. Such representations, however, proclaim the truth in and by their representation of it, which is left to the spirit to understand spiritually, as is the case with all things sacred or “religious”, as is the Bible in the context of Christian life or philosophy generally, though not maybe for historians in the abstract. This, of course, was the insight of Bultmann, to name but one modern theologian/philosopher, one who was in close contact, epistolary and other, with Heidegger, for what that might be worth. Of Heidegger and Sartre, Pieper once remarked, one tasted again the salt of theology on one’s tongue, after the waste, philosophically speaking, of empiricist positivism or populist “scientism”, perhaps, of mindless specialism in a bounded “field”, either triangular, square or similar. I digress in order not to do so.

Taylor writes that “the whole meaning of the death lies in the coming of the spirit whereby the locus of Incarnation shifts to the community, the ‘body of Christ’” (p. 210), which is fine as far as it goes, though “shifts” is the wrong word for incarnation in its full revelation or *thought*-development if interpreted as a work done “not by conversion of the godhead into flesh”, which is impossible, but “by the taking of the manhood into God”, of manhood as such (the “conception”, again, as such “immaculate”), that is, which is at least conceivable, although, as Hegel argues, this is revealed as eternal truth rather than “done” as, again, an event. The revelation *of it*, however, seems, but only by the same finite premises, as of something “in” history, to remain as an event, given that God *is*, Hegel says, revelation, although one might further say, it is in fact said, that God is event, *act* perpetual, of generation, spiration and so on, *actus actuum*. That is, incarnation finds its conceptual beginning in the representation which is history or, more shortly, time but its concept is perfected, or is perfect, eternally. This is what Scotus referred to, in his way, as necessity. Finally, though, Taylor says this:

God as a pure abstraction has already taken a giant step toward man in becoming incarnate; but in order to become fully realised in man he has to take the other step, that of dying as an incarnate God and therefore cancelling his inherence in a particular time and place, so that the incarnation of God can become that of the community of men in general.



The last sentence is unclear; this might best be resolved by inserting, a trifle ungrammatically, “of man” (not “as” man, note) between “incarnation of God” and “can become that”, for “the community of men in general” cannot incarnate again since it is fleshly enough already. Otherwise I would only ask Taylor how a pure abstraction can take a giant step. Or is it pure “Hegelese”? Anyhow, he says that “the Christian church lives this unity without really knowing it” and this might seem sound enough for the purpose here.

One is not too happy, either, with Taylor’s characterisation of the religious form of Absolute Spirit as living the unity of spirit “in a muddled and obscure way”. Hegel does not speak in this way of “representation” and it leaves one wondering what Taylor would say about Art, the first and in a sense foundational form of Absolute Spirit. Furthermore, the “Christian church” is the cradle of theologians and mystical thinkers generally who do really know spirit, who have the gifts of the spirit, and, what is more, there is no reason to exclude Hegel himself, and this by his own confession, from this unity, Christian thinker through and through as he is, and all the better a philosopher for that, he himself gives us grounds for saying, some of which we have just touched on. It is part of my aim here, indeed, to get the community, of which I am anyhow one, to see how Hegel fulfils and helps on their foremost actual aspirations, in an at least similar way to how she, the Church, was got to see the grace-filled intelligence at work in Newman, so that his ideas, seventy years after his death, were papally recognised as the main driving force of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, 1962-1964, called after its closure by the then Pope, Paul VI (Montini) “Newman’s Council” (Newman was canonised as a “saint” some thirty years later, again by a (subsequent) Pope, the Polish John Paul II (the philosopher Karol Wojtyła). So, for a start, both Newman and Hegel deal in development, whether of “doctrine” or of the Idea or Notion, itself a doctrine, which is one reason for claiming that Newman’s thesis entails *development of the doctrine of development itself*, something he himself does not seem much to have touched on. Did Hegel? Well, he does show how the development is different as one moves from the Doctrine of Being through Essence to the Notion and pure “advance”, dropping the “anti-thesis” somewhat, just for example.

Thus in the second century Saint Justin Martyr presented the Christian faith as the world’s most up-to-date philosophy, while the importance and general reliability of Origen has still to be recognised. Newman’s relation to philosophy is more complex, by his own choice and/or modesty, while the example most immediately perhaps inspiring Hegel in this regard was St. Anselm of Canterbury, whose dialogues and other writings are purely

philosophical, as, really, are Augustine's, I venture to claim. He introduces (well, it's in St. Paul already) a notion of "the rule of faith" but he has a philosophy of that too. The same might be said for Thomas Aquinas's thesis of theology as a "sacred" science, in the way he defines<sup>50</sup>. Philosophy, that is, is not in principle atheistic. Questions as to how God is to be approached, including accounts of "the idea of the holy", whoever might write them, and supremely of "what is God", are undilutedly philosophical. The dualism comes in with a certain account of revelation, concerning which, again, philosophy must and can critically enquire<sup>51</sup> without for one moment being false to this revelation.

That "the unity is seen as distant in time" (Taylor) is not necessarily true and depends partly on the state of mental culture of the individual believer, although most can grasp that "with the Lord a thousand years is as a day", i.e. it really is, i.e. those years *are* not. With Christ I hang upon the Cross, you sit with Christ in the heavenly places, St. Paul tells his converts indifferently. The "He will come again" of the Creed does not profess to be deep theology, which is also in the patrimony of the Church. The liturgy involves many references to the First and the Last, *alpha* and *omega*, or can speak of Christ as one who "came down from the heaven he never left" and so on. It is the business and duty of everyone to penetrate deeper and deeper into the final truths. "seek and you shall find". At the same time, the Church exists for everyone and would not be what she is if she were not that, just as is true of her Lord and Master. So there is no need to stay outside "in fantastic extravagance of mind", not that this phrase quite captures Professor Taylor's sober efforts.

He is quite wrong, though, to say or imply that "the consciousness of faith still sees God as separate". This is refuted by Hegel's own witness<sup>52</sup> as by most others cited here, Augustine in particular, or St. Paul or Eckhart. Or we might go right back to Samson's "The spirit of the Lord is upon me", enabling him to kill, it is said, a great number of Israel's enemies with "the jawbone of an ass" and finally to pull down a house upon the lot of them. The separateness, that is, is just the starting-point from which spirit would escape and always has been. Moses comes down from the mountain with

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<sup>50</sup> Cf. the very first *quaestio* of the *Summa theologiae*.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. my *Hegel's Theology or Revelation Thematised*, CSP Newcastle, UK, 2018.

<sup>52</sup> See, for example, page 759 of *The Phenomenology of Mind*, the paragraph beginning "There is something in its object concealed from consciousness if the object is for consciousness an "other", or something alien, and if consciousness does not know the object as its self. ..." Augustine's whole dialectic of love, for instance, virtually starts off from there. Hence his question that so engaged Derrida, "What do I love when I love my God?"

radiant face. But how can Taylor say *Geist* “truly reveals himself in Christianity” after the way we find him characterising this “him” above? Where on earth does he stand?

Taylor now takes us through the three forms of Absolute Spirit, tolerably enough, asserting thereupon that “without finite spirit there would be no infinite spirit”, a point in the Idea where freedom and necessity most entirely coincide, it is important not to lose hold of, as if presenting God, nonsensically, as “evolving” or “growing up”. We might equally well (or better) say that without otherness in God himself he would not be infinite, there would be no God (and no world either, therefore).

Thus, when Taylor speaks of “the only antidote” God can find for the evil he had to allow or countenance he seems to picture the all-powerful as grasping, with great expense and strain of mind, in some cosmic cupboard standing ready and independently of God. The licence he so variously allows himself in this section sits ill with his critique of religion on just that score. It is simply rather a matter of what God does as being how he is and that necessarily or, it is the same, in absolute freedom. The unity, of the moments of death and “entry into glory” are surely not “only grasped by representation”. That is what faith in its meditations strives to rise above, until it, the subject, is grasped by another yet closer than self, again. Nor does God, as infinity, inter-relate with man in a two-way process. This absorbs the finite and not contrariwise, Hegel clearly states<sup>53</sup>. Rather, God has no real relation with man or his creation, even though or because we have a real relation with him, Aquinas states, really implying absolute idealism without saying or, can it be, thinking so. I would think he was just as much an absolute idealist as Hegel found Aristotle to be.<sup>54</sup> The creation itself, Hegel says, is a *representation* of the Divine Word. The “upward spring of the mind”, having a negative effect even upon thought’s basis as thought first appears in “its first and phenomenal shape” is a first step in the “thinking of the phenomenal world” as belonging to thought’s, to mind’s, own phenomenology of itself as pursued *by reason*, here, within and at one with “the true reason world”. This “upward spring of the mind *signifies* that the being which the world has is only a semblance, no real being, no absolute truth”. This is the *theatre* that incarnation, the being “made flesh” of God, i.e. self-made, takes to itself by injecting itself into it, as if the producer becomes the audience who alone make our earthly theatres, again, real. “He was in the world and the world was made by him and the world

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<sup>53</sup> “The genuine infinite ... does not lose itself. The negation of negation is not a neutralisation: the infinite is the affirmative, and it is only the finite which is absorbed.” (*Enc.* 95)

<sup>54</sup> Cp. *Enc.* 142, *Zus.*

knew him not; he came unto his own and his own received him not; but as many as received him, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God” as being thus “born” of God.<sup>55</sup> This is what Hegel claims to have shown to be necessary to the concept of the infinite, often somewhat thoughtlessly just called God, not noticing that that must be, *qua* name, “the name that is above all names”, even itself, and only thus being infinite which, as ultimate principle, not bound by something else, it must be. It belongs, that is, like Trinity, to which we now come here, “to the philosophical order”, is not just “philosophy of religion”, such as Hegel will have occasion later to treat of, but as founding *sophia* itself, of which this, or Hegel’s book which contains and uncovers it, is the first part or, again, prologue.

This individual human being, then, which Absolute Being is revealed to be, goes through in its own case as an individual the process found in sense existence. He is the *immediately* present God; in consequence, His being passes over into His *having been*. Consciousness, for which God is thus sensuously present, ceases to see Him, to hear Him. It *has* seen Him, it *has* heard Him. And it is because it only *has* seen and heard Him, that it first becomes itself spiritual consciousness: or, in other words, He has now arisen in Spirit, as He formerly rose before consciousness as an object existing in the sphere of sense. For, a consciousness which sees and hears Him by sense, is one which is itself merely an immediate consciousness, which has not cancelled and transcended the disparateness of objectivity, has not withdrawn it into pure thought, but knows this objectively presented individual, and not itself, as spirit. In the disappearance of the immediate existence of what is known to be Absolute Being, immediacy acquires its negative moment. Spirit remains the immediate self of actual reality, but in the form of the universal self-consciousness of a religious communion, a self-consciousness which rests in its own proper substance, just as in it this substance is universal subject: it is not the individual subject by himself, but the individual consciousness of the communion, and what he is for this communion is the complete whole of the individual spirit. (p. 763)

This might be taken as Hegel’s commentary on the text; “Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed” (*John* 20, 29), an evangelical comment on the more than first fifty years of the life of the believing community, for whom “to live is Christ”, “the complete whole of the individual spirit”. But it is much more than this. It is actual, comprehensive theology, as Aristotle understood his metaphysics to be, *mutatis mutandis*, Aristotle for whom too the enterprise begins in the swirling mists of sense-immediacy or of, one might say, fable and representation, ritual and finite

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<sup>55</sup> *Gospel of John*, “Prologue”.

notions generally, out of which Abraham is put, centuries later, as the necessary one having been first called, the *father* of those who believe, before whom, all the same, I AM. “And they took up stones to throw at him”, religion baulking at becoming philosophy and, indeed, *sophia*, that final “intellectual virtue” and gift of the Spirit.

The conditions “past” and “distance” are, however, merely the imperfect form in which the immediateness gets mediated or made universal; this is merely dipped superficially in the element of thought, is kept there as a sensuous mode of immediacy, and not made one with the nature of thought itself. It is lifted out of sense merely into the region of pictorial presentation; for this is the synthetic [external] connexion of sensuous immediacy and *its* universality or thought. (p. 763, stress added)

“Paul, why are you persecuting me?” Paul hears a voice asking him. He asks, “Who are you?” Well, he says already “Lord”. “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting”. Here already the fulfilment of the incarnate one in the community is proclaimed, i.e. He *is* the community, his “body”, which one receives as a thousand, a thousand as one, in the eucharist. This is acknowledged from the beginning, while Taylor would misinterpret Hegel’s awareness of this, in his faith, as a rationalistic cutting down to finite size. But it is “pictorial presentation” which makes us stick to the separate individual as the norm, “each to count for one and none for more than one”, and this is not sound philosophy, which rather teaches “each to count for all and none for less than all”.

True, the mediation process in the still earthly community may be less than complete and that is one reason for the established sacramental system, which, incidentally, Aquinas found difficulty in freeing from the charge that it confines Christian and/or spiritual freedom, that the whole of nature signifies, or “represents” spirit as well as do the sacraments. Uncharacteristically, he appeals simply to the authority of Church praxis.<sup>56</sup> But there is certainly a kind of crisis in thought about the sacraments today, brought in by acceptance of the indeed necessary ideas of baptism of desire (or of fire, originally), spiritual communion, learning to forgive one’s self for one’s sins (routinely taught now by their elders to young seminarians) and so on. So the substance of >Christianity does not lie here. Where then? In spiritual self-consciousness, Hegel plainly teaches, while it is worth noting that a recurring theme in the lives of the first “desert fathers” is the question as to whether the hermit should attend the regular public worship he finds so distracting and, many would frankly affirm today, boring, though

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<sup>56</sup> See *Summa theol.* III, 60f. on the sacraments in general.

this can derive from a wrong attitude. Our clergy are not there to entertain us precisely. Still, and again the question is raised as implicit in the New Testament, are we not all priests to ourselves. What inhibits all out formlessness here is the felt need for unity of doctrine and, no doubt, discipline, not, surely, matter of the Concept, however, and there I will leave it. Religious praxis is not as such fullness of Absolute Spirit in and with and as its own proper form, just as Jesus is put as not paying the Temple tax, one might wish to raise for a guiding comparison. Or again, there is the whole business of church buildings in all their beauty, nonetheless only starting to appear after three temple-less centuries, the faithful worshipping “neither on this mountain nor on that” but “in spirit and in truth”, as Jesus shall have said to the Samaritan woman. Still, it is often the best wisdom to go along with what is expected as far as one can – thus Jesus sends Peter to find the necessary coin in an obliging fish’s mouth. It’s beautiful really, the writing, of high quality at the least.

Today we focus upon the Pope, the “number one Jesus-man” as they say in Africa, and this makes things both easier and more difficult, depending in part upon the individual thus burdened with this high office. Who is number two, one might wonder? – matter of indifference, says Hegel, “it is useless to count”, each counting(!) for all, again.

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Hegel goes on to speak of the “here” and “the beyond”, which he himself puts in scare-quotes, however. That such pictorial presentation is “characteristic” of the religious communion, as it must be, since its universalist essence, its absoluteness even, a characteristic which marks it forever as “not of this world”, is to include all men and women without distinction, i.e. essentially, indeed “beyond” all that we can see and hear. It, the communion, the Church, is “militant”, that is to say, to recall a figure lately discarded as unsuitable, only as finally, i.e. essentially “triumphant”, eternally blessed and happy, it might be better to say. “Our citizenship is in heaven”, its members affirm, not “will be” but “is” in heaven. This is “triumphalism” only as being the “faith that overcomes the world” (words of or attributed to Christ in the Gospel, one of them). This is the sense in which the great Christian metaphysicians may state, not especially figuratively, that “Reality is friendly”.<sup>57</sup> Hegel, however, by contrast, often uses this term to denote precisely what he will conclude is finally “unreal”, viz. our immediate perception, e.g. of a world (cf. *Enc.* 50), whereas for Elders the term “already” stands for however things turn out to be,

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<sup>57</sup> Watchword of the late Leo Elders SVD, author of *The Metaphysics of Being of St. Thomas Aquinas in a Historical Perspective* (Dutch original), Brill, Leyden 1993.

perception of which, he would claim, require faith and hope, plus love, as Socrates long ago insisted.<sup>58</sup> So the various permutations and combinations Taylor lists in his later chapter specifically on religion as second form of Absolute Spirit, or his concluding words on “Hegel Today” (already yesterday), basically serve to distract from the quality of the faith and philosophy of this “second Aristotle”. The irrelevance of this would be seen, indeed, if one approached Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* in this indeed circumstantial way, a long citation from which, from Book XII, chapter 7, not merely fittingly but decisively, in respect to the general intention, concludes Hegel’s *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, shaming the irony and superciliousness, figures of speech, namely, of so much that goes under the name of scholarship. Was Aristotle a scholar? He may have been, but no one attending to what he says gives much attention to that. The same, of course, might be said of Wittgenstein. So for a philosopher it is something of a handicap in final analysis if one goes down to succeeding generations as a professor, in the mundane and salaried sense, of philosophy. Thinking of Socrates in relation to Plato it may even be a handicap to have put pen to paper, thinking now further of the one recalled and adored as, rather, *incarnate* word or Word indeed. I reflect that one could not make this particular distinction (as if between *Gott*, God, and *die Götter*, the gods), by use or non-use of the capital, if writing, so to say “correctly”, in the German language. But philosophy must indeed be “incorrect”, ever and always. Hence it must, it too, as surely must genuine art, as absolute in content, share in that mockery and crucifixion by the world that Christians rightly and truly, but not correctly, “glorify”. This distinction is made by Hegel in the *Logic* as fundamental to his view thereof and really it should be enough to show where he is “coming from”, as they say now.

So this universalism explains why “the mediating process is incomplete”, while many work at its completion. Functioning thus Hegel may certainly be viewed as member *in actu* of the spiritual community, *qua* spiritual not a literally card-demanding community, but one to which one can belong not so much as but irrespective of being carpenter or academic professor. So it is not quite “correct” of Hegel to say that spiritual life is “encumbered” by this so to say “flat-footedness” (T.S. Eliot). It belongs in fact to the logic of divine incarnation as participated in by every “rational creature” as such and

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<sup>58</sup> Cf. *Phaedrus*; see also our “Happiness and Transcendent Happiness”, *Religious Studies* 21, 1985, pp. 349-367. For a similar synthetic inclusion of the three theological virtues with the four cardinal virtues needed to attain our end, cf. Peter Geach, *The Virtues* (a course of lectures delivered at Cambridge and Uppsala, where I heard them in 1976), Cambridge University Press, 1977.

accounts for much of the chronic dissatisfaction of so many, or all, individual members of “the Church”. We have to love, that is to say, endure, one another. That is our distinctive role and mission or sending, everyone’s ultimately, to “come out from among them”. Politically, democracy only works in the measure in which it is aristocratic in spirit, has entered on the narrow way found by, in a figure at least, “few” or the best (who are simultaneously worst: as was said, “From whom much is given much will be expected”), not least though by ourselves in the light of our own, not yet our own, reason.

All this, Hegel sees, calls for “a higher plane of mental development”, and this indeed is essential to Christian belief whether as essence or as effect, development namely, whether mental specifically or simply human and/or humanising. It even possesses a special power of correcting its own mistakes, able to bear the true thought that *corruptio optimi est pessima*. So the saints and scholars on the island of the faith-community can be taken as typifying this island, this exile on earth, as one of “saints and scholars” namely. Thus the Israelites of old regarded themselves, as “chosen” and bent all their efforts accordingly under corresponding higher duties. In Christianity the more than aristocratic principle gets its absolutisation, its trans-figuration. Faith, indeed, ever gives way, eternally indeed, to its completion in, after all, love, hope meanwhile being temporally necessary, while no one can say with certainty that he possesses any of these virtues viewed necessarily as perfections (perfection does not belong to this restless world). Indeed “I have no virtues” declared yesterday’s typically “modern” saint (Thérèse Martin, died 1897, aged twenty-four). Paradox accompanies us all the way, then, and in trying to say anything whatever, even, I would incline to argue, that twice two is four. Is? Nothing “makes” anything but itself, and yet nothing is, again, just itself. This is Hegel’s central discovery or emphasis, with respect to his system of logic as answering ultimately for or to everything, nature and spirit namely.

Thus Hegel passes to the consideration, referring to “three moments” variously distinguished, of the divine Trinity, still within “the philosophical order”. So he presents a summary of his theology (pp. 764-5) *before* we come, five or so pages later, set to explain the same basic truth, however, to his angelology of good and evil.

We have to consider this content as it exists in its consciousness. Absolute Spirit is content; that is how it exists in the shape of its truth. But its truth consists not merely in being the substance or the inherent reality of the religious communion; nor again in coming out of this inwardness into the objectivity of imaginative thought; but in becoming concrete actual self, reflecting itself into self, and being *Subject*. (*Ibid.* p.764)



It has to be, so to say, on its own or for itself, such that whatever might ever grasp it must become it, thus in dying to itself. Yet, Hegel claims, spirit realises this “in its communion”. As “its *life*” he might seem to mean that is all that spirit does, or rather that in just anything spiritual, e.g. a painting, spirit entirely realises itself or is present. It is difficult to conceive a third alternative. One must not “untwine” its life though, more generally, e.g. to its original and primitive strands in the earthly life of Christ. Here again, in this phrasing, we see how this is yet the Idea in its wholeness, for Hegel, become present, and that is quite orthodox, we may note. But we won’t “get at” the notion by idolising just one of these unceasing manifestations (God *is* revelation, after all, Hegel claims) as ultimate, not appreciating “the idea of the communion and its action with regard to its idea”. Here again we have Hegel’s truly Catholic view of the Church, which everyone joins as she is now, whenever that “now” is for the one joining. If I am exclusively in love with medieval Catholicism, or the pre-Conciliar modern variant, say, I will be very disappointed with the modern Church and probably not stay with her, once having joined. One also separates oneself from those joined to her in infancy, the majority, by such attitudes. Development can only begin from actively present material, its jots and tittles. If one wants a married clergy one must start from the celibates we have now, there must be form to re-form, and so on. Thus Hegel’s new definitions and explanations take in the existing ones. Indeed, he personally finds or gives reason to reject the actual Catholicism he knew but that signifies little here. The communion acts “with regard to its idea”, that is to say, does not bury the talent.

Spirit’s original “content of its consciousness”, which it is, “*is* the process of descending into existence” (stress added). There is no break or gap. Here begins the pure Trinitarianism, viz. that the Father is nothing other than the generating of the Son, the uttering of the Word, *in act*, the Father is this continuous act, from which proceeds otherness as such, whatever is other than the Father but principally his own othering of himself as Word, both with him and one with him, while this othering’s not only most characteristic but defining form is precisely its enfleshed openness to immediate sense-knowledge, so that human nature, ours, proceeds directly in and through that or, in liturgical terms, that Adam has the face of Christ. It follows from this also that the shapes of the animals along with the greenery, the mountains and so on, descend directly from this likeness at the summit, without prejudice, need one mention, to any so to say historical or temporal account of an ascent of man from those from whom he is descended. That, however, is “outside the concept”, as dealing with temporal representation, with matter. But is not a face material? Clearly it can be so regarded but clearly, too, it transcends it, is personal, in a word.

This, that, is the “life” of spirit, again, yet remaining in its utmost and necessary simplicity as “all in all” or indeed in each while in this is included the whole of creation and the life of the Church or *ekklesia* (called out, *ex kalein*), community of “salvation” or *new* creation. Infinitude is the passing into otherness, in its very consciousness, otherwise it would have been finite “all the time”. The “third stage” or completing movement of what is thus an eternal all at once or unchanging process “is the return from this presentation and that otherness” and this, says Hegel, “is the element of self-consciousness itself”, has to be, simply because self-consciousness as he has elucidated it is itself infinite over again, so to say. One can only marvel at the naturalness and matter-of-factness of Hegel’s presentation, clear fruit of long hours on many occasions through life, his young life here, of pondering incarnation and Trinity together, such as he learned about them from the seminary he attended or simply from the Bible and his reading generally. This is a man of prayer, make no mistake, he prays, thinks, as he writes. Wittgenstein did the same in his way and this is what caught and catches attention. Rhetoric is just not in it, just as we find in Aristotle. Thought, prayer, poetry, a descending order in forms of absolute spirit of one and the same act, that is Hegel’s doctrine.

Hegel can seem a little less than definite, so far, concerning the incarnate word of God. It is, certainly in “imaginative thought” at least, “but one of its moments”, this “taking on of a determinate mode of being” which, like all determinations, is nothing apart from God. Yet, as Word, all things without exception “were made through him”. What it comes down to is that every other thing is also Christ in its otherness, as the bread “is” his body, though clearly, we want to object, it isn’t. There is universal transition in contradiction, “this also is thou, neither is this thou”. This imagination, as he calls it, all visible things being images (of the invisible), a representation in the immediacy of its presentation, leads into or is the process from “pure thought” to all-embracing self-consciousness as both revealed and yet revealing (itself) in absolute simplicity amid the diversity, which it in a manner “cancels” in bringing about. Music is the obvious analogue, to hear it is to lose it. “Fled is that music, do I wake or sleep?”

Thus this content has to become one’s own “inherently and essentially”, the spirit, one’s own, becoming its substance. The first picture of it is the World as a whole, nature (and history) perhaps. This content and one’s own spirit are the same. “All things are yours” says the Apostle, adding, all the same, as condition and antecedent cause in one, “and you are Christ’s”. It is a “self-closed circular process”, self-closed, note, in and by divine necessity, the ultimate name for freedom or for will, taken absolutely. Or, the Absolute has to be in the power, itself *be* the power (inasmuch as there can, logically,

be no other) of the Absolute, another indication of the missing of the Notion by our inescapable subject-predicate form of expression which we must use to express or indicate identity in otherness, the truth of what, if followed or strictly adhered to, might hinder one from saying anything. That is the paradox of philosophy, if not of final *sophia*. God, said John of the Cross, doctor of the Church, praising silence, “has spoken only one word”. Could have Hegel read that somewhere? He has a strange reference to “Spanish poetry” at one point, though it was not in his poems that John said that, but in his commentaries thereon.

This movement within itself expresses the absolute Being *qua* Spirit. Absolute Spirit, when not grasped as spirit, is merely the abstract void, just as spirit which is not grasped as this process is merely an empty word. Since its moments are grasped *purely* as moments, they are notions in restless activity, which *are* merely in being inherently their own opposite, each in finding their rest in the whole. But the pictorial thought of the religious communion is not this notional thinking; it has the content without its necessity; and instead of the form of the notion it brings into the realm of pure consciousness the natural relations of Father and Son. Since it thus, even when thinking, proceeds by way of figurative ideas, absolute Being is indeed revealed to it, but the moments of this Being [externally] synthetic pictorial thinking, partly fall of themselves apart from one another, so that they are not related to each other through their own very notion, while, partly again, this figurative thinking retreats from the pure object it deals with, and takes up a merely external relation towards it. The object is externally revealed to it from an alien source, and in this thought of Spirit it does not recognise its own self, does not recognise the nature of pure self-consciousness. ... In this way there is retained and preserved only what is purely external in belief, and the retention of it as something dead and devoid of knowledge; while the inner element in belief has passed away, *because this would be the notion knowing itself as notion*.<sup>59</sup>

This inner element is pure self-consciousness. It is pure when it has no object but itself, when it is itself its object. This is the Absolute Idea, wherein “I am you”, applied to any you (or I) whatever. As Hegel explains here, although not every I is aware of this, except in varying degrees. Not every I is fully I. Yet this is a matter of thought, of being, not of becoming, since this has been left behind, ever and for ever, so to say, as childish things are put away as not having been. What has been is now perfected, in grammatical intuition, so that also it has no longer being, is no longer. Or, to remember is not to re-live, whatever else it is, such as a giving of eternal significance to the passing moment as known, whether bread broken or

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<sup>59</sup> Pp. 767-768.

mountain climbed indifferently, were we not directed to anything. This was the point of objection Aquinas considered, we noted, as to the established sacraments constricting (*arctare*) Christian freedom. Here I point, rather, to the light the objection throws on freedom as universalising self-consciousness.

In this simple beholding of itself (of “the eternal Being”) in the Other, otherness therefore is not as such set up independently; it is distinction in the way of distinction, in pure thought, is immediately no distinction - a recognition of Love, where lover and beloved are by their very nature not opposed to each other at all. Spirit, which is expressed in the element of pure thought, is essentially just this: not to be merely *in* that element, but to be *concrete, actual*; for otherness itself, i.e. cancelling and superseding its own pure thought-constituted notion, lies in the very notion of Spirit. (p.768)

This, though, is not a moment “prior” to creation, especially logically not so. Hegel is saying, rather, that for the divine, called here the Idea, what we call creation, the divine othering which is its essence as begetting, in ever-present act, of the Word, “in the beginning with God” and “by whom all things were made”, is, as infinite act, no sooner thought than done. Hence those possible that God is said to know are not some larger set from which a selection is made, like that by a wise *man*. The purely possible remain ever inactual, just in the concept, creation itself determining them as a separate logical class, so to say, viz. that of the possible. Having no actuality they are thus, at once *impossible*. That is their condition, viz. their conditionality, due, simply, and not merely “dictated”, to the Concept or End as initiating beginning as resulting from itself alone as “realised”, to employ this figure, only, of “pastness”. We approaching thus perhaps the most astonishing moment of Hegel’s systematic thought, though some see it as just rehashed Gnosticism. It would rather be regenerated Gnosticism, in every sense of that term, in that case. But there is nothing nor has been anything quite like it, or quite it, rather.

The element of pure thought, because it is an abstract element, is itself rather the other of its own simplicity, and hence passes over into the proper element of imagination – the element where the moments of the pure notion at once acquire a substantial existence in opposition to each other and are subjects as well, which do not exist in indifference towards each other, merely for a third, but, being reflected into themselves, break away from one another and stand confronting one another. (p.769)

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One question would now be: are we already into a Hegelian angelology, otherwise just round the corner? The answer is yes and no, due to the peculiar nature of angels as, near enough, existing thoughts, each one a species, as Aquinas had it, not, that is, *an* individual, even if we speak of individual species. For Hegel, as for Descartes, that is more or less what we all are anyway, hence Maritain's charge that Descartes' philosophy was an "angelism" but in fact men, inasmuch as in heaven (and where else is earth?) are "as the angels", we have on the highest authority, so to say, and not merely because they "neither marry nor are given in marriage", something vastly more ample being at stake (to which they are already "married", by nature, so to say, this indeed being the divine image: "male and female created he them", in and as his immaculate conception (the bride, in iconography, as referred to here above) inclusive of all its finite moments, not in abstract separation, which we mistake for the concrete, but all in one and one in all. Existence, anyhow, is, has to be, first a thought and has to be thought, thought indeed by and/or with what thereby must transcend existence, as a merely finite categorial moment<sup>60</sup>, faithful in this to the Pseudo-Dionysian negative theology so dominant also in Aquinas. "We know most about God when we know that we know nothing", he says, while, like Hegel, he finds himself obliged to say any number of things "about" the divinity and its persons "beyond personality":

Merely eternal, or abstract Spirit, then, becomes an other to itself: it enters existence, and, in the first instance, enters *immediate* existence. It creates a World. This "Creation" is the word which pictorial thought uses to convey the notion itself in its absolute movement; or to express the fact that the simple which has been expressed as absolute, or pure thought, just because it is abstract, *is really the negative*, and hence opposed to itself, the *other* of itself; or because, to state the same in yet another way, what is put forward as essential Being is simple immediacy, bare existence, but *qua* immediacy or existence, is without self, and, lacking this inwardness, is passive, or exists for another, is the undisturbed separate subsistence of those moments formerly enclosed within pure thought, is, therefore the dissolution of their simple universality, and their dispersion into their own particularity. (pp. 769-770)

I would re-emphasise, in conclusion here, however, what I have just been noting, namely that where Hegel would criticise "the soulless word 'is', the copula of the judgment" or "sticking to the *term* 'is', and forgetting the character of thought" (p. 777, stress added) he finds support, for only

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<sup>60</sup> So there is something of a tie-up here with the existence-neutral "sistology", as an alternative to ontology, defended by Richard Sylvan, but as, it seems, restricted to the phenomenological family only.

apparently opposite reasons, in Thomas Aquinas, who analyses identity predication in terms of matter and form, he too, thereby also rejecting abstract identity, which, it would follow, is ultimately contradictory as two in one without difference.

In conclusion, the difference in type of signification should not be confused with an absolute difference *in re* between what types of entities subjects and predicates can signify. That the predicate signifies quasi-formally (Aquinas) does not mean it can only signify a form, as in Frege's "On Concept and Object" (apparently) ... Nor, on the other hand, does the identity factor eliminate all difference between subjects and predicates.<sup>61</sup>

Thus:

Even in statements in which the same thing is predicated of itself, this is in some way the case, insofar as our intellect treats what it assigns to the subject position as the *suppositum*, but what it assigns to the predicate it treats as a form existing in the subject, as it is said that predicates are taken formally, subjects materially.<sup>62</sup>

The two thinkers thus concur in rejecting a supposedly distinct and/or abstract "is' of identity". We pass now to the material to be considered in our chapter following, some of the initial ground of which we have surveyed here in these last few pages in a preliminary way, since they belong also to the subject of incarnation as itself, if viewed without respect to time, i.e. in the constitutively fulfilled divine intentions which thus are never merely or abstractly intentions. We pass from "Hegel on the Incarnation" to "Hegel on the Trinity".

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<sup>61</sup> Stephen Theron, "Subject and Predicate Logic" (actual title of article as submitted, "Subject-Predicate Logic"), *The Modern Schoolman* LXVI, January 1989, pp. 129-139, p. 138. On this point see also our "the Supposition of the Predicate", *The Modern Schoolman*, LXXVII, November 1999, pp. 73-78.

<sup>62</sup> Aquinas, *Sunna theol.* Ia 85, 5 *ad 3um*.

## CHAPTER TWO

### TRINITY, GOOD AND EVIL

Hegel's chief theological if not generally metaphysical originality, or originating originality even, can be thought to lie in his conceptual association of these our two titular themes, Good and Evil, to the extent that for him a true account of Trinity cannot be given apart from his account of this *logical* opposition, not thus far necessarily therefore a conflict, of just good and evil. So much is this so that the converse holds equally, that the true account of good and evil, as an "ordered pair", is to be sought here, in Trinitarian thought, namely. Precisely *as* logical this opposition becomes a question for metaphysical theology, no longer for him *restricted* to a "natural" theology in the Scholastic or more especially Neo-scholastic sense. Or rather, it is in his *Science of Logic* (both versions) and its further development in the two succeeding parts of his *Encyclopaedia*, as also in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, that what he says here, in *The Phenomenology of Mind*, the text of which we are most nearly commenting upon and/or expounding, is both refined and confirmed.

Implied in this procedure is a transcendence of the view of ethics as a philosophical science, tallying with the absence of a treatise on ethics from his *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, to give it its full title. *Sittlichkeit*, rather, is seamlessly woven into the third part of that work as falling *under* Spirit, specifically under Objective (finite) Spirit but not under Absolute Spirit, where Art belongs and/or is situated by Hegel along with Religion and in the fullest or most perfect sense Philosophy in particular as synthesising and absorbing those first two. Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil* is thus, in many respects at least, looked forward to or prepared in the world of thought. A common or harmonising factor here, as indication merely, may be found in the *Notebooks* of Hegel's exact contemporary and devotee, in the mode of his muse, of Absolute Spirit, Beethoven: "Power is the morality of those who stand out from the rest and it is mine". For power compare the role played in Hegel's thought by *Kraft*. Of its essence it transcends the abstractly ethical, as is abundantly illustrated in Scripture, and is ultimately the province of Spirit as Trinitarian person. "You will be clothed with power ..." This, then, is the background to the question of good

and evil, as pair, falling *under* that of Trinity, of Spirit. Note, though, that Hegel makes a special point of not identifying God, or Absolute Mind, with power, for, in the first instance, the reasons of logic that he gives, in the context of a critique of Herder (*Enc.* 247). He dubs it “the confusion of conceiving God as Force”.

We add that there is here a certain closeness to Thomist views of the good life. Thus Martin Grabmann speaks of happiness, *Glückseligkeit*, a close relative of Hegelian self-consciousness, as *höchste Entfaltung der Sittlichkeit*, as discovery of a better (more good) way to be in the most universal sense, in strong contrast to Kant here. Happiness as joy, *gaudium*, is in fact listed in Scriptural tradition as one of the twelve “fruits” of the Spirit, and thus not in its full development an abstractly moral virtue at all but something better, a “grace”, participating in “realised end” as at least not all virtues need do. Their necessary connection with a realist or less than idealist viewpoint is hence difficult to deny. The metaphysical or contemplative life, as described, again, by Aquinas, transcends the moral sphere, we have already noted, with its particular virtues, inasmuch as this pertains only to the “active” life. It transcends it though in swallowing it up, in making our actions themselves participate, somewhere on an ever moving scale between self-cancelling and self-transcendence, in this contemplation, in a speculative knowledge finally absolute. Thus for the tradition, to repeat, as contrasted with Kant, there are not and could never be two species of reason, the theoretical and the practical. The latter is reason as directed to a work (*ordinata ad opus*), where work is to be seen as essentially phenomenal. Thus by our work(s), in view of the unity of the virtues (as of *Sittlichkeit* therefore) we are essentially worshipping, exercising faith in the largest sense. Here can be seen the somewhat non-speculative, populist sense of the old “faith and works” controversies. Further, the goodness of the thinker speculatively transcending abstract goodness can become apparent. It is not a matter of two species of goodness, as if the real and the phenomenal were two species of being, of *to on*, in “ontological discontinuity”, much as this discontinuity, and hence this phrase, might commend itself to the religious apologist whose mental development has yet to transcend dualist realism.

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There are thus three moments to be distinguished: Essential Being; explicit Self-existence, which is the express otherness of essential Being, and for which that Being is object; and Self-existence or Self-knowledge *in* that other. The essential Being beholds only itself in its Self-existence, in its objective otherness. In thus emptying itself, in this kenosis, it is merely within itself: the



independent Self-existence which excludes itself from essential Being is the knowledge of itself on the part of essential Being. It is the “Word”, the Logos, which when spoken empties the speaker of himself, outwardizes him, and leaves him behind emptied, but is as immediately perceived, and only this act of self-perceiving himself is the actual existence of the “Word”. Hence, then, the distinctions which are set up are just as immediately resolved as they are made, and are just as directly made as they are resolved, and the truth and the reality consist precisely in this self-closed circular process. (*Ibid.* p.767)

Here *trinitas* in its first abstract meaning introduces Trinity. It is, namely, a trinity of moments, in that Hegelian sense in which all finite notions, even such notions, as picturings, of the infinite, are moments. There is thus no reason to confuse it, again, with the ancient Sabellian heresy. For since we are all such moments of the Idea there is no further reduction involved here, for instance of the divine “persons” or rational substances (*hypostases*), as they have been called in theology. For Sabellius, it seemed to those judging his case, the divine persons were not persons in that full sense accorded to human (or even angelic?) persons.

We should note Hegel’s first “thus” here. Otherwise we will not clearly grasp Hegel’s presentation of the *third* person, of Spirit, which, he asserts, *is* the Holy Spirit of religious confession. McTaggart wished to blankly deny this, or that Hegel could have *meant* it, in his bid to dissociate Hegel’s thought from such Christian confession, or from Patristic thinking. Prejudice kept him from seriously considering the latter and thus seeing its openness to eventual treatment by and in absolute idealism, if indeed such thinking, like that of the two great Greeks of antiquity, cannot be seen to have embarked upon this itself by implication. Hence Aquinas, for example, stated that every divine idea of what is or could be or would never be was one in identity with the divine essence in its indivisible integrity.<sup>1</sup>

Hegel, in fact, gives his account of Spirit *first*, as being the full issue of the other two persons, due to be recast by him, however, as *subjects* and finally, by their infinite nature that is wholly possessed by each, as subjectivity itself, which he will on occasion denote also as absolute personality (as in the exclamation “God help me!”), necessarily in the singular inasmuch as unitary, in that speculative contradiction which is “in reality”, or in truth, no contradiction. “And yet they are not three gods but one God” (Athanasian Creed).

So he speaks above (Baillie, p.763) of “the self-consciousness of spirit which has reached its notion as notion”, and this is indeed ultimately the Holy Spirit or union with the same. Apart from or “before” that “the

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Summa theol.* Ia Q 15 *in toto*, “On the Divine Ideas”.

mediating process is still incomplete". That is, all our talk of Father and Son is resolved into and in the Spirit, in prayer (philosophy as prayer), in a word, or in thinking self-consciousness. Spirit *is* as necessarily resulting from these two as first presentations or "forms" of itself. The "Spirit of the Lord" of the Old Testament was ever the Lord himself, moving upon "the face of the waters" and thus moving them too. This is a connexion, he says, of being with thought, in which, as synthetic, or put together, there is a defect. In reality, just as being spirit, God is "fire in the head" (Nijinsky), to think of whom, in this fire, is to touch him, the Idea that is (and yet "ideates") ultimate being, as we read at the end of the first *The Science of Logic*. The procession of Spirit is thus the passage from substance to subject that Hegel stresses. Instead of connecting being and thought "synthetically", therefore, as if "ontologically discontinuous", we should proceed from being *to* thought ("I go to the Father") as "the true Being", from the death of being to Pentecost, yet to this as supplying that death's true meaning in and as its graduating to this life in the spirit, daily, in a manner. "We die daily". For there is here no longer "an unreconciled diremption into a 'here' and a 'beyond'". We have indeed the true *content*, but with "all its moments ... appearing as completely independent aspects, externally related to one another" (p.764). The end-term, the end or term, rather, must swallow up the mediations, though fulfilling them, in a manner keeping them as giving them their meaning.

For consciousness to attain this truly unitary and indeed "simple" (Hegel's word used repeatedly in this section: the corresponding divine attribute figures prominently in Aquinas's tractate on the Trinity) form of the content, however, it must "necessarily pass to a higher plane of mental development" than previously,

where the absolute Substance is not intuitively apprehended but conceptually comprehended and where consciousness is for itself brought to the level of its self-consciousness. (p.764)

Such comprehension, Hegel would have known, was in orthodox theology and teaching reserved to that Substance itself absolutely, so to say. Yet the beatific vision of God, attainable by "supernatural" grace alone, granted to the blessed, gave or gives them full participation in this ultimate self-knowledge. This involved these theologians immediately in conflicts over the extent of "natural desire". They could not easily grant that the natural desire to "know" the infinite had to transcend, if itself infinite or without limit (the mark of reason as spirit, *Geist*), all objectification, such that in the end, Hegel shows, what such knowledge knows has to be itself, as in the teaching of Aristotle. Today, therefore, such theologians tend to speak,

highly speculatively unless they are merely equivocating, of man's natural desire to transcend his nature. This has led them further to the concept of forgiving oneself first as condition for forgiving others, which approaches yet more closely Hegel's thought although, unlike him, remaining imprisoned in the phenomenal sphere of picturing, necessarily or not. Yet the traditional argument from natural desire does in fact extend to such natural self-transcendence but, as it is conceived, by the power of an essentially abstract other. However, "I shall not die but live" (*Psalms* 118) is the natural response, in the power or force of this desire, while Hegel teaches that such death, in fact, "is the entry into spirit", so where's its sting? What we are waiting for is a full treatment or philosophy of time such as Heidegger, with his dualism between the God of philosophy and that of religion, did not achieve, his Counter-Reformational realism preventing him from developing properly the seeds to be found in Hegel. For him philosophy remained a "blow in the face" to God or to religion.

So I would take the "its" in the above quotation (from page 764), as it stands at least, as referable to "absolute Substance" at least as much as to finite consciousness as it is brought to infinite self-consciousness. Consciousness here comes to the self-consciousness, that is, of the Absolute Subject, Hegel's plain teaching generally, concurring with what I mentioned above of "beatific vision", though without the pictured divide of a "here" and a "beyond". This is not a downgrading or elimination of "heaven", of blessedness (*Enc.* 159), but assertion of the inclusion or absorption of that abstract "here" of time in just that eternity, as McTaggart saw clearly and defended as Hegel's meaning and as, more simply, necessarily true. Thus it is, also, that Hegel immediately adds that we "have to consider this content as it exists in *its* consciousness" (my stress), again, i.e. in the consciousness of the content. "Absolute Spirit is content". The truth of this content, though, "consists in ... becoming concrete actual self ... and being Subject" and not merely in the religious teaching or *praxis* or even in objectivising thought, thinking only itself, but as the all, rather, all and not merely or exclusively, "subjectively", "my" all ... *omnia* simply. This gets "lost in translation", again, unnecessarily *mis*translated, however, of the Franciscan *Deus meus et omnia* as "My God and *my* all". Rather, God is my all as precisely not just *my* all but all things, *et omnia*, rather. This was Hegel's point against Neoplatonist extravagances (see p.756).

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Returning now to the three moments, we look again at what led us to this *excursus* upon the third, viz. "self-existence or Self-knowledge *in* that

other”, as it leads us into treatment of Trinity and Creation in close collusion, again, with the Hegelian treatment of Good and Evil, “in this self-closed circular process”, which itself “expresses the Absolute Being *qua* Spirit”. Yet Spirit too must be grasped as *Being*, as this *process*, namely, since this is what Being finally is, though not, of course, a (particular) being over again, as an answer perhaps to the Heideggerian question, “What is being?” To be being it must *transcend predication*. This is the significance of the metaphysical *logica docens*, in which identity is the logical relation. This is precisely *not* a mere “term logic”. It is logic of the concept, of the Concept. There is no opening here for some particular “*is* of identity” in contradistinction to some supposedly more functional “*is*”. This point is the backbone of Hegel’s “Preface” to *The Phenomenology of Mind*. The being expressed by the *copula*, namely, is exactly that of an identity always of two moments of this one concept, always just two at a time, as constituting *one* thought. This consideration, all the same, does not make of the relation a purely linguistic and hence phenomenal entity. Thus a language can function perfectly well without such a *copula*, approaching just therefore more nearly pure thought while still a *Begriff*–*Schrift* (I intrude the hyphen) of sorts. The moments are thus all identical with one another as being each identical with the Concept. This is the sense in which “Everything is a syllogism” (Hegel), i.e. just one syllogism. This everything thus has no parts, is simple, Hegel repeatedly says<sup>2</sup>, and is thus no proper or composite *whole* either. This finds, makes comprehensible to speculative reason, Hegel’s considered statement, when discussing just here the identity of Good and Evil, as precisely two moments:

The difficulty people find in these conceptions is due solely to sticking to the term “is”, and forgetting the character of thought, where the moments as much are as they are not, - are only the process which is Spirit. (p.777)

Implied here is that “is” properly applies only to the final Concept, that no moment properly “is” at all, therefore, despite every entity we encounter, of which we might predicate anything, being a moment in this sense. This “character of *thought*” (my stress) is what we have just been stressing above. It explains Hegel’s reduction of the philosophy of language to a mere *Zusatz*

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<sup>2</sup> Indeed he keeps it ever before him, even when considering politics or state-craft, as is seen in his critical remark on Rousseau, who nonetheless made the same point, “when he says that the laws of the state must spring from the universal will (*volonté générale*), but need not on that account be the will of all (*volonté de tous*)”. (*Enc. 163, Zus. (1)*)

(in “The Philosophy of Spirit”), which astonished Derrida.<sup>3</sup> We have here, namely, a *deconstruction* of language as precisely the phenomenal, like nature or the phenomenal world, precisely, again, “as a whole”, as “in *esse* and *posse* null” (*Enc.* 50). This omission of a linguistics precisely parallels the omission of an ethics from Hegel’s tripartite *list* of “the philosophical sciences”. The introduction of a merely phenomenal *Sittlichkeit*, along with treatment of the State, into Hegel’s “philosophy of objective spirit” and precisely not into Absolute Spirit (the section following), is *the same* move as what we have just been treating separately. Similarly, Hegel’s affirmation that “the state is God on earth” parallels the first thesis of the logic that being and non-being are the same. For earth, again, or the world, is “null”, we have just recalled. Thus Christ on earth became, necessarily, God emptied, even a curse, “made sin”, a soullessly recollected “individual historical figure” (p.765). God on earth, then, will not be more than this, State and Church being but two phenomenal moments, not in any other way the Kingdom of God, here on earth, nor any one of Hegel’s posited three “kingdoms” (in LPR). Thus it is within our phenomenal lives in their immediacy that we experience the state as “God on earth”, as a legislative *instance*, so to say, grasped thus though, necessarily, by the abstract Understanding *in via*.

Human nature, not much to its credit, is more ready to believe that a system denies God, than that it denies the world. A denial of God seems so much more intelligible than a denial of the world. (*Enc.* 50)

Here Hegel foresaw the fate of his own system in the inexpert or otherwise interested hands of many. Since these moments of Spirit are “notions in restless activity”, anyhow, they “are merely in being inherently their own opposite”. They find, namely, “their rest in the whole”. Here Hegel identifies final or absolute motion and rest. Process itself does not change or move, forms rather “a gallery of pictures”, he says on the penultimate page of his book. See Baillie p.807, who here recalls, in the footnote, from page 1071b of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, that “Movement can neither come into being, nor cease to be; nor can time come into being, or cease to be”. There is no warrant for misreading this identification of time and eternity on the part of Aristotle as a reflexive linguistic statement, as many do, nonetheless. Yet it by no means reduces, onesidedly, eternity to time but enriches, rather, our grasp of the former. One shall *see* eternity, rather, in each “moment” or, for that matter, “grain of sand” (W. Blake, in whose

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. J. Derrida, “Speech and Writing according to Hegel”, in G.W.F. Hegel, *Critical Assessments*, ed. Stern: Routledge 1993.

poetry, poetic *thought*, the *first* or for us primal form of Absolute Spirit exercises itself). *This* is, has to be, time's eternal return and not some arbitrarily repeated and decidedly finite sectionalist successivism, as of a life *temporarily* repeated, "for ever and ever".

Contrast "the pictorial thought of the religious communion", which "brings into the realm of pure consciousness the natural relations of Father and Son". One can hardly deny this, must grant to the Moslems, as to the Christian Hegel, that "God cannot have a son". The communion, though, "even when thinking, proceeds by way of figurative ideas". Yet this, Hegel will say in a later text, is necessary precisely so that they can be transcended, as was ever the business of theology, beginning, in the Scriptural canon itself, with Pauline and Johannine theology, e.g. of the Word in the latter case, though one then might ask, with Joseph Pieper, what can be meant by "God speaks". God, Hegel finally declares, is his own revelation and, thereby, revelation itself. Hegel's own philosophy is thus a supreme instance of the process it here discusses, of the transcendence of a necessarily actual picture-*thinking*. The content itself requires and contains this actual form of itself, as it evokes our human art, being itself most beautiful and true, necessarily, as absolute. Hegel is at one with Aquinas in denying absolute evil as logically impossible. *Malum est semper in subjecto (bono)*. To this though one must add that Hegel can scarcely exclude an identity of the beautiful with the ugly, just as the truth is falsified by any possible judgment about it. Ultimately philosophy is a matter of not philosophising, one cannot *speak* of it, as Wittgenstein understood, Thus a time will come, quite logically, when one "can write no more", that of the "entry into spirit", of *thanatos*, working in us who write as life in those who read. Else why write? Why ever be obliged, even *paid*, to write?

Figurative thinking though will neutralise itself if it does not transcend itself in knowing the time for such transcendence, as or when the moments of Absolute Being revealed to it, that it has gleaned, "fall of themselves apart from one another". It does not recognise, in the object externally revealed to it, or to which it takes up "a merely external relation", whether its own self or "the nature of pure self-consciousness", that the latter is the goal of the whole process, right now and not merely in some ill-conceived beyond, or, furthermore, that this goal, as goal or end, is actually realised. Be happy, rejoice – these words are not so vain and foolish as they may sound to the unspiritual or to a group of homesick schoolboys in chapel. One has after all but to believe, to know. Then art, first of all, will proceed, then religion, then philosophy in burial and hiddenness, silently maturing.

This eventual transcendence, of the state of "parts outside parts", is notionally compulsory. If this is not done, if spiritual things are not

understood spiritually, then their dynamical content or “form” gets missed or lost, “degraded” rather, “into a historical imaginative idea and an heirloom handed down by tradition”, requiring new resurrection eventually, from such a death. This, I venture to suggest, is offered by this Hegelian philosophy, as itself a way or “rule”, “whose service is perfect freedom”. Absorption of the Vatican II “Decree on Ecumenism” and associated documents (1964) might be posited as the first material step in this process. We are invited to *live in our minds*, no less, as the whole of the modern period but all the centuries before also has been preparing, in regard to “all manner of thing”, inextinguishably, the “inner element in belief” being precisely “the notion knowing itself as notion”. This, says Aquinas in effect, is the goal or aim, if anyone would consider, of all our history and social arrangements, Hegel’s false as condition for the true.

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Hegel now gives his account of “Creation” as included in as identical with such after all reflexive knowledge, of just the notion by itself. This identity, in the freedom also called necessity, in simple self-consciousness as Absolute Subject, includes, equally, identically even, myself as this, who am thus straightaway not myself as I project myself phenomenally merely. For “if I were not then God would not be”, as Hegel cites elsewhere, with approval, from Eckhart. Thought here as everywhere thinks itself, assuming, as infinite, all the error and untruth of finitude, in itself and yet as “putting it by”, in absolute distinction or negativity. It is not that all cows are black here but that there are no cows. Thought thinks itself in infinite process transcending all motion or change and just therefore my immediate consciousness. It is in this sense that the “death of God”, as object, is implied, as is also one’s own death as, precisely, “entry into spirit”, not merely represented sacramentally, if efficaciously, in the death and resurrection of baptism, according to Church teaching, but faith-effected in notional thought as the final logic or “Word”, *logos*. In the self-speaking of this one and sole word all words are erased as finding therein and only therein each their place. It is, one might want to say, “no big deal”, but simply because it is not a “deal” at all, not one among several possibilities or “ways of knowing and thinking” (title of a book by Ernest Ruch, OMI), but *sophia* itself, as Hegel claims philosophy finally is, as love itself, *philia*, includes its object. This is “scientific” in the final and Aristotelian sense of *nous*. “Philosophy leaves everything as it is” (Wittgenstein), free from the distortions of opinion. This is precisely the attraction of mathematics, or chess too. These “games” or abstract enquiries evoke a comparable

seriousness, as if, in Lukaszewicz's word concerning discoveries in formal logic, one might just there discover something of "the mind of God", as he says "a Catholic philosopher" might say<sup>4</sup>. Philosophy, the concept, however, is not a matter of language or representation, even its own, being itself rather in the position of an essentially lost dialogue, of its own lost dialogue, to which we work as it were backwards, says McTaggart<sup>5</sup>, where not only speech, but all thinking, on the part of finite subjects, of anything but itself in its integrity, must cease. The "blessedness" (*Enc.* 159) we thus enter into is not our own, consciousness leaving itself, as one already possessed, at the door it enters of *self*-consciousness; not a deal at all, again, not a risk, even a "wonderful" one, since not a game at all. It is the notion itself alone that is "pure play" in "realised end". I cite again:

The Absolute Spirit, as *pictured* in the element of pure essential Being, is not indeed the abstract pure essential Being; rather, just by the fact that that this is merely a moment in the life of Spirit, abstract essential Being has sunk to the level of a mere element (in which Spirit lives). The representation of Spirit in this element, however, has inherently the same defect, as regards form, which essential Being as such has. Essential Being is abstraction and, therefore, the negative of its simplicity, is an *other*: in the same way, Spirit in the element of essential Being is the form of simple unity, which, on that account, is just as essentially a process of becoming something else. Or, what is the same thing, the relation of the eternal Being to its self-existence (its objective existence for Itself), is that of pure thought, an immediately simple relation. In this simple beholding of itself in the Other, otherness therefore is not as such set up independently; it is distinction in the way of distinction, in pure thought, is immediately no distinction – a recognition of Love, where lover and beloved are by their very nature not opposed to each other at all. Spirit, which is expressed in the element of pure thought, is necessarily just this: not to be merely in that element, but to be *concrete, actual*; for otherness itself, i.e. cancelling and superseding its own pure thought-constituted notion, lies in the very notion of Spirit. (Baillie, p.769: first stress added)

"This also is thou, neither is this thou". Commentary could scarcely make this clearer. Hegel next mentions "imagination" (cp. *Enc.* 455 to 460, inclusive of his long excursus on language (on which Derrida had concentrated in the article just cited). It is here, in this "element", that "the moments of the pure notion at once acquire a substantial existence in

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<sup>4</sup> Cited from Coope, Geach. Potts & White of the University of Leeds, *A Wittgenstein Workbook*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1970, p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> This figure occurs in his early *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic* of the 1880s, mixed though there with his other image of a zigzagging *progress*, though now forward now back.



opposition to each other". This occurs, we have just seen, in virtue of Spirit's own essential active self-othering, as Word and as words, imaging. This othering of the notion by the notion into substantial existences (here we see how the notion must transcend existence) in mutual opposition, as foundation of separateness, of moments as moments, is itself a notional moment, the notionally first, absolute moment which is Art. Even in finite life we identify art and the artist. Enquiries about the latter's life, circumstances and so on are a supervening abstraction. We hear some music and we say "That's Beethoven", i.e. necessarily (must be, has to be, etc.). Art transcends the artist, as when we say the works of Scripture are "inspired", absolute as to source. Later enquiries as to the circumstances and motives of composition have merely correctness of the Understanding as their goal. The truth these writings yield, however, or just therefore, belongs to speculative reason, "understanding spiritual things spiritually". This is the purely signifying character of "the letter", as indeed of the world itself (cp. *Enc.* 50) and the art-works within it, themselves conceptual "otherings" as being absolute spirit at source. That is, they are like concepts themselves, or like the world as a whole, "formal signs" purely or interiorly *words, verba interiora*, self-otherings of an other. "I do nothing of myself", said of and by the self-positing or other-positing (it makes no difference, we can now see) mediator, applies universally, even to Spirit itself. However. Spirit itself is its "own process" (cp. p. 767), otherwise "an empty word". Thus the Father, in Trinitarianism, is *nothing but* father, generating actually, *in actu*, his own Word or Son as other of his own essential otheringness or as entirely himself, whence both as one breathe forth, "spirate" or indeed "send" (the) Spirit. This *mission*, Hegel well stresses in this his account of creation (and of everything else), is internal and external indifferently (cp. *Enc.* 138f.). Aquinas, in his question on "the divine missions" at the close of the *Summa's* Trinitarian treatise, says nothing less.

So, anyhow, this element of "imagination" is "proper" to thought, besides being the place, element,

where the moments of the pure notion at once acquire a substantial existence in opposition to each other and are subjects as well, which do not exist in indifference towards each other, merely for a third, but, being reflected into themselves, break away from one another and stand confronting each other. (Baillie, p. 769)

We perhaps cannot see so easily why this must be so but we can see that this break-up into "separate existences" must necessarily not be first moment of this all-inclusive process. Add to this though that if the infinite as such must have moments then it is not infinite if the moments, while

corresponding in their meaning to a merely possible realisation, are not actually “realised”, each separately, since each of them, in relation to the nature of thought, of *nous* here pushed, by thought itself, to its furthest, and hence pushed by, as thought by, the infinite itself, would remain abstract or, in other words, a finite conception merely in each case incapable of “thinking itself” - it would be ours merely and what then, for that matter, would “we” be? It does not, as they say, “bear” thinking about, would not, anyway, instance self-consciousness. This, though, is to exclaim, with the nineteenth-century Ontologists and yet simply with Hegel, that “God” names something we are all somehow aware of, however we rate this name *qua* name, since this is the Notion at work “within” us as actively constituting us as what we finally are. “Greater things than I have done shall you do for I shall be in you” – thus religious proclamation, born within the bosom of a wholly religious culture, the Jewish, sets mind on the road to this the truth of “the reason world”, which “all notions”, as our own, are naturally “set”, it is their nature, to apprehend, becoming thus self-conscious as, *mutatis mutandis*, do individuals.

Imagination, then, we see, is certainly not exhausted as a power in the production, for instance, of a composite language. It is only in our own purely phenomenal sphere that *such* imagination, or that, say, of painting, is, so to say, itself imaged or shadowed. Creation itself is rather its proper province as “the notion itself in its absolute movement” (p. 769). The key concept here, as relating imagination to divinity, to the Absolute, is that of othering, expounded above, here as in Hegel.

Merely eternal, or *abstract* Spirit, then, becomes an other to itself (*in* this “breaking away”): it enters existence (ultimately in self-incarnation as its highest “development”, in thought, namely, as “the true Being”), and, in the first instance, enters *immediate* existence. It creates a World. This “Creation” is the word which pictorial thought uses to convey the notion itself in its absolute movement; or to express the fact that the simple which has been expressed as absolute, or pure thought, just because it is abstract, is really the negative, and hence opposed to itself, *the other* of itself; or because, to state the same in another way, what is put forward as essential Being is simple immediacy, bare existence, but *qua* immediacy or existence, is without Self, and, lacking this inwardness, is passive, or exists *for* another. (p. 769-770, parentheses added).

The continuation of this paragraph, in fact, is equally essential:

This existence for another is at the same time a world. Spirit, in the character of existing for another, is the undisturbed separate existence of those moments

formerly enclosed within pure thought, is, therefore, the dissolution of their simple universality, and their dispersion into their own particularity.

The “self-closed” circularity here, that “we” get a look-in upon this process of which we are not merely part, is just therefore not merely benign but illusory, at any rate for developed self-consciousness as Hegel defines it. For at the same time, or equally rather, as we must acknowledge, in the final “case” of incarnation, namely, that our sense-perception of “the immediately present God” is itself mere immediacy that must be “cancelled” and “transcended” “as Spirit”, so must it also be said, since it is so, that the being seen and heard (or however we modify this with reference to deaf-mute people or similar) “as an existent self-consciousness” on the part of “the Supreme Being” “is in very truth the culmination and consummation of its notion” (p. 760). Only thus do we find him saying that while any of the “figurative” forms of expression (e.g. “fallen”, “Son”) belong “merely to figurative thought (my stress), and not to the notion”, yet such a form “either (we may say) transmutes and lowers the moments of the notion to the level of imaginative thought, or transfers pictures into the realm of thought” (p.771). Implied, in the light of Hegel’s whole system and *oeuvre*, is that this applies to our whole process of thinking and its expression indifferently, as is the case with the Aristotelian *phantasmata*. It is the same with the necessity of divine Creation itself, necessary not as something that God “needs” or is forced to do but as Love, which, as Hegel intimates when discussing “distinction in the way of distinction” (p.769), itself necessitates, i.e. conceptually, this first othering we call creation, preparatory to necessitating the second in our temporal perception but in divine or ultimate reality one *self-revelatory* act of generation in self-begetting, thus uncovering the meaning in Hegel’s affirmation that “God *is* revelation”.

The above, in general, says something about ex-istence, always properly of a finite particular as standing out from the whole. I can only cite again, if more amply, the following:

Merely eternal, or abstract Spirit, then, becomes an other to itself; it enters existence, and, in the first instance, enters immediate existence. It creates a World. The “Creation” is the word which pictorial thought uses to convey the notion itself in its absolute movement; or to express the fact that the simple which has been expressed as absolute, or pure thought, just because it is abstract, is really the negative, and hence opposed to itself, the other of itself; or because, to state the same in yet another way, what is put forward as essential Being is simple immediacy, bare existence, but *qua* immediacy or existence, is without Self, and, lacking thus inwardness, is passive, or exists for another. This existence for another is at the same time a world. Spirit, in the character of existing for another, is the undisturbed separate subsistence

of those moments formerly enclosed within pure thought, is, therefore, the dissolution of their simple universality, and their dispersion into their own particularity. (pp. 769-770)

The simple or pure Being “is really the negative” because abstract and hence opposed to itself, to being. Just as this other of itself, then, it becomes a world, at one and the same time varied (Hegel’s mere variety) and monotonous, bare existence without Self, such that “There is nothing new under the sun”. Many may wish to make this passage determinative of Hegel’s essential *atheism*. I make no comment, except to say that by his own logic what are different, as are theism and atheism, are the same. Thus McTaggart, having declared for atheism, makes frequent use of theological expressions (as indeed did Sartre). Further, it is by no means evident that God cannot be conceived in a manner describable as atheistic. ‘The heathen say daily to me “Where is thy God?”’, the disconsolate Psalmist complained.

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The world, however, is not merely Spirit thus thrown out and dispersed into the plenitude of existence and the external order imposed on it; for since Spirit is essentially the simple Self, this self is likewise present therein. The world is objectively existent spirit which is individual self, that has consciousness and distinguishes itself as other, as world, from itself. (p.770)

Indeed Spirit, as simple self, could not be thus dispersed, as pantheism would imagine. There is a definite downgrading of existence to something finite and alienated in these texts. The world is an individual self, as that Word “through whom all things were made”, in one system and “self” therefore, and through itself. This is clearly Hegel’s mind, as will become increasingly clear. The word, the “outing”, the othering, contains all of the “otherer” and self-emptier, “going forth freely” indeed (*Enc.* 244), in the supreme freedom of its own necessity, “without shadow of turning”, and contrariwise. Thus “the world distinguishes itself as other from itself”. “This also is thou, neither is this thou”, that’s the *Leitmotif* throughout.

This world though, Nature, made by or through the Word (using “by” here in the grammatically instrumental sense rather than that of personal agency), as world (i.e. they are the same but different or, rather, the same in their difference: this is what the abstractly atheist or, rather, non-Trinitarian reading of Hegel misses), is not yet manifest as *self*, though it is indeed the Self that is the Word or, even and also, absolute “divine” person as “othered” or self-alienated,

... for since Spirit (which the world has been declared to be, viz. as Spirit “existing for another” or as having “entered” existence, which is a particular modality or finite moment merely of the Idea, as Being itself finally is not) is essentially the simple Self, this self is likewise present therein. The world is objectively existent Spirit, which is *individual* self (as was not “what is put forward as simple essential Being”, we found him saying earlier), that has consciousness and distinguishes itself as other. as world, from itself. (p.770, parentheses added, stress original)

“He was in the world and the world was made by him and the world knew him not” (*Gospel of John*, “Prologue”, finely “caught” here by Hegel). The world, nature, has to be, finally or unalienatedly, “individual self” in the sense of the final self-consciousness in which individual consciousness is consumed. So is then the world, however, as become, or revealed as one with the infinite or, hence, the infinite simply, as is every divine idea, Aquinas had earlier taught, simply following Augustine as classical continuator of Greek thought, in fact, missing only the self-humiliation of the Word therein, although this is itself an idea Hegel finds not free from representation as *Vorstellung* (p. 773, pp. 775-778), In general the true state of affairs is caught intuitively by the devotional saying, “This also is thou: neither is this thou”, assuredly not regardable by Hegel as mere paradox, the point at which religious wonder innocent of theology often stops:

The difficulty people find in these conceptions is due solely to sticking to the term “is” and forgetting the character of thought, where the moments as much *are* as they *are not*, - are only the process which is Spirit. It is this spiritual unity, - unity where the distinctions are merely in the form of moments, or as transcended – which became known to pictorial thinking in that atoning reconciliation spoken of above. And since this unity is the universality of self-consciousness, self-consciousness has ceased to be figurative or pictorial in its thinking; the process has turned back into it. (*Ibid.* pp. 777-778).

The last clause can be taken as a summing up of the process, in Scripture and Patristics, up to Anselm Hegel would probably have said, of the regeneration of philosophy out of and from religion, philosophy’s only concern as he says elsewhere, viz. “religion and nothing but religion”.

This self of the world, then, which is indeed itself, the world, as itself Spirit, necessarily “has”. Kant had called it “the rational creature”, thus distinguishing it utterly, in agreement with Aristotle himself, in virtue of its rationality, from the latter’s “featherless biped”, a phrase indicating, all the same, as is not often noticed, that man is as a kind of bird, is, as bipedal, aviarian or bird-like, like to the feathered bipeds (more than to the apes?),

an aviator indeed, flying, in his thought, where he will, such thought, after all, not excluding empirical realisation, in eventually “going to” the moon or anywhere else, for instance. As such, however, viz. representable as a “featherless biped”, it is a part of Nature, indeed is Nature become, becoming self-conscious or man, man himself becoming man in the full reach of absoluteness or divinity in and as the latter’s assumption, as ever Act, not passive to our analyses, of the biped’s sensibility, reaching up into phantasmal thinking as nonetheless, or just thereby, becoming thought thinking itself or, as, indeed, returned into or revealed as, finally, “the true being”.

Thus the Stagirite might, momentarily, with this comical “aviarian” allusion, as it seems to us at least, be *prefiguring* the rationality he finally specifies. So the “creature” in question, the “creation”, is thus no accident or even phenomenon merely. This is the doctrine of Absolute Idealism, which the recently proposed cosmological, even cosmogonic principle, within “physics” concretely considered, called “anthropic”, unmistakably approaches.

Here is the nexus, man as spirit, not merely in but *of* the world as a whole. It reaches its apogee of explicitness in McTaggart’s doctrine, in *The Nature of Existence*, that only persons exist. In Hegel one does not at first see that he is talking about man as such, if indeed this can be said. The transition, in his text here especially, from world to Adam, is virtually seamless, as being indeed that from the world to its own self, again a “distinction in the way of distinction” of “what are by their very nature not opposed to each other at all”. Matter doesn’t matter. As, according to Aquinas, a created necessary being, in his sense of “natural necessity”<sup>6</sup>, matter, by Hegel’s doctrine of predication, is pure form or Idea, as applies also to human souls and, apparently without difference (for Aquinas, as distinct from Leibniz), as necessity of being, to God. We may remark, in passing, on the oddity of the realist account of creation, where immortal beings, souls, *inhabit* a contingent and fugitive world, as it has to be seen as, being in reality an abstraction (from those souls) to which the Hegelian (and Spinozist) term “acosmism” seems better fitted, cosmology meanwhile becoming in McTaggart a set of doctrines about just those souls exclusively<sup>7</sup>. They *are* the cosmos. “The world is objectively existent spirit, which is *individual* self, that has consciousness and distinguishes itself as other, as world, from

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. the essay on natural necessity in Aquinas by Patterson Brown in *Aquinas*, a collection of essays edited by Anthony Kenny, Macmillan Paperbacks, London 1970.

<sup>7</sup> J.M.E. McTaggart, *Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1901, Chapter Two especially.

itself" (p. 770). Hence one can also say, as Hegel does elsewhere (cf. *Enc.* 50), that there is no world or, as "only a sum of incidents", as it is when taken abstractly or "in itself", that it is "phenomenal, in *esse* and *posse* null". The "being which the world has is only a semblance".

This individual self, which the world is, as it follows, distinguishes itself "as other, as world, from itself", in what we call knowledge. It, the self, "is thus immediately established as first", to the extent indeed of "naming" the beasts and hence also plants, rocks and so on, though not just those trees, of knowledge and life, mentioned in the Scriptural narrative. All the same, says Hegel, crucially for his account as it goes on, this individual self, which is the world in fact, "is not yet conscious of being Spirit". It would be crass indeed to take this phrase, *viz.* "not yet", abstractly in a historical or temporal sense. The necessity of thought is operative, this being the factor which some mistake for atheism or, again, pantheism. Self

thus does not exist as Spirit; it may be called "innocent", but not strictly "good". In order that in fact it may be self and Spirit, it has first to become objectively an other to itself, in the same way that the Eternal Being manifests itself as the process of being self-identical in its otherness. Since this spirit is determined as yet only as immediately existing, or dispersed into the diverse multiplicity of its conscious life, its becoming "other" means that knowledge concentrates itself upon itself. Immediate existence turns into thought, or merely sense-consciousness turns round into consciousness of thought; and, moreover, because that thought has come from immediacy or is conditioned thought, it is not pure knowledge, but thought which contains otherness, and is, thus, the self-opposed thought of good and evil.<sup>8</sup>

The "self-opposed thought of good and evil": we might apply this characterisation of self-opposition to pairs such as positive and negative simply, of which it is a species, or Being and Nothing. The pairs, that is to say, are logical rather than real, "distinction in the way of distinction". Yet it is logic that determines both reality and existence, Spirit that, in its character as Being "exists for another", is even or, here, specifically, "the undisturbed separate subsistence of those moments formerly enclosed within pure thought, is, therefore, the dissolution of their simple universality, and their dispersion into their own particularity". "Formerly" here has the sense of a *priori*. Thus, therefore, as self, as spirit, man will see a world, with "an external order imposed", any world. The point, again, is Aristotelian, *mutatis mutandis*. Number, weight and measure, all the same,

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<sup>8</sup> *Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 770. Cf. *Enc.* 24, *Zus.*, section 3, for further analysis, more detailed in some respects, perhaps less fundamental in others, of these conceptual origins as pictorially presented.

are enclosed, absorbed, within the Idea and are otherwise abstract or “purely” logical. Not to have added this reflection would be, again, “one-sided”, against “the character of thought” (cf. p.777).

I add now the following historico-philosophical reflections, to my account of Hegel just here, in an attempt, to situate, as mitigating, the firstly apparent strangeness, of Hegel’s treating the questions of good and evil (practical after all) as intrinsically united with proper Trinitarian theory, which is indeed, on this Scotist or post-Scotist view, not abstractly theoretical anyway, just as, Scotus says, theology is superior to philosophy as being a practical science. To understand his statement properly (rather than idly wondering about what he himself “then”, so to say phenomenally, thought) we must recall Aristotle’s declaration that *theoria* is itself “the highest *praxis*”.

It is thus the world itself, as *individual* self, that now, in a development of its own interior logic, discloses its *finite ideality* (here are the points of entry for the moment, as it is on Hegel’s scheme of logic, after all, of “good and evil”), its ceaseless self-opposition constitutively set against Spirit’s ceaseless self-identification, into which it is only absorbed as being itself the same as, in its difference from, Spirit or Self. Man, as self, is thus nothing but this battle-ground, having himself to *become* Spirit as “our affair”. The world, this individual self, has first to become objectively an other to itself, *just as* “the Eternal Being manifests itself as the process of being self-identical in its otherness”. *Hence*, in perfect pictured accord, religion declares that man is “made in God’s image”, sufficient premise for “natural law” as the “eternal law” the former is also spoken of as reflecting, or as “reflected light”, light as (Latin) *ius* (*Recht*), though, rather than *lex* (*Gesetz*), since the latter “rationalises” or gives some kind of *ratio* of the light, says Aquinas, which is eternal or natural, whether inscribed in tablets of stone, so as to be smashed, or written, so as to be erased, in sand. Doubtless the two German terms cited do not correspond at all points to the Latin distinction as expounded by Aquinas at *Summa theol.* IIa-IIae, the section on the virtue of justice and *iustum*, the just “thing”. In these detailed treatises on the virtues, natural or “theological”, on gifts, graces and the Gospel beatitudes, Aquinas covers, really covers, the same ground as is done by Hegel’s treatment we are discussing, giving, as he does throughout, full play to speculative reason. One thing that emerges is that no one can know if he has any given virtue, e.g. humility, *the* virtue of truth (*sic*), or not, as he can and should know if he has kept “the law” or not. The law (*lex*) Aquinas posits in each case as *corresponding* to the virtue, therefore, does not guarantee, if followed, the latter’s being possessed as inward *habit*. Further, Aquinas insists that you can’t have one virtue without having all of



them (there is no thieves' honour in the true sense: yet Peter Geach protested violently against this "monstrous" doctrine in *The Virtues*, CUP 1977). So if a man is reckoned just he must be reckoned chaste (the virtue of "right reason *in venereis*) and generally temperate as well, however "irregular" his *mores* may seem. The monks around Charlemagne thought to solve that one by claiming that his *membrum virile* burned in Hell while his soul enjoyed beatitude! *Anima mea*, Aquinas might have countered, *non est ego*. Hegel agrees if *anima* is taken in abstraction from an equally abstract "body". The flesh, nature, is rather "absorbed", though, for him, into mind as, like all moments, the same in its difference. Hegel, anyhow, rather follows Kant in not giving virtue, or even ethics generally, place in "first philosophy", while disagreeing sharply, within first philosophy, with Kant's "metaphysics of morals". The theory of the virtues, anyhow, is indeed *theoria*, and hence Aquinas, to the discomfiture of some, reckons conscience an act of *speculative* reason specifically, i.e. not practical. Contrariwise, the conclusion of any *practical* syllogism, Aristotle declares, is an *action* and not any kind of judgment, such as that this is to be done, *hoc est faciendum*, the "rationalist" alternative espoused a while ago by G. Grisez and J. Finnis, actually neutralising practical reason but without sublating the distinction, as do Hegel and Aristotle in saying that *theoria* is the highest *praxis*: one might just as well say the converse, though this is less usual. It may be interesting to note here Aquinas's doctrine that the final or "new" divine law is not written or enunciated at all, e.g. in some part of the Bible, but, and he rests content with a figure, "poured into the heart". All this, for Hegel, comes under his own account of "thinking" as meaning "a liberation", meeting self in other, but of which all consciousness instances the modes, called I, free Spirit, Love, Blessedness. Or, it is "the power of necessity" (*Enc.* 159).

This self's becoming "other", while yet only "immediately existing" and "dispersed" amid "the multiplicity of its conscious life", "means that knowledge concentrates itself upon itself", in some kind of exclusion, he seems to mean. It is thus *immediate existence* that "turns into thought, or merely sense-consciousness turns round into consciousness of thought", like the simple process of growing up to which Hegel likens this development from innocence to self-consciousness at *Encyclopaedia* 24. So the thought, in this first Adamic self-concentration, is conditioned, "not pure knowledge" (could it ever be, whatever the state of culture, though Hegel claims at least approximation to this?). It is, again, "thought which contains otherness", as of good and evil. Already even, as he will go on to show, evil is thus the same as goodness and can only be thus conceived if it is not to remain a purely abstract negation or "sham-being", which is the real evil in

its essential *unreality*. Hegel will speak of self-assertion, “on the part of the existent consciousness”, which is a clear if discordant variety of self-consciousness. We may recall these points when we come to his identification of conscience with “wickedness”, recalling also Nietzsche’s “beyond good and evil”. Self-opposition may not be the last word.

So it is that “self-concentration on the part of the existent consciousness has straightway the character of becoming discordant with itself”, a point stressed in the *Encyclopaedia* account. “Evil appears as the first actual expression of the self-concentrated consciousness.” Hegel here is more Miltonic than Milton himself who, in the words of Hegel’s contemporary, William Blake, “was of the Devil’s party without knowing it”. Hegel knows and accepts the consequences, as we shall see here. Man, he says, “is evil by nature, and it is an error to imagine that he could ever be otherwise” (*Enc.* 24, *Zus.*). This sounds restrictively Lutheran, but need not be. Redeeming grace, as Hegel sees it, can have nothing to do with some quasi-legalistic “imputation”, as anyone can verify, but is rather identified with the Aristotelian and afterwards Christian “holy dying” (*athanatizein*), captured sacramentally in baptism, whereby just death or dying, Hegel says, “is the entry into spirit”, a bald enough statement which is simultaneously a judgment upon life and its immediacy. Things are in general, he also states, the opposite of what they seem. Or there is a reciprocity. In what sense, all the same, it is just “man” that so enters, i.e. man so to say abstractly, or man become God (and hence God-man), absorbed into God, these are secondary questions.

Hegel, anyhow, dismisses all talk of a “fall”, of man, the Devil or anything, as pictorial or figurative. One cannot fall away from God, as the infinite, embracing all things. Aquinas might correct this by saying one can, all the same, fall away from the divine friendship, from unity of mind, of *nous*, in other words. Sin and lunacy must be quite closely associated on any account. “I am wiser than the aged, because I keep thy law”. Such a man, anyhow, then “goes to the place appointed for him”, as one does with regard to any action, however. In this case there is no “fall” and foreknowing is determinative, not passive, the “fore” being anyhow a figure.

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Evil appears as the first actual expression of the self-concentrated consciousness. And because the thoughts of good and evil are utterly opposed, and this opposition is not yet broken down, this consciousness is essentially and merely evil. (p.771)

The opposition, it is implied, *will be* broken down, and that without having to wait for the nineteenth century and Hegel's philosophy. Or rather, these thoughts are not yet conceptually or logically broken down. The "yet" is not historical. What is narrated is itself *logical* development, saturated with necessity. Thus good, the good consciousness, is implied from the start through *talk of* the bad consciousness. Yet no one is talking as such:

Logic ... and its categories ... are the heart and centre of things ... Common fancy puts the Absolute far away in a world beyond. The Absolute is rather directly before us, so present that so long as we think we must, though without express consciousness of it, always carry it with us and always use it ... Logic is usually said to be concerned with forms only ... But this "only", which assumes that the logical thoughts are nothing in comparison with the rest of the contents, is not the word to use about forms which are the absolutely real ground of everything. Everything else rather is an "only" compared with these thoughts. (*Enc. 24, Zus. (2)*)<sup>9</sup>

The Idea, that is, founds Mind. In its light we see all (without seeing that we do). "The soul has learned everything" (Plato: *Meno*). Mind is the other of self that *is* self, as being is the other of nothing. This term "other", in fact, is more exact than "opposite", which implies without itself grounding an antecedent and more specific "reason", *ratio*. *Ratio est ad opposita*: thus the Scholastics distinguished reason from nature as, always, *determinata ad unum*.

Meanwhile, logically viewed, this first consciousness, again, self-concentrated, "is essentially and merely evil", once innocence is left behind. Innocence knows neither good nor evil as such, for it does not reflect, in what has to be self-concentration, a bending back. Consciousness, in fact, bends behind *its own* back; thus it is not an innocent bending back, is evil, as the no longer innocent is guilty as self-occupied, Hegel seems to be implying. It is evil in itself, though, rather than viewed as necessarily or, rather, specifically "before God", since the religious narrative on its own can scarcely avoid the false implication, Hegel asserts, that innocence is *ipso facto* better (than evil). Innocence is natural rather than spiritual, is not, unlike evil, spiritual at all. Yet one can, or so one would at first think, envisage an innocent or "objective" self-concentration, as it were without a

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. here Henry B. Veatch, "Concerning the Ontological Status of Logical Forms", *Review of Metaphysics*, December 1948, along with the whole profuse and profound corpus of his work on the philosophy of logic, above all his first book, *Intentional Logic*, Newhaven 1952 (see my *Philosophy or Dialectic*, Frankfurt 1993, Part I, section 5, pp. 61-70, "Some Criticisms of Veatch's Intentional Logic Considered"), left to posterity by this foolishly neglected if ever unfashionable thinker.

break. It becomes evil in that case, it would seem, as turning *practical*, as in Eden one never had to be. That too could be related to awareness of one's own nakedness specifically, in shame, of a separation or break from one's instinctive or natural life, Hegel claims. Behind this lies his idea that knowledge in itself (anyhow) appears at first as evil. Evil, that is, is a first stage on the ascent to the Good. We can compare, or use these earlier reflections the better to situate Hegel's later remark, assertion, that *conscience* is wickedness. It was utterly crass to take this as a first indication merely of an encroaching conventionalist conservatism (as Findlay had intended to do in his Introduction to Hegel), as if Hegel's thought might ever be conceived as moving, or rather moved, at such a level. We should rather enquire into what he might mean, in the light of his total *oeuvre*, by "wickedness". The same would apply to how we should read his later book on *The Philosophy of Right* ("right" as translating the titular *Recht* rather than, say, *Gesetz*, as corresponding to *ius* rather than *lex*, again: otherwise the book would hardly be interesting at Hegel's usual philosophico-metaphysical level, else preserved throughout his work).

Yet one cannot have this evil without the good, "owing to just this very opposition". The originality lies in the putting of evil first, as metaphysically or logically prior to good. The "good consciousness" opposes the evil and this relation itself, between the two abstractions, is necessarily present. Here Hegel reasons that since it is the immediate, or existence itself, that has "turned round into thought" with this self-concentration, since this is in fact a concentration *away* from immediate self as, rather, upon that *all*, upon the Idea, which self, subjectivity, finally is, since this is so, namely, we have, within as without the self indifferently now, a transition, interiorly as exteriorly, to otherness from deep within the subject's identity, this subject now becoming thought itself. Therefore this transition to otherness, put as becoming evil, need not be seen as remaining, or ever having been entirely immanent, in the immediately concerned subject. It could be removed away, "out of the *existing* world" (my stress), "to the very earliest realm of thought", a more fundamental *layer* of thought, one might rather say, varying the pictured "realm" a little. Thought has no realms, is its own place, while "earliest" seems to refer to the subject's own quasi-historical or mythical projections.

Hegel in fact now cites these myths without apology. "It may thus be said that it was the very first-born Son of Light who, by becoming self-concentrated, fell", to which is immediately added that falling, in context, belongs "merely to figurative thought", that third, imaginative blending of what had first been opposed, as had *noumenon* and *phenomenon*. We have discussed this above in relation to language as such and, particularly, "the

necessary picture-idea". The blending, we noted, Hegel, like Aristotle, finds necessary, although in Aristotle too the phantasm rather merely accompanies the thought, is in no way blended with it. That happens rather in imagination itself, not in intellect. This process, however specified, yields also the term "Son" here. It is up to us, rather, to understand this spiritual intention spiritually, as those do not who object, in "certainty against the spirit"<sup>10</sup>, that "God cannot have a son", here, surprisingly again, envisaging several possible or alternative "sons", to start with anyway. This type of expression, therefore, again,

either ... transmutes and lowers the moments of the notion to the level of imaginative thought, or transfers pictures into the realm of thought. (p. 771)

That is, it depends on our intention in employing it. What is clearly intended here besides, however, is a kind of bringing together of the otherwise entirely opposed figures of Satan and Christ, which again might recall Milton, though the pair could equally be viewed as that of Christ and "Satanised" man specifically. A certain identification of falling and rising is also implied, as in the popular saying that "we fall but to rise". Hegel goes further, however, introducing "the angelic hosts" as prelude to his Trinitarian considerations, apparently with a view to rendering indifferent any immediate "multiplicity of other shapes and forms", counting the moments being "altogether useless" as falling "outside conceptual thought". *Numeri non ponuntur in divinis*, as Aquinas had more "theologically" put it, but also as more of a directive, for which Hegel (as of course does Aquinas elsewhere) gives here the justification. After this angelological moment Hegel will return to questions about the incarnation considered earlier in the chapter, as discussed by us above, but this time focussing upon it as the process of redemption of fallen man, finally identified, here and as developed in his final chapter following, with reposeful self-consciousness as simultaneously a self-obliterating omniscience or heaven. "The soul has learned everything" but just therefore or even identically "all nature is akin" (Plato, *Meno*). Yet, or therefore, the soul is in ceaseless motion, it "foams forth to God His own infinitude" (Schiller poetic line, with which "the first

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<sup>10</sup> See, for this expression and its meaning, the Preface to the third edition (1830) to the *Encyclopaedia* (but for further commentary on it see also the second Preface of 1827). Hegel's stance towards doctrinal expression appears to be precisely that of the then future Second Vatican Council (1962–1964). Cf. the discussion of "certainty against the spirit" in Jordan D. Wood and Justin S. Coyle: "Must Catholics Hate Hegel?" in *Church Life Journal* or in Blog Posts, June 8, 2018, at <http://churchlife.nd.edu/2018/06/08/must-catholics-hate-hegel/>.

part” of Hegel’s system concludes), which sublates the opposition of motion and rest, as it does that, we find, of good and evil, shockingly, as we, and Hegel, cannot but find this conclusion. But he will develop this further, with more attention to its logical basis, in what is put as Preface to *The Phenomenology of Mind* but written subsequently to the book’s main body, as also in his later work, continuous with this. Meanwhile he uncharacteristically compromises, saying not merely that after this fusion good is just not good, evil just not evil, but that we must “obstinately” continue to assert their opposition at the same time. Well, we must, I suppose. In fact he takes occasion, all the same, just with respect to this issue, to assert his fundamental thesis as that upon which all hinges here:

The difficulty people find in these conceptions is due solely to sticking to the term “is”, and forgetting the character of thought, where the moments as much *are* as they *are not*, – are only the process which is Spirit. (*Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 777)

We might take note here of Hegel’s characterisation of evil as he means it here as being the “side of the opposition involved in figurative thought ... which takes natural existence and individual self-existence to be the essential reality” (p. 778). Our whole picture of things and finite way of going on, so to say, falls under this epithet of “evil”. This naturally tones down its normal element of emotive horror, since the horror now, though objectively greater, as more absolute, yet just therefore is less felt. Spirituality, after all, truly transcends emotion, as rooted in our animal nature, one might say. “Humankind cannot bear too much reality”, wrote the poet Eliot. Nor too much philosophy, maybe!

Hegel says, then, that in place of the fallen Lucifer, light-bearer, another “was at once created”. The key is this phrase “at once”, obviously again not temporal but logical. It is a picture of this conception of the dichotomised pair, good and evil, itself, the point being to interpret the picture in the light of the former dualist conception or this in terms of the picture indifferently. Both “may thus be said”. This is a very liberal permission. No one, after all, again, can be “fallen” from God, though the Idea doubtless relates differently to any two of its moments, with each of which, nonetheless, it is identified in idea, essence and being, but not, note, with the collected aggregate of all these, since that is not a moment, as is, nonetheless again, the *ordered* cosmos. So Hegel speaks of “the wrath of God”, though as a figurative conception and thus, like number, “devoid of the notion”.

One might want to say that this treatment of evil in regard to good, they are the same, is a subspecies of Aquinas’s treatment of the class of “transcendental predicates” (those applicable to anything whatever: i.e. it

differs radically from Kant's notion of "transcendental") other than being (*ens*), viz. that they are ultimately the same – one, good, true and similar all denote being<sup>11</sup>. Yet Aquinas does not say that, for example, good and not good, or non-good, are the same as each other, though he does account for "the origin of negation", if not of evil, with reference to one of these transcendentals specifically (viz. *aliquid*, something, as taken from *aliud quid*), putting it in this respect at least as more fundamental in the order of these predicates' succession upon first this, Being, followed by One, Other, Something, True, Good or a similar list of these transcendental predicates, i.e. that everything else, i.e. after Being, is *aliquid*, something, but parsed as *aliud quid*, an *other* something, namely, and so *not* the first, i.e. negation is first enshrined in the thought we denote by "other" as itself enshrined in, in some lists, the fourth "transcendental predicate", i.e. *aliquid*, something (or other, as we say).<sup>12</sup> By this Hegel might be saying that good and evil equally denote being, but he rather does not. He rather says, as is also Aquinas's ultimate idea, that only being is, or that thought, the true being, thinks only itself. In virtue of this he excludes good and evil from first philosophy, as in a clear sense he also excludes the opposition of false and true, the false being a necessary moment to the self-revelation of truth. I abstract here, however, from the philosophy of the *me on* (in Greek), the metaphysical negative, of that which might transcend existence or even being, from the *ouk on*, the simple negative. By contrast one might classify the more usual dualities of logical theory, not to mention its self-limitation, as Manichean, e.g. in the mathematically inclined Frege, as a limitation to truth and falsity in despite of Being, which he distinguishes from *die blossse Kopula* precisely to exclude being from logic and its philosophy, if any, while continuing to use the indeed "soulless word 'is'" (Hegel, as cited above), the polar opposite of Hegel's general procedure, whereby the Idea is disclosed at the end as "the true Being" and that solely, while it is at the same time the backbone of his science of logic. This though, in what becomes a three-cornered discussion (with Hegel as hypotenuse), is quite the opposite of Aquinas's account of the copula "is":

The copula *to be* signifies the act *to be* of the thing known. This does not mean, however, that it necessarily signifies it as being in the real order: rather it signifies it in whatever order it is found ... for what is apprehended may not exist in reality (as when we say "man is a species") and if the copula always

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. Aquinas, *QD de potentia*, VII.

<sup>12</sup> Cp. Leo Elders, "Le premier principe de la vie intellectuelle", section II, "Le jugement négatif", in *Autour de Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Vol. 1, FAC-éditions, Paris, 1987, esp. pp. 192-198.

represented the thing as in the real order, it would often be false. But since anything of which a proposition is formed must exist at least in the soul, the copula must signify at least such an act of being.<sup>13</sup>

Or, in Aquinas's own words:

For "is" means that which is understood after the manner of absolute actuality. For "is", when it is expressed without qualification, means *to be in act*, and therefore it has its meaning after the manner of a verb. But the actuality, which is the principal meaning of the verb *is*, is indifferently the actuality of every form, either substantial or accidental act. Hence it is that when we wish to signify that any form or act actually inheres in any subject, we signify it by this verb *is*, either simply or according to some qualification – simply, in the present tense, according to some qualification, in the other tenses.<sup>14</sup>

Meanwhile I would add to this discussion the observation that the essential opposition Hegel points to between good and evil, making of "good" a relative term, appears to be quite absent from Aquinas's metaphysical account of Good as Being as it is presented to the will, of Truth as Being as it is presented to the mind, counting both will and mind as, so to say, individual faculties of human nature, as relating here, after all, to human language, whereas Hegel keeps more in mind, it may seem, the Aristotelian truth that Mind alone is divine, is everything and that as such it "thinks only itself" and all else as therein included. Hence it is, though, that Hegel says elsewhere that evil is "a sham-being" merely, "a negative which, though it would fain assert itself, has no real persistence and is, in fact, only the absolute sham-existence of negativity in itself"<sup>15</sup>. But then we must ask in what sense he is, as co-relative, positing Good also as "sham-being" when compared to Being itself, such that he is involved after all in some self-contradiction distinct from his general defence of contradiction as the world's "motor". Being is neither good nor evil inasmuch as, strictly, it is simply and uniquely itself "and there is no other", as was put as said of (or by, rather) God. There is only being. In eternity "good" and "true" fall away as belonging to the representational character of human speech as such, against which, against its "bewitchment" (Wittgenstein), philosophy is identified as "a battle" (Wittgenstein). I do not find this view of Hegel's foreign to Aquinas in his metaphysical writings. As theologian and teacher, especially perhaps in the "medieval" context, so to say politically, he bends

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<sup>13</sup> Robert W. Schmidt: *The Domain of Logic according to Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1966, p. 229.

<sup>14</sup> Aquinas, *Comm. in I peri herm.*, lect. 5, no. 22.

<sup>15</sup> *Enc. 35 Zus.*



away from or relaxes the stringency of this first of truths, with which all the same just he is identified, that God and God alone is Being, just therefore having his own unique act of being, the all in which all alone find themselves. Just therefore, though, God alone is good, he reasons, and hence virtue and morality, the “honourable good”, are only thus honoured because they lead to God<sup>16</sup>.

So, Aristotle, Aquinas, Hegel – a straight line *in the order of theology* and hence of “religion and nothing but religion”, the business of philosophy according to Hegel in particular. Religion as a *virtue*, however, is treated by Aquinas (in ST IIa-IIae) as a subordinate part of justice! We may say then that Hegel takes philosophy a further step into the mystical, which he identifies with speculative thought proper. In a way this corresponds to the older view of theology as “queen of the sciences”, transcending philosophy as basing itself upon revelation, identified by Hegel with an absolute speculation, the spirit, i.e. mind, “leading into all truth”. The mystical, that is, is not the impenetrably mysterious. Is this not rationalism? If not why not? Is it rational? Is faith rational? Hegel’s answer, to this last question, is affirmative, at the same time as he equates the rational with infinite or “absolute” knowledge, not attainable within finite life, as McTaggart, with no religious commitment, also affirmed. The divine or absolute right is thus preserved in either case, death remaining spirit’s unique portal. “If I go not away the spirit will not come unto you”, a saying which every human being can apply also simply to her or himself. Thus the religion of the Cross, *spes unica*, and *sophia*, without qualification simply converge. This is the only interpretation possible of what, in terms of Hegel’s system, is otherwise a self-contradictory phrase, “the absolute religion” (referred to Christianity). But then, it would seem, we can continue to speak, if we would, of absolute goodness or truth. Still, speech is silver, silence is golden.

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“Fallen” is “just like “Son”. They are both figurative terms. “Disinherited”, as dependent upon “son”, would still be equally figurative, as, there can be little doubt, we will have to say that “friend” is, as applied to God. Aquinas says the society of friends is not necessary to eternal bliss. Implied is that even the relation to God, from our side only though it be (since God has no real relation to creatures), must be *closer* than friendship, just inasmuch as it is the purely “logical” relation of identity, translatable all the same, Hegel

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. our “The *bonum honestum* and the Lack of Moral Motive in Aquinas’s Ethical Theory”, *The Downside Review*, April 2000, pp. 85-110 (cited previously above).

would show, as love. This is even love's secret, key to the mystery of the erotic as logic's own reality, incarnate and "spiritual" in one.

Satan, then, would be just what he should be, prior or posterior to the pictured fall, no better and no worse, of necessity, while "fall" or "son" are taken from the contingent phenomenological "realm". As such, as object, he is thus good, is worthy material for artists, in painting, literature or music. Thus C.S. Lewis (*The Great Divorce*) had to destroy his own thesis of a real divorce of heaven and hell by finally *nullifying* the latter as it disappears down a worm-hole on the lawns of heaven, as I mentioned above. In fact heaven and hell are "married" (Blake) and thus identified in sublation towards truth, which, in being thought, is itself blessedness or heaven, inclusively this time, over again. Thus in the parable the tares are burnt up but not the enemy who sowed them. Nor would it contradict the parable if it were added that the servant told to gather the tares returned to the lord to say that there were no longer any tares to be found. What the enemy fathers, after all, are lies merely.

"Good and Evil were the specific distinctions of thought which we found ..." (Baillie, p. 773). We cannot, that is, take this distinction for granted; there might have been other ones. In fact, though, the distinction arose specifically in relation to the passage from innocent ignorance to knowing. It is thus enclosed within this whole system of logical necessity, at one with yet as transcending much, but not necessarily all, previous metaphysics. What was Aristotle's attitude to his formal logical treatises in relation to his physics and metaphysics, to cite the most prominent candidate viewable as predecessor to Hegel? We know he distinguished the adverbs *logikoos* and *physikoos* (I write "oo" for the omega). But so does Hegel. Still, the going forth freely as nature (*Enc.* 244) is, again, enclosed within logic as, finally, a philosophy of Absolute Spirit (*Geist*). Nature, for Hegel, results from and finds its final place, its "return", in absolute thought. Nature would have to be *as a moment thereof* only. In Gentile's terms it would be *pensiero pensante*, in the Italian, i.e. actively thinking thought, by or as God in fact, which Gentile himself considered impossible and therefore found Hegel inconsistent as including this representation which is Nature in his threefold scheme, as it thus becomes. *A fortiori* he equally rejected the alternative of *pensiero pensato* as a realist account of created nature left as self-standing.

This opposition is, again, to be "broken down". They, Good and Evil, are, for the "moment" as it were, *represented* "as essential realities of thought, each of them independent by itself". Thus: "man is the self with no essential reality of his own and the mere ground which couples them together, and *on which* they exist and war with one another" (p. 773, my stress). That is, Hegel views our destiny as trans-human, even as it is said (by St. Paul) of

the “resurrected” Christ that he “became a living spirit”, when, he also says, “God shall be all in all”. Here is where, if anywhere, Hegel’s views on immortality, on death as “entry into spirit”, free therefore of “sting” or “victory”, are to be sought, in combination with his affirmation that “the end is realised”. “If God is for us, what can be against us”, the same Apostle, Nietzsche’s “first Christian”, impeccably reasons, in full “correctness”, even granted that “all judgments are false”. We grant equally, with Hegel, that “everything is a syllogism”.

Thus man is not man, and yet he is (man). He transcends himself in “weakness”, “mere ground”. The self, however, is “the actuality” of these “universal powers”.

From this point of view it thus comes about that, as evil is nothing else than the self-concentration of the natural existence of spirit, conversely, good enters into actual reality and appears as an (objectively) existing self-consciousness. (p. 773)

The “thus”, or the “conversely”, rather, might seem over-charged. The thought, however, is a paralleling of spirit’s natural existence as evil, inasmuch as self-concentrated in the way specified, *abstractly* individual, with its thus far natural appearing, *in existence*, as good. Both powers appear, are manifested, one after the other, yet with the so to say simultaneous suggestion that they are found always together as, so to say, abstracted from one another, the natural enclosed within the spiritual, what is pictured in Scripture as the one *afterwards* seen as “mediator” being “made sin for us”. As the evil is the finite, in first “creation”, so the good is infinite as including, taking up and “sublating” the evil, “made sin for us” in religious, even ritualistic terms, or, again, “promised” as, doubtless at a later stage of development, seen as logically necessary. “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed”, in unity, even proto-instance of this unity, of individual and universal. “Everything is a syllogism”, everything. The idea of, for Hegel, necessary mediatorship is presented, “pictorially” or not, in this early religious text, as previously in the so-called *proto-evangelium* of *Genesis* 3, 14-15: the woman’s offspring, “he” in the Greco-Jewish Septuagint version, “she” in the Latin, “will crush your head”.

The “Divine Being’s transition into otherness”, as a datum of pure thought, “merely hinted” what for figurative thinking “comes nearer its realisation”. Hegel seems to speak with this negative reserve, while yet implying the necessity of the religious “moment” (of thought, which includes existence), especially as having in mind the “figure” of the Divine Being’s “humbling” itself, figure insofar as this seems to imply change in God, in the absolute, although properly interpreted it need not do so. What

is done “in the wild weather of his (i.e. spirit’s or God’s) outer provinces” (George Macdonald, parenthesis mine) reflects those relations of love within eternal Trinity or, equivalently, Hegel claims, reflects logico-metaphysical necessity, than which nothing is more free, or which is freedom as such. God does not renounce an abstract nature and “unreality” of which he is anyhow innocent, as this very appearance (of himself) itself shows.

The other aspect, that of evil, is taken by imagination as an event extraneous and alien to the Divine being; to grasp evil in the Divine Being itself as the wrath of God - that is the supreme effort, the sovereign strain, of which figurative thought, wrestling with its own limitations, is capable, an effort which, since it is devoid of the notion, remains a fruitless struggle. (p.773)

So much for the wrath of God, is what he says here. It is a figure. So he has to explain how this evil is not, finally, an event and not extraneous to God, the Idea, to Spirit, having already defined evil as a self-concentration of spirit. It is just this explanation that aspires also to explain the “atonement”, at-one-ment, in reconciliation or “redemption”, as consequent upon that “incarnation” of which he has already treated. We might add, however, that this particular understanding of evil as what we might otherwise see as *something else*, self-concentration etc., is a post-atonement or Christian account of evil which is by no means self-evident. Nietzsche, say, proposes to give a different account. Is “the Christian account” perhaps still at bottom Kantian, as final disobedience to “pure” duty, a notion inseparable from the late-medieval degenerate conception of liberty as an *indifference* between God’s will and our “self-centred” (self-concentrated seems synonymous) one? In a similar way McTaggart objects to Hegel’s giving a new, so to say lexically divergent account of infinity. What, however, determines these objections as just one misunderstanding is the principle G.E. Moore cited from Butler at the head of his *Principia Ethica* of 1903 that “Each thing is itself and not another thing”, the falsity of which Hegel’s whole *Science of Logic* is directed towards demonstrating. I quote again:

The difficulty people find in these conceptions is due solely to sticking to the term “is” and forgetting the character of thought where the moments as much *are* as they *are not*, - are only the process which is Spirit. It is this spiritual unity, - unity where the distinctions are made in the form of moments, or as transcended - which became known to pictorial thinking in that atoning reconciliation spoken of above. And since this unity is the universality of self-consciousness, self-consciousness has ceased to be figurative or pictorial in its thinking; the process has turned back into it. (pp. 777-778)

He thus presents (his) philosophy, which, as “speculative”, he *likens* to (as distinct from identifying it with) “what used to be called mysticism”. Yet it still is thus called, defining now a form of mysticism as the connatural fruit or growth of Christian faith and not some atypical or occasional *outgrowth* of it<sup>17</sup>: mysticism is thinking, i.e. contemplative religion, or simply contemplation not, it may be, recognising itself as religion since it is in either case *sophia* simply, *höchste Gottesdienst* according to Hegel, or, as happiness, *höchste Entfaltung der Sittlichkeit*, according to Martin Grabmann SJ<sup>18</sup>, the natural sequel to or crown of religion in its absoluteness. It is this absoluteness which excludes any account of goodness in properly “first” philosophy. “Why do you call me good? There is none good but God?” In line with this question by “the protagonist of the Gospels” (P. T. Geach’s phrase) Thomas Aquinas, and not only Hegel, describes the moral good or the *bonum honestum*, totally separated from normal or natural goodness by Kant as alone “good without qualification”, as, on the contrary, only called good at all by transference in so far as the practice of the *honestum*, of morality, the virtues, is what leads to a “physical” or natural union with and/or knowledge of God, the true and not merely the highest good or *summum bonum*, for which alone, adds Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa contra gentes*, “if one would but consider”, all social and legal arrangements exist. That is why no specifically moral motive for action is to be found in Aquinas at the ultimate level.<sup>19</sup> Rather, any obligation of “duty”, inclusive of the whole of justice, is *propter finem* alone, not indeed, though, as merely instrumental thereto as in utilitarianism but as participating, it being indifferent whether we say here and now or eternally.

It is otherwise with the necessity arising from an obligation of precept, or from the necessity of the end, when namely someone cannot obtain the end of virtue unless he does this ... Willing the end entails reason’s commanding whatever is needed to that end.<sup>20</sup>

Hence it is that, Thomas says and that repeatedly, *bonum habet rationem finis*, good has the intelligibility of end. Given that this is so, however, then there seems no actual taking-off point possible for Hegel’s reflections upon goodness, unless to confirm the negative quality of these, from the rational viewpoint, as simply bearing upon the more fundamental matter of the

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. Dom David Knowles OSB, *What is Mysticism?* Sheed & Ward, London 1967, 1971.

<sup>18</sup> M. Grabmann, *Thomas von Aquin*, Munich 1959.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. note 68, *supra* in previous chapter.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* IIa-IIae 58, 3 ad 2.

established end or Absolute Idea, the final ever-achieved *telos*, namely, which alone the honourable good of virtue and/or (short-term) duty is to serve as not distracting from it. *That* is its honour, namely, and nothing else, while being a moral “prig”, in the manner of the pharisees of the Gospel, would simply distract from it. Hence we have the last word from the Cross, *tetelestai*, in present perfection or perfect “tense”, translatable as “the end has been realised” (or “it is finished”, Latin *consummatum est*), the text adding, immediately, “and bowing his head he gave up his spirit”, i.e. died. If all goodness is there alone, as the intelligibility of Good *in extremis* as end (the Absolute Idea as “the true Being” ending or, *equivalently*, consummating, Logic: compare our notion of Climax) in every sense<sup>21</sup>, however, then one has to ask how the pair Good and Evil differ from the pair Being and Non-Being, which Hegel in a sense preserves since, for example, it is the basis for his criticism of “the soulless word *is*” (p.777), in function admittedly of his critique of the form of judgment. We can at least say that non-being is preserved precisely as Nothing, is thus in a sense not preserved, is “sham” or, rather, what any “sham” amounts to, viz. nothing. And yet Being is said at first to be “not a whit better than that”. These things are resolved only at the level of Spirit, of thought’s character as “only the process which is Spirit”, development. *That* is the question here, if any remains, of whether to accept this premise, concerning Good and Evil principally, whether to reject the manifold argumentation presented for it.<sup>22</sup>

I add the reflection, upon this conflating of Good and Evil, that there is ground for it in the Scholastic metaphysics of good whereby good is sought in any action whatever, viz. its end, or whether this is *judged* good or evil, i.e. a problematic about judgment itself is rather entailed, just as this is

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<sup>21</sup> The two main senses were repeatedly, but surely mistakenly, gratuitously even, separated or divorced as if the term “end”, or more exactly *finis*, were confusedly equivocal merely as had not been noticed(!) in the traditional philosophy or theology thereof, or more particularly in Thomas Aquinas’s treatment of it, of “the ultimate end of human life” as the foundation of his account of man in the long, longest, middle Part Two of his main *Summa*. Hegel, however, preserves the tradition, unveils it even, with his “Death is the entry into Spirit”, recalling the Pauline “As many of you as have been baptised have been baptised into his (Christ’s) death”, i.e. life’s fulfilment begins with a sacramental (as distinct from “ritual”) drowning of the “old Adam” as if, thus far at least, of an unwanted cat; thus far, inasmuch as “Whatever you do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus” is or may be the rule. Or again, “Mortify your members which are upon earth, for you are dead and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (*Colossians*). All this is old ground once won for humanity and which Hegel develops.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. our *Hegel’s System of Logic*, Cambridge Scholars, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 2019. *passim*.

developed in Hegel's logic. Hegel may have found confirmation of this in the Biblical so-called paradoxes, of life as death and conversely, on bringing to nought the things which are, of last being first and so on. Instances of this, however, are constantly found in extra-Biblical writers, in so far as they are philosophical, what's more. Plato comes to mind, and these can indeed serve to dismiss the concept involved, as Zeno attacked movement with such instances, or change, or, essentially, as Hegel dismisses predication, by means of its own use even, in favour of the Concept, before reuniting both in the syllogism, which is the form of everything ("Everything is a syllogism"). This is the level we are on, not as a mere project of debunking thought as self-confuting or "conflicted" but quite the reverse, to a point where these two greatest Aristotelians, Hegel and Aquinas, stand together, I have not so much tried to show as have, I hope, at least begun to trace that it shows itself.

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The image of God's wrath, as "devoid of the notion", then, leads nowhere, nor is it necessarily to be seen as an evil in any case, I add. We have and are enjoined to have our own wrath against life's finitude. Instead of at once saying what the evil "in God" is, however, this fact he claims to have established, he immediately refers to the "alienation of the Divine Nature", which is thus "set up", by this same divinity, we must presume. The setting up is a positing of "the self of Spirit, and its simple thought" as "two moments, whose absolute unity is Spirit itself" (p. 773). This is "double-sided" precisely in its unity. The self is in the thought, thought is self. The thought of God, whatever our consciousness of it, holds mind in its being *as* thought, the final Being, as his Greater Logic some years later would conclude by saying, I remind again. The simple answer to our question, however, is that Hegel demonstrates here that Good is not to be *conceived* without Evil, that, again, the character of *thought* is Spirit, which is process. In short, both are the same in their difference, *just as* was the case, I repeat, with the prefatory Being and Non-Being of Hegel's logical works. At the same time "Spirit's alienation with itself consists in the two falling apart from each other, and in the one having an unequal value as against the other". Yet the double-sidedness mentioned is not Good and Evil as such. Rather, inasmuch as the good Spirit is thought it is this process in which each thing is or turns round into its opposite. This fact, that God is *nous*, process, lies behind the mythical Biblical assertion that Adam, man, "has become like us", knowing good and evil. For that he cannot be thoughtlessly

or innocently happy. Happiness is something he must *win*, as “its own result” as Hegel says elsewhere.

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So we have two mutually complementary ideas, “the self of Spirit and its simple thought”, which yet, as two beings (in the end the Idea is true Being, specifically) are “falling apart from each other”, by and in absolute will, which is thus far goodness. For by this they each have, necessarily, “unequal value as against the other”. Either the Divine is made “essential and natural existence and the self are unessential” and “to be cancelled” or self-existence “passes for what is essential and the simply Divine for unessential”. Existence in general mediates the bare community of these two moments. God exists, the world exists too, but subordinately. Here Hegel touches on the “ontological discontinuity” thesis, of divine and created being, embraced recently by today’s “religious party”. Yet Hegel touches on it only to reject it, “this opposition”, to assert its dissolution. Ontological discontinuity, after all, cannot be more than a *representation* within religious proclamatory discourse (and thus far legitimate in its finite place), on a par with talk of the soul and the body as if each had their own form, instead of soul’s being form of the human being, itself a living spirit. Hence it is not *forma corporis* specifically, as is often parroted, while the Scotist “form of the body” as coming in between man as form and *materia* is radically un-hylomorphic, whatever other end it may serve. On Aristotle’s theory the last form is always and entirely *forma totius*, there can be no co-active or co-existent hierarchic “bundle” of forms. So here, there are not two separate and individual beings *pictured* as struggling together at the same level, God and the world.

Just in virtue of their independence each must inherently, through its own notion, dissolve itself in itself. The struggle only takes place where both cease to be this mixture of thought and independent existence, and confront each other merely as thoughts. (p. 774)

As thoughts alone, that is, abstract moments, are they separate, not coordinated. In inviting to thus dichotomise at the level of finite confession the catechetical tradition, considered more “safe for teaching”, loses relevance for philosophical wisdom, gift of the spirit though the latter may finally be. The former is the milk given to babes, in the Apostle’s comparison. Theology itself has to and does, here and there, break loose from that, but above all in the person of the death-practising soul in prayer and contemplation, Aristotelian *athanatizein*. Each horn of the dilemma



must “dissolve itself in itself”. The or an “old” concept of God dies here. This, in fact, coincides with the Christian “glorying in the Cross”, the God forsaking himself forsaken as spirit enters into spirit in self-commendation, *in manus tuas*, phrases from the Davidic psalter as used on the Cross as narrated, thus at the same time in spoken conformity with religious tradition. The sorely wounded head is thus “sacred”, its grandeur or splendour neither marred nor deflowered, nor does philosophy deny this in its relativisation of heads and countenances, highest of phenomena just in *what* they represent. “Lord save us”, as the Irish folksily exclaim or used to. For modern democracy, it is being increasingly grasped, spells the end of that division between esoteric and exoteric upon which Hegel still relied, even while the eclipse or the absorption of *abstract* religion (exoteric), itself become absolute, into philosophy (esoteric) leaps out from his pages, something that the artist had long previously understood of his art as absolute, as “a greater revelation than the whole of religion and philosophy” namely, even as and because standing upon just that first absolute foundation of the sensuously immediate to which the highest descends in re-ascending, booty-laden, confirmed as to its proper domain. The end-result of all these figures, without which there is no language or speech at all, no *means* of manifestation or epiphany, is self-consciousness as Hegel and others expound it, overcoming and cancelling all history and events and, indeed, every propositional predication. This is not an abstractly finite mysticism but that towards which the mystical life strives as *sophia*, which it shall love, *philia*. One can wonder whether the Latin root *fil-*, as in *filius*, son (replacing the Greek *huios*), does not coincide with the phonetically indistinguishable *phil-* used in Greek to signify love and friendship, for just wisdom, for example, as a supreme knowing or “tasting”, *sapor*. “What the spiritual man desires is contact”. These words, from a conference given by a modern Carthusian abbot, indicate the deep spiritual import, as outlined in Hegel, of the sensuously immediate and, hence, of the erotic, which the new Puritanism of today would do well not to forget or cast aside if it is not to remain primarily a medial money-making, for some individuals, gimmick.

Each of the two abstractions, again, God and world, must “dissolve itself in itself”, as thoughts, namely, ceasing to be this “mixture of thought and existence” which is really, much rather, a synthetic compound, indivisible in itself. For the Concept, says Hegel, has no difficulty with existence as a finite moment of itself, recalling that each such categorical moment is identical, in its finitude, with the Idea as genuinely infinite. Thus the world stands firm by God’s decree only or, rather, entirely, inasmuch as God and his decrees are necessarily one. Nature is no afterthought, nor is any one of those teeming individuals in their subjectivity. But by the same token no

one of them is abstractly or “absolutely” an individual. If universality is *the* principle of personality (i.e. no “distribution” or un-distribution is involved), as Hegel says, then personality is the principle of universality. God cannot be thought to have afterthoughts, signifying finitude. The contingent itself is absolutely necessary, without which, that is to say, God would not be. This is the truth, as Eckhart exclaimed (“If I were not, God would not be!”), as delivered in Hegel’s Logic in its claim to be “form of the world”. Deliver me, prayed the same Eckhart, from speaking too much of God, of that which, all the same, is our subject here.

Hegel speaks of “these universal powers of Good and Evil”, having claimed to establish that they are both truly such, coupled together in man as indeed belonging both “to the self”. Still, there is no evil without good, its actively constituting opposite, so to say. Both enter “into actual reality”, its appearance, as self-concentration or, conversely, on the part of the good principle, “as an (objectively) existing self-consciousness”, again. This is *imagined* as a “humbling”, as of a great man conversing on equal terms with lesser men specifically. It is due, according to Hegel, to the fact that “these universal powers of good and evil belong... to the self” (p.773), equally. “The self is their actuality”. I stress the “is”, lest we fail to notice the claim made here, which alone enables us to understand what Hegel means by “self-consciousness”, in the light of which alone we can understand “absolute knowledge”, the theme of his following and concluding chapter. In a schema, a format, of absolute idealism the incarnation of the mediator *thought* necessary will not be exempt from the general shift of fulcrum. But nor will it be *reduced* thereby, as we and the various commentators continue to *imagine*, or while our imagination ticks on *beside* our thinking activity, which is so to say duty-bound to ignore it. We find theologians, consequently, prattling about real change in God (Küng, Rahner). They remain on the *abstractly* religious or pictorial plane, as Thomas Aquinas, affirming divine immutability, does not. When we move from the left to the right of the pillar we may change its position relative to us, while the pillar itself undergoes no change. This is still, admittedly, a figure, *of course*. The divine pillar suffers no change at all, even of that kind, since it, he, has, can have, no real relation whatever to anything outside of himself, as Aquinas goes on to affirm in the same treatise, *De Deo uno*. Self-consciousness acknowledges this in self-transmutation of its own self, knowing itself, rather, for the first time, as we say. “Know yourself” or, in other words, lose it. This loss of self is the redemptive counterpart of the absorption of absolute substance into subjectivity. The whole of Hegel’s logic is directed toward this, as it happens, evangelical injunction. Is it directed by it? As a purely psychological enquiry, resting upon an assumed absolute validity

Hegel shows to be merely momentary or, more shortly, false (when otherwise viewed), cause and effect namely, any answer to this last question is “past finding out”, since, by the same momentariness, there can be nothing to find. Why the chicken crossed the road is the *same* question as why it wanted to get to the other side. Equally, though, it is *how we know* it wanted that, but only since the wanting was in the crossing. The same applies to all such psychological questions in their falsely finite determinism, as Sartre showed well enough. All determinism, Hegel further shows, though, is God’s, the Idea’s, whose necessity is perfect freedom, i.e. necessity itself in its reality is that, “without shadow of change or turning”. There is, however, no truth in the contingent realm, since it is necessarily contingent, only correctness, such as may be one’s choice of year, possibly, for Caesar’s crossing the Rubicon, or, further, the Rubicon itself, where it is or was, and so on. We can *imagine* the Idea as “changing” its garments while remaining the same, as in *Psalm* 104 (Vulg. 103), a poem. But the Idea does not change with this its changing, as (the world is) seen by us. As Hegel says more generally, while affirming that good and evil are the same we must immovably, obstinately, stress their difference.

Our enquiry, it will be remembered, centres around the identity in difference of God and the world which, I have already stated, must alter, correct or advance our conception of God, possibly, for some at least, beyond recognition of it as the same concept, though what is the same is anyhow different, again, as even Thomas Aquinas recognised in his treatment of subject-predicate knowledge, where he assimilates identity statements of the “A is A” form to that general identification which is the form of predication itself (dubbed *accordingly* false by Hegel). “A is A” should accordingly not be represented as that A *equals* A<sup>23</sup>, since the predicative A is “quasi-formal”, the subjective A “quasi-material”, only this enabling an identity *statement* at all. For Frege, his F of x, you simply cannot have it, it can at least seem. A function without its subject is a mere string of words denoting nothing. Predication there is no longer the contradictory identity of two in one. In fact there is no longer any predication at all but just two utterly disparate incomplete verbal forms (you cannot call them expressions) complementing each other in what is not even as such *asserted*. You need a separate sign for that, as one ought not so to need, i.e. in logic specifically. This can hardly then be called “the Frege point”, as rather pointing only to a defect in its own system.

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. the citations above from our “Subject and Predicate Logic” and “The Supposition of the Predicate”, in *The Modern Schoolman* for 1989 and 1999 respectively.

Hegel's protracted account here, therefore, of the opposition between two "elements" which are only *pictured* "as separate and independent Beings" (this is wrongly dismissed as his "pantheism"), since if they were that then each "must inherently, through its own notion, dissolve itself as itself", is his attempt to answer the general question, posed by the Zen Buddhist D. Suzuki, for example, as that of why God, say the Christian God, *had to* create a world? Some would simply call it a free necessity of love, of goodness as self-diffusiveness, and leave it at that. Not so Hegel, for whom the necessity is logical, or valid in virtue of itself, a point even McTaggart seems at times not to have had a firm hold of. God and world "confront each other merely as thoughts". As determinate notions "they exist merely in the form of opposition", rather as zero, while being a number, is yet opposed to number, we might add, and here the zero would be God or the essential being as opposed to existent beings or phenomena. As independent, though merely as thoughts rather than beings, however, they "each have their essential nature outside their opposition". Is Hegel, then, having his cake and eating it, as we say? It seems so, yet he adds that their free, self-determined movement, as "peculiar" to each separately, *starts* "only in that one of the two which has the characteristic of being inherently essential as contrasted with the other". Yet even this is only "pictured" as "spontaneous". Really its self-abandonment is conceptually necessary, i.e. *to the concept* itself. This too "gets its specific character merely through opposition", in this case of logic to nature if not to spirit. Just on this account it has, ultimately, "no real independent subsistence" (is not, after all, God?); *just therefore* its self-abandonment or emptying is "necessary". That is, the concept's very becoming is a conceptual refinement or even correction exercised by the concept itself in its very essence, this being also the model for any conceptual or logical development as such. It has not "independent self-existence" in the first place, "but simple being", whatever that is. Just therefore it "abandons itself and gives itself unto death". This shall "reconcile Absolute Being with its own self". Put otherwise, it is only in Christ incarnate that we get any notion or inkling of what God is, or is not. The reconciliation is not finite or limited, does not exclude this cancelling of opinions. Thus does Absolute Being, simple being, "manifest itself as spirit", estranging the abstract being from itself as having "natural existence and the reality of an actual self". This self, however, here goes on, in so to say further renunciation, death succeeding upon incarnation, to become "a living spirit", one who "has lived", has been "sensuously" experienced.

This its otherness, or its being sensuously present, is taken back again by the second process of becoming "other", and is affirmed as superseded, as universal. Thereby the Divine Being has come to itself in the sphere of the

sensuous present; the immediate existence of actual reality has ceased to be something alien or external to the Divine, by being sublated, universal: this death (of immediacy) is therefore its rising anew as spirit. (p. 774-5)

This, he goes on to claim, amounts immediately to “the establishment of a communion”, no longer pictorial but “as the Self”. This is the third and final stage in spirit’s self-development, its development of self-consciousness. (cf. p.765). “These three moments constitute the life of spirit”. The first moment, pure substance, also called Essential Being, *descends* “into existence or individuality”.

The third stage is the return from this presentation and from that otherness; in other words, it is the element of self-consciousness itself ... Self-existence or Self-knowledge in that other ... a communion which, while hitherto having its abode in the sphere of pictorial thought, now returns into itself as the Self ... Spirit thus passes from the second element constituting it, -figurative thought – and goes over to the third – self-consciousness as such. (cf. pp. 767-775)

This is Spirit’s life, he says. It therefore reflects Trinitarian process as he has described it. So it remains true of what is said here that the *number* of individuals concerned is immaterial. We may say that what is presented is the identifications of selves with Self in a universal solipsism, only thinkable by an identity of any first person with all second or third persons, who also each thus view him or her, though we may leave undecided whether the factor of sex or gender is phenomenal or spiritual. Should it be both, then it will be found taking up a key position in the system as further developed, the system which is philosophy, or which philosophy itself is. “Male and female created he them”. Yet “in Christ there is neither male nor female”, but “a new creature”, Paul goes on to say, yet this can seem in strong contrast with what we know of his practical directions for the new communities. This may not be so relevant as one can easily *imagine*, however. For on any account, just to begin with, women and not men get the babies. Or, questions of the divine image in man, identified lately more and more as this sexual duality rather than the possession of a spiritual soul or, even, rational consciousness, refer to just that, the imaged or imagined. Now image is appearance, so this whole problematic merely returns us to the question of Man’s, the self’s identity in difference with the Absolute, this being his true and final self-consciousness, cancelling the other. “It has not yet appeared what we shall be, yet we know that when he appears we shall be like him as seeing him as he is” (John I, 3, 2). Not only that, but the future tense for eternity, for spiritual self-consciousness, for this self-consciousness, incompatible, for example, with being born at some moment

of time, as used here falls away. Eternity, rather, has to be increasingly appropriated and insofar as this occurs the past falsely supposed to be leading up to it increasingly falls away or has passed indeed. It is in this way that “death is the entry into spirit” (Hegel), again, or that Jesus says one cannot be his disciple before we have learned to hate our life in this world. When this hate is perfected, it is implied, when we desire nothing finite but would happily be free of all, then, simply, by the same motion we enter the inheritance, in principle unobservable beforehand, as Hobbes truly said of heaven, that one will “no sooner know than enjoy” it. That’s is precisely why Hegel does not talk of heaven, for which McTaggart would reproach him as himself not having assimilated Christian teaching and tradition.

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If we further consider the kind of procedure that pictorial thinking adopts as it goes along, we find in the first place the expression that the Divine Being “takes on” human nature. Here it is *eo ipso* asserted that implicitly and inherently the two are not separate: just as in the statement, that the Divine Being from the beginning empties Itself of Itself, that its objective existence becomes concentrated in Itself and becomes evil, it is not asserted but implied that *per se* this evil existence is not something alien to the Divine nature. (p. 775)

God and man, then, are not separate. But nor are separate the becoming evil in man, absolute consciousness’s dialectical battleground, self-knowing’s becoming evil. This is *pictured* as a development, when really there are not, cannot be, events and change *in* the infinite as such, changelessly identified as it is with all changes or moments, each self-known eternally by spirit as the other of itself in identity. So the Divine Being is actually constitutive of or is, “from the beginning”, absolute self-emptying. The product of this is world, the cosmology of which is that it is not a cosmos but negation. It is world, self-emptied spirit, spirit become, *qua* spirit, the other of spirit, that in or *as* man becomes, but in eternal *destination*, in self-alienation, evil, which means here therefore evil willed in and as the Idea, in and by absolute self-consciousness or spirit. As Hegel says, any possible fall from Absolute Being would make of this an empty name. It is God who hardens Pharaoh’s heart, whether he makes him pay for it or not. This, the middle moment or position of threefold spirit in Trinity, is *thus* occupied by both Satan, as “prince of this world”, therefore, and Christ, who, while declaring that the former “has nothing in me”, was yet declared, by the community with which, as become spirit, he is eternally identified, to be or have been “made sin for us”, this being the *reconciliation*, yet in and as “returning to where

he was before". So all the differentiations get synthesised in the more than perfect because infinite compound that is absolute simplicity but, as the final identifying agent of every particular, not abstract simplicity (Hegel calls it "concrete"), in which, as self-consciousness, God, the Idea, is known as "closer to me than I am to myself" (*intimior me mihi*: Augustine). "This also is thou; neither is this thou".

Anyone who then asks, "Does Hegel *believe in the Devil*?" has not understood this. He believes in God, as being his account of man, in self-consciousness. Yet it is a belief in God that overthrows many of the previous representations and thus is called, by some, atheism, by Heidegger, for instance, inasmuch as he might stand by his declaration that philosophy as such is a blow in the face to God. Yet this might be the same as that overthrowing of representations I mentioned, which is constitutive anyhow of Christianity itself. "He that has seen me has seen the father", says the sensuously visible man, who also said "What you do to another you do to me", thereby, if this is true, universal self in full consciousness thereof, while "Greater things than I have done shall you do", because, of course, "I will be in you" as we are not much later, and surely in consequence of this clearest of "exemplary causes", said to be "in" one another mutually. By this though we are *all* after all exemplary causes, "all one person". The mediation is self-cancelling in thought's universality, or cancels its own particularity, to where each says "I live yet not I", each lives *in* the spirit, or in the *höchste Gottesdienst* of what is called figuratively sonship, as being *free* "service", identified by Hegel as *philo-sophia*, the Idea knowing itself, the true self-consciousness being total absorption, as, in the exemplary case, and hence in all, "I and my father are one". For this is in reality absolute self-consciousness without enumeration, since this is outside the concept. *Numeri non ponuntur in divinis* (Aquinas). It is useless to count" (Hegel), while what we serve is our own highest (*höchste*) truth, as in its turn serving or loving us. "The truth shall make you free". So this opposition of notions, which continually confronts us, might be put over as a conflict of styles of discourse merely, in which, however, those demonstrating the continuity of *tradition*, of *thought* as such, have the advantage, this being Hegel's own *method* in Logic as a and *the way*.

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In man, as world, Being's "objective existence" becomes evil, "groaning and travailing" as awaiting its redemption when Christ "shall present the kingdom to the father and God shall be all in all". Obviously, though, God, as the Idea, i.e. just as God, could never be anything else than all in all,

since, rather, again, nothing *else*, as “alien to the Divine nature” or “external to it”, could be at all. Self-consciousness is realisation, beyond merely “notional” knowledge, of this. That is, the Concept is a taking up and putting by (*Aufhebung*) of all particularised concepts, all “unredeemed”, which is the same as unresolved, alienation. “In my end is my beginning” and conversely, as alpha and omega in one, Hegel’s thought, his philosophy of spirit, of mind, overcomes language and its “bewitchment” of intelligence (Wittgenstein), against which philosophy as finite *praxis* battles. It is itself the Idea, act indeed, final Being as and in eternal enjoyment of its own *sophia*, as Hegel’s Greater Logic ends by declaring. Thus it is, *pace* Heidegger, *the being or I as “universal of universals”, the fullness, pleroma, of him or her that “fills all things”*.

The above, that the evil self-centredness, “whence primarily comes its reality”, belongs to the Divine Being, “appears to pictorial thinking as an inconceivable happening”, Hegel here adds. It is strange that he says “happening”, unless or until we understand from context that he is referring to the act, which is God, of and as incarnation. Yet by this that it “takes on” or assumes “human nature” “it is *eo ipso* asserted that implicitly and inherently the two are not separate”. The adverbs here serve to confirm Hegel’s denial of the thesis of many leading theologians today that there is change in God, “real change” as they like to emphasise. The same applies to the celebrated *kenosis*, precisely as viewed with the eyes of faith and its intelligence, that “the two are not separate”, as change would entail:

Just as in the statement, that the Divine Being from the beginning empties Itself of Itself, that its objective existence becomes concentrated in Itself and becomes evil, it is not implied that *per se* this evil existence is *not* something alien to the Divine nature. (P. 775)

In general “the infinite within the finite is presented in the phenomenon of the Incarnation of God” (De Figureiro, *art. cit.*). Further, “the idea that the concept consummates itself in actual reality”, by becoming “part” of it, is one reason why “part” must be *aufgehoben* in logic, along, progressively, with all finite categories and/or their concepts. The whole thesis of a divine becoming is outlined within an account of phenomenal reality exclusively, since *this* is the becoming. The Son, the Word, never left eternity or “the bosom of the Father”, of which he is the complete revelation, as it is the aim of Hegel’s philosophy of religion to show. “No man has seen God at any time. It is the only Son, who is nearest to the Father’s heart, who has made him known” (Cf. Prologue, *Gospel of John*).

This leads, in turn, to the “emergence of the universal community of men”, of which the Christian community or Church is the sign, just as Christ



incarnate was the infinite within the finite, the trans-phenomenal phenomenised. Thus, far from deifying history and its process Hegel shows how history's miasma is overcome through a divine or absolute irruption into it, this however as something premised from the beginning and perpetually, only this measuring up to the concept of the finite, as of the infinite rather, as philosophy defines it. Thus Christ is perfected in, necessarily, leaving the world or returning to the heaven that he never left. "I have overcome the world". In fact, Hegel intimates, indeed declares, it is only with this irruption, with the coming and life and teaching of Christ, that the conception of man as man first enters the human mind.

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Hegel's surely surprising attribution of "evil" to God, to the Absolute, besides the logical grounds upon which it is established, probably reflects meditation upon the various Biblical statements culminating in the Pauline assertion that the self-emptied Divine being (Paul writes though, represents this, in what are, so to say linguistically, pre-Trinitarian days, of or as one "equal with God") "was made sin for us", a curse etc., as if indeed "an inconceivable happening", though not for those theologians I mentioned (they include Küng and Rahner). Yet it is no more able to be conceived than is Isaiah's assertion of "the suffering servant" that "truly he hath born our griefs", unless that servant is to be seen as one with or *as is* the One sending him, external "mission and" internal divine "procession"<sup>24</sup> here coinciding, and hence mission(s) and procession(s) coinciding as to a common effect, at least, as does the universal and particular in dialectical logic, wherein each is one with all, whatever might be said of the original "sacrificial lamb" of atonement. This is said also without prejudice to previous treatments as separate of divine processions *ad intra* and missions *ad extra*. They are certainly distinguishable conceptually, as are Inward and Outward as such in Hegel's Logic, where they are all the same identified, as reflection-into-self and reflection-into-other respectively<sup>25</sup>. Behold the Lamb of God" then,

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<sup>24</sup> These are the terms used by Thomas Aquinas, who treats of them as conceptually separate and yet to be considered together, the divine missions being put as the subject of his final quaestio or topic of his Treatise on the Trinity in *Summa theol.* I. The connecting link, as Hegel brings out, would be divine necessity, which is a matter, is the object, of Logic as final form of metaphysics, this again instancing identity in (conceptual) difference.

<sup>25</sup> *Enc.* 138, cf. 135, on Appearance and Correlation as contrasted, in being paired with, Existence, originally in the "immediate" relation of Whole and Parts. It is the parts "that possess independent being".

the Baptist's words repeated at every Mass when the "host", the victim (*hostia*), is held up for adoration. So Hegel speaks of "absolute Being and self-existent Self", the pair in terms of which the whole discussion has been conducted, as "those apparently mutually repugnant moments" (p. 776), the whole being seen as a part within that whole, as we might say<sup>26</sup>, again. Though these are in principle separable yet only their dialectical complementariness as one opened the way to Trinitarianism, as big a modification of the Idea (of God) after all as is the movement of modern atheism, just as the taking on of human nature by the Divine, Hegel says, asserts, simply as an idea, that "implicitly and inherently the two are not separate", these two pairs being thus the same. This amounts to saying that the Idea of God is discovered, in the sense of clarified, in its denial, which is thus not its dismissal.<sup>27</sup> In this way the Trinitarian processions themselves already replace God, or begin to do, say, as we might say in historical perspective, instancing Hegel's general point about predication as, for example, in "God is Being".

This figurative idea, which in this manner is still immediate and hence not spiritual, i.e. it knows the human form assumed by the Divine as merely a particular form, not yet as a universal form – becomes spiritual for this consciousness in the process whereby God, who has assumed shape and form, surrenders again His immediate existence, and returns to His essential Being. The essential Being is then Spirit only when it is reflected into itself. (p. 776)

"Only", that is, therefore, when nothing "exists", as this is treated in Hegel's Logic, at all. This, the third moment (p. 767f.), "immediately expresses ... the establishment of a communion which ... now returns into itself as the self", as "self-consciousness as such" (p. 775), since spirit is only known in its community, Hegel will later confirm. Reflection itself is thus return (to essential Being), in proper idealist fashion, for those picturing as, equally, for the one pictured. Did Jesus then actually die on the Cross? Did he not suffer those pains? Hegel might reply, with McTaggart, that no one actually dies, that all pain is spiritual, inward. Jesus "went to the Father", whom, however, he had never left, being one with him as that separable self-existent self. That is, also that "went" (in *John's* "I go to the Father") is a picture, like Orpheus passing from the shadows to underworld reality in

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<sup>26</sup> Cp. De Figureiro's article cited above, citing Hegel's reference to the *Philebus* of Plato as corrected by the truth of the Idea's intrinsic incarnation in particularity.

<sup>27</sup> In this way we might begin to understand something at least (or at least understand it, rather) of the modern Christian martyr Bonhoeffer's apparently perverse suggestion that in our day God, the living God as must be meant in this case, wants us to live and speak as if He did not ex-ist, i.e. as a "separate" being.

the vain hope of a return to the shadows of earthly life with his dead wife, once his light among those shadows. You can't literally go or return to what you have never left. The circularity, again, is one of thought entirely. Thus Peter asked the "risen Lord", fatuously, as product of initial pain and bewilderment, "Wilt thou now restore the kingdom to Israel?" The dialectic, Spirit, never "restores" (an idea smelling of death, as someone remarked, though one employed in the recounting of celebrated Gospel mysteries, thus truly interpretable as eminently "signs") simply, but rather "makes all things new" at every step of the logical way. This is reality's form. The system thus transcends the Aristotelian assertion that the universal exists differently in things to how it exists in thought, inasmuch as it declares (and does not merely "go on to say") that existence in thought is alone the true Being, beside which existence is itself a mere finite category (although Hegel's language does not always explicitly advert to this his finding, in his whole political philosophy, for example, which Charles Taylor expounds so brilliantly). This is the truth behind the idea of a "sistology" transcending the "prejudice" of existence, as propounded and defended by Richard Sylvan in particular.<sup>28</sup>

Conceptually we could express this reconciliation discerned here, discerned moreover as never *effected*, since it is eternally realised or "in place",

by saying it consists in the fact that evil is inherently the same as what goodness is. Or again that the Divine Being is the same as nature in its entire extent, just as nature separated from God is simply nothingness. (p. 776)

This, as cinema-goers used to say, "is where we came in", above. One must concede, he adds here, that saying this comes over "as an unspiritual mode of expression which is bound to give rise to misunderstandings", as it certainly does and has done. "When evil is the *same* as goodness, then evil is just *not* evil nor goodness good ... both are really done away with". Hegel might seem here to retreat from the metaphysical foundation he has laid. For he has just said, for example, that "nature separated from God is simply nothingness". He means that good and evil *in God*, in idea, are the same, as are essential Being and simple existence (of world and man) as, the latter, yet leading on to evil as the first self-centredness away from innocence, men becoming as the gods, which is put as evil. They are the same there, we might alternatively say, as not being there. That the eternal being is alone good is thus but one way of negating anything as being beside (that) Being,

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. Richard Sylvan, "Sistology", in *Handbook of Metaphysics and Ontology*, 2 vols., Philosophia Verlag, Munich 1991, pp. 837-840.

the establishing of which is nothing less than the entire function of logical process, Hegel plainly claims. Knowing good and evil, then, is knowing that they are each, as “terms”, as thoughts, both good and evil in the manner shown, just like man, as Hegel seems here to interpret, thus, in one way at least, i.e. the “reverse” way, simultaneously reducing man to nothing, “with no essential reality of his own”, a mere battleground of these opposed forces, which yet are, we shall find, “the same” in God, i.e. really. More exactly, in becoming *like* or *as* God man, the finite, becomes entirely evil, opposed. It is through this that his identity with God in self-consciousness is revealed, discovered. He is “taken into” God in his very idea. The infinite, God, is closer to him, as to all finitude, than it is to itself. Thus we re-invert what might at first be taken as the atheistic inversion of Hegel’s thought, or, rather, make of it “matter of indifference”. This is the sting of ecumenism. Upside down and right way up, once given that causality itself is *aufgehoben*, are the same. For in thinking, in the Idea, there is no causality as distinct from effect, but reasons, rather.

As regards the above, Hegel reminds us that Satan, in fact, was put as the first creation, light-bearer, Son of the Morning, along with the “angelic” creation generally (cf. p. 771-2). He adds that just as we may *here* “transmute” “moments of the notion to the level of imaginative thought” or “transfer pictures to the realm of thought” *indifferently*, so it is “matter of indifference” to “co-ordinate” hosts of angels (and/or devils), in multiplicity, “with the simple thought of otherness in the being of the Eternal”. In so far as the self-concentration proper to God, and yet identified with evil, is mentioned here again and that functionally, the distinction between good and bad angels rather falls away. They are bearers of spirit one and all, or, equally, spirit’s own *perpetuum mobile*. This now becomes the basis for further Trinitarian interpretation. Negatively, this cannot be based upon number, since the latter is “outside conceptual thought”. Implicitly he recalls Plato’s characterisation of the universal as “neither one nor many”, as well say both. Yet, given otherness as an essential aspect of infinity, there is, necessarily, diversity, Hegel reasons, though not mere plurality. All is thought, namely, and only as thought is it true reality, this coinciding being the true mark of God alone, the Idea as being.

So one part of otherness is “the Son”, self-conscious essential Being, the other the self-emptying of such Being here again emphasised as *natural to it as infinite*, whether we take it now as one or two persons, returning in what might appear as a make-believe or subjective relation. Compare: “I and my father are one”. Yet it is “fuller” or more self-constitutive than any finite imitation of it between two others of one another, so to say. The self-emptying returns to or re-assumes the relinquished self-existence or being

rather than existence, which, the latter, is more generally “from another”. Hegel appears to be thinking of “resurrection” at the same time as he equates the corresponding self-centredness with evil, perhaps “defused” as proper to the Idea. Already this might as well, then, be *put* as a “quaternity”. Suffice it to say that Hegel wishes to separate triadicity from a mere number. *Numeri non ponuntur in divinis*, to cite Aquinas again. Together with earlier remarks on self generally (p. 759f.) this passage serves to indicate the shift of religious language towards philosophical self-consciousness as its true meaning, freed from its conceptually finite falsity, which though, along with evil, there seems no reason, if we are divine, to repudiate!

Evil, as something God allows, is good, has its function, just as good, as not yet in concept the Idea, is thus evil, should thought stop there and not “do away with” it. One might say the same about pain. There is none good but God remains the final truth of the logic, cancelling all the categories except as when they are integrated into that as its moments. So good on its own, i.e. *apart from God*, as a category, is evil, still abstract and finite, not yet the Idea. Similarly, only God (and we need not forget Hegel’s general judgment that this term should be avoided in philosophy, i.e. unless we happen to be discussing it as such) is generally evil, as what first becomes, in nature and creation as his projected other, self-centred. Therefore in God good and evil are not two parts but the same (compare being and nothing) and therefore cancelled, whereas, and just for this reason, when used elsewhere they are unreal as abstract and so, again, neither good nor evil, whether as a pair or separately taken indifferently. This seems to be Hegel’s position, although his logic ends by characterising the Idea as the true (and good, therefore?) Being:

*So ist denn auch die Logik in der absoluten Idee zu dieser einfachen Einheit zurückgegangen, welche ihr Anfang ist; die reine Unmittelbarkeit des Seins... ist die durch die Vermittlung, nämlich die Aufhebung der Vermittlung zu ihrer entsprechenden Gleichheit mit sich gekommene Idee.* (WL, Suhrkamp Verlag 6, p.572)

This logic thus coincides with that of Aquinas inasmuch as the latter finds only Being to be the real transcendental. Goodness and truth are just abstract or *entia rationis* only, as *basically naming being itself rather*, but as presented specifically to will in the one case, specifically to intellect in the other, these themselves being finite conceptions. They thus have restricted origin determining restricted application and so are not transcendent in the required sense (cf. Aquinas, *QD de potentia* VII).

So much for goodness! Regarding truth, however, the position, the difference, is more nuanced. *Veritas est in mente*, says Aquinas often

enough, in the sense of *in mente sola*, as if not in things, *in rebus* (but compare the Thomist Joseph Pieper's study, *Wahrheit der Dinge*, of a lifetime ago now), though he is generally taken to mean truth is in mind as *corresponding* with things, which completely vulgarises his real doctrine, as if he presupposes "things" or "an object to which our conception must conform", the stance Hegel criticises at *Enc. 24 Zus.*, from which I now cite. Truth is rather "the agreement of a thought-content with itself" (Hegel).

God alone is the thorough harmony of notion and reality. All finite things involve an untruth ... For this reason they must perish ... And the question comes to this: What are the forms of the infinite, and what are the forms of the finite? ... But it is from conforming to finite categories in thought and action that all deception originates.

In other words, the final *Being*, God, the Idea (we have just seen), *is* (or perhaps it "truths", using this word as a verb) truth and even logical method: *Die Methode ist der reine Begriff* (WL, *loc. cit.*). Let this suffice for a comparison of Hegel with Aquinas on this point of transcendental predication, of metaphysical truth (and/or being), rather.

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In putting evil as self-centredness Hegel might seem to be removing its especial sting. We normally might describe evil, the phenomenon, as acting as if we were God, i.e. self-centredly, or in a way perfectly correct only for God, as all in all. But philosophy finds that acting as God in this way is perfectly correct for, because true of, the rational creature precisely as rational. He, she (or it?) legislates for the universe in all he does or thinks indifferently. So if we do not find this in God we do not find it in rationality anywhere. Equivalently, if we do thus find it then, even as a transgression of some kind, it is not evil, i.e. "evil is just not evil" (Hegel) when seen in this way. Therefore, Hegel says, we must at the same time strenuously affirm the opposite. This after all is nothing especially specific in a logical system where, of assertions that something is "the same" or "not the same", "neither the one nor the other has truth". Put otherwise, *talk* of good and evil in this way belongs to talk of *men* (and women, of human beings) as finite even or also in their concept. It therefore "lies outside the notion". It is a phenomenal, imaginative or abstract idea, what Hegel calls a *moment* merely. Mind errs where it rests in such notions. Their truth "is just their movement".

Given these premises as established, Hegel infers that evil, in this form of self-centredness, is spirit's most characteristic manifestation. The figures

of Satan and of Christ become closely intertwined, as dialectically opposed, along with multiplication of other spirits as “matter of indifference”, the universal, after all, being “neither one nor many” (Plato), since number, again, “falls outside conceptual thought”. Yet, if “good and evil are the same” what distinguishes Satan and Christ? Or, as closely related to this, does Hegel find the orthodox claim concerning Christ’s divinity equally “matter of indifference”? Or again, may we not affirm that this doctrine itself can get to wear a different look at different stages of spiritual or intellectual development, just as in some Scriptural passages, epistles especially, Christ’s divinity is not yet routinely affirmed, or at least not in the later fixed form or formula. For Hegel, anyhow, Christ’s difference seems to reside especially in his mediatorship, itself though an elastic or fluid concept leading to the mediatorship of everyone to and for everyone in “the spiritual community”.<sup>29</sup> These comments may be referred to ecclesial theology’s comments upon Pilate’s *ecce homo* down subsequent centuries.

Hegel pictures “the very first-born Son of Light” as “falling”, something he immediately declares “merely ... figurative”, “just like the term ‘Son’”. This can suggest that Baillie’s, the translator, putting “Lucifer” in square brackets after “Light” is less than accurate. If Hegel were *translating* that name (light-bearer) as *Son* of light specifically this would be tendentious, as helping his argument along without warrant. He argues from another at least associatively title, more usually, in English, “son of the morning”, though one also calls this “first light”, not quite the same as “Light”, however. Inasmuch as his “fallenness” is figurative (but for or of what, precisely, is the relevant question?) so might be his personal separation from the Trinitarian Father as *constitutively* othering whatever is meant by this figure (Christ, Satan). This is the implication of Hegel’s saying that upon this fall “another was *at once* created” (my stress). All this, as sheer thought, is clearly not referable to time, except figuratively again. So the “at once”, I judge, is the indicator of this. The other is not an other, self being the other of itself. Satan and Christ thus parallel exactly the later or other division employed in this section, that of “absolute Being and self-existent Self” or, it seems here, to be contrariwise, i.e. the active paralleling can be in the contrary direction. So to Satan as Prince of this World, if we would follow Hegel in our Scriptural reading, corresponds the world itself as othering of the Father, or nature simply. Similarly, there is more than a hint of some kind of identification (in difference, as always) between the self-emptying

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. Daniel P. Jamros (with whom our study began), “Hegel on the Incarnation: Unique or Universal”, *Theological Studies* 56, 1995, pp. 276-300; also *The Human Shape of God: Religion in The Phenomenology of Spirit*, New York, Paragon House 1994. Fr. Jamros seems to see mere opposition here, however.

of God in his “Son” and the generation of self as such. Our own birth, however, as a phenomenon, becomes viewed as a figure of this, a figure, because the self-emptying cannot be other than an eternal truth, whereas someone’s being born, as if not there or anywhere “before”, is a self-contradictory positing, in virtue of which time is finally denied. This relates to Hegel’s affirmation of necessity, coinciding with that of Aquinas (the divine knowledge as omni-determinative is not itself determined) as the final truth of freedom.

On birth, being generated, it is joyous as one with that palpable joyousness of generation. “In the morning before the dawn I begot thee”, a text liturgically applied to the ever-new generation of the Son or Word. The two are one in being characteristically new every time, new baby, new union, whenever not repeated but enacted, actualising a shared life, itself ever new, and whether or not a “remedy for concupiscence” is thrown in<sup>30</sup>. Thus birth, and/or the generative act, fusion of male and female, just *together* image the Idea in representation (“male and female created he them”)<sup>31</sup> under the aspect of its ever-newness, carrying no dead past with it. “Behold I make all things new”, continually, it has to be.

For “son” therefore we should read either absolute Being or self-existent Self: in Scripture we already have “Word” preferred, suggesting a fluidity of notion, though here we may note the continuing linguistic ambiguity or, rather, equivocal *analogy* of our term “conception”, as having a phenomenally causal root. Insofar as one of these is describable as “self-concentrated” it applies equally to the one fallen and the other at once created. In that case we should or can equate “created” with “thought” or “conceived” as past participles and thus we have already that identification of inward and outward arrived at in Hegel’s Logic and which hence, once given its validity, can be applied to the processions within God (Trinity) or the procession exterior from God (creation) in their relation to one another. We might also claim that this identification is nascent in Aquinas when he chooses to speak of both indifferently as *processions*, thereby witnessing also to Hegel’s conception of Spirit as perpetual fluidity or movement, as in our term “wind”. You cannot have a motionless wind. The philosophical denial of motion in the infinite refers to the analysis of motion as “*imperfect act*” (see Aristotle, *Physics* III and IV) implying unacted potentiality.

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<sup>30</sup> The corrective to Freud’s (or Augustine’s) pessimism here was supplied, in the main, by the thoughtful work of his younger and still much maligned colleague, Wilhelm Reich, work more continuous with Freud’s than was that of Jung, whom many would somewhat uncritically prefer, as “safer”, perhaps.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Fergus Kerr OP, *Twentieth Century Catholic Theologians*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford 2007, pp. 193-201, on “nuptiality” and the image of God in man.



Spiritual motion, however, is ceaseless act as itself perfection. What is said here so far applies to that “co-ordination of other shapes and forms” as “matter of indifference” which, I add, might be applied equally to ourselves as “shapes or forms” or just one of these, as Aquinas had argued that each angel must be a whole species. Yet each one of us, one might finally go on to argue, has or even is, rather, his or her angel, as being ourselves then severally species (if, as in Aquinas, the angels have to be that) and more than a species, which is to say self. Here the angels rather fall away, and so even in Scripture the child’s angel has no independent reality other than being his or her angel. Species after all are generally not more than *entia rationis*. We might read “angel” as “thought”, though this might seem to clash with that person, child or adult indifferently as being already in themselves a divine thought or moment, the angel being the objectified self, i.e. it could not bear a closer relation to its charge. I leave that there for now as illustrating spirit’s conceptual reality. It means, however, that whereas we are taking God as *our* reality, we are positing ourselves as *our angels’* reality! How come? Well, we are equally God’s reality as *intimior me mihi* (“closer than me to me” is better translation than the usual “closer than me to myself” as retaining Augustine’s full speculative charge).

Or how come all this? What are we co-ordinating? Scripture and philosophy? To what end? What is Hegel’s end? He is giving an account of that religion he has claimed to be absolute, as he then must. He even declares that religion is philosophy’s sole business, as being itself superlative religion, *der höchste Gottesdienst*. From this we might conclude that, when absolute, religion is *not* religion but philosophy, wisdom. Whether and to what extent, in either case, of religion or of philosophy, laws of behaviour are laid down seems irrelevant, indifferent. Religious hermits need follow no law, the philosopher follows laws of logic, or does he? Law is itself a finite concept or moment of the Idea. How far this might or might not also apply to *Recht (ius)* as well as *Gesetz (lex)*, as, for Aquinas, *aliqua ratio iuris*) I leave for the present.

Neither the one nor the other has truth (Hegel refers to the sameness or difference of good and evil); their truth is just their movement, the process in which simple sameness is abstraction and thus absolute distinction, while this again, being distinction *per se*, is distinguished from itself and so is self-identity. Precisely this is what we have in sameness of the Divine Being and Nature in general and human nature in particular: the former is Nature so far as it is not essential being; Nature is Divine in its essential Being. But it is in Spirit that we find both abstract aspects affirmed as they truly are, viz. as cancelled and preserved at once; and this way of affirming them cannot be expressed by the judgment, by the soulless word “is”, the copula of the judgment. In the same way Nature is nothing outside its essential being [God];

but this nothing itself is all the same; it is absolute abstraction, therefore pure thought or self-centredness, and with its moment of opposition to spiritual unity it is the principle of Evil. The difficulty people find in these conceptions is due solely to sticking to the term “is”, and forgetting the character of thought, where the moments as much are as they are not, - are only the process which is Spirit. It is this spiritual unity, - unity where the distinctions are merely in the form of moments, or as transcended – which became known to pictorial thinking in that atoning reconciliation spoken of above. And since this unity is the universality of self-consciousness, self-consciousness has ceased to be figurative or pictorial in its thinking; the process has turned back into it. (*Phenomenology of Mind*, pp. 777-8)

This spiritual unity became known to pictorial thinking, he qualifies, “in that atoning reconciliation spoken of above” and which thus itself pictures, he makes clear, the eternal harmony of thought. It is difficult to deny, though, that we have here willing admission that Hegel’s thought, that is to say, he claims, the truth, arises, becomes manifest, out of this witness of pictorial thought, in part or very largely. Nor is this to deny that its substance, this content, is to be found in Aristotle, Plato and others, not to speak of Hinduism or above all, though Hegel does not stress this much in these early years, the Jewish scriptures, as is precisely the Christian claim. In fact, and indeed it follows from this, what we have here is the content and form indifferently of mind itself, resolved ultimately in and into, as developing, self-consciousness, as of what was, is and is to be, just as it “was to be”, recalling now Aristotle’s concept of essence. One might need to re-read here the positive account of necessity in the relevant sections of Hegel’s two logical treatises, the one a summary, or enlargement in reduction, of the other.

Were that not so there would be no point in the careful and subtly spiritual analysis he has just given to “that atoning reconciliation”. What is “pictorial” is that the reconciliation is of what it was impossible ever to separate, precisely the realisation of this being the conclusion to this reconciliation. As he puts it, “Spirit is its own community”, in the Scriptural phrase, “judges all things”, especially therefore, as emerges here, does it judge judgment itself where proposed as an “instrument of reason” (Aristotle). We thus pass to the third and final “element” “constituting” Spirit, which sublates the first two, namely self-consciousness (p. 775). These three elements are first made explicit as “moments”, of Spirit, at page 767:

There are thus three moments to be distinguished: Essential Being; explicit Self-existence, which is the express otherness of essential Being, and for which that Being is object; and Self-existence or Self-knowledge in that other

(generally referred to by Hegel as self-consciousness, here under the aspect of Spirit itself, which he does not fail to identify with the Trinitarian Holy Spirit).

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The reconciliation, of good and evil, Christ and Satan, God and creation, in self-consciousness, succeeds upon a “struggle between the two elements” only “*pictured* as separate and independent beings” (my stress). This independence is stressed in Scripture where Christ says “the Prince of this world” is coming but he “has nothing in me”. That, Hegel implies, belongs to the *picture* of independent existence. This begins to be overcome when Christ disputes (is pictured as disputing) with Satan in the desert. Dispute is already dialogue or spiritual interpenetration. Of this “double-sided form”, double in those various related ways Hegel here specifies, each must, just conceptually, “dissolve itself in itself”. It can seem that Hegel’s thinking here really takes off from perception of Satan’s pictured personalisation in tradition specifically. Since Satan is but a thought, a concept, so it must be, at the deepest spiritual level, with Christ also, though without denying human personality at all. Its notion is rather expanded (to infinity). So

The struggle only takes place where both cease to be this mixture of thought and independent existence, and confront each other merely as thoughts. For there, being determinate notions, they essentially exist merely in the relation of opposition; *qua* independent, on the other hand, they have their essential nature outside their opposition; their movement is thus free, self-determined, and peculiar to themselves. (p. 774)

Despite words such as “merely” or “only”, earlier, Hegel here intends reference to the deepest or most spiritual level, paralleling how he speaks of logic as the substance of the world at the beginning of the *Encyclopaedia*. Things appear, the spiritual process appears, to begin with that principle we now call evil. At least it appears to move indifferently between the two, since they are, in the end or “really”, the same:

If, then, we consider the movement of both as it is in themselves - i.e. as it is essentially – their movement starts only in that one of the two which has the character of being inherently essential as contrasted with the other. This is pictured as a spontaneous action; but the necessity for its self-abandonment lies in the notion that what is inherently essential, and gets this specific character merely through opposition, has just on that account no real independent subsistence. Therefore that element which has for its essence, not independent self-existence, but simple being, is what empties and abandons itself, gives itself unto death, and so reconciles Absolute Being with its own

self. For in this process it manifests itself as spirit; the abstract Being is estranged from itself, it has natural existence and the reality of an actual self. This its otherness, or its being sensuously present, is taken back again by the second process of becoming “other”, and is affirmed as superseded, as universal. Thereby the Divine Being has come to itself in the sphere of the sensuous present; the immediate existence of actual reality has ceased to be something alien or external to the Divine, by being sublated, universal: this death (of immediacy) is therefore its rising again as spirit. When the self-conscious Being cancels and transcends its immediate present, it is as universal self-consciousness. This notion of the transcended individual self which is Absolute Being, immediately expresses therefore the establishment of a communion which, while hitherto having its abode in the sphere of pictorial thought, now returns into itself as the Self; and Spirit thus passes from the second element constituting it, - figurative thought – and goes over to the third – self-consciousness as such. (pp. 774-775)

So, as first put, the two principles, eventually moments, of Spirit are treated simultaneously as standing for the Father (“essential Being”) and the Son (“explicit Self-existence”) as Trinitarian relations which are simultaneously persons, i.e. the persons are the relations (Hegel is here completely Augustinian and Thomist), the relations persons, and as standing for Christ and Lucifer. One can equally put these last two, it seems, in reverse order, it not being clear which is which, since they, in turn, stand for Good and Evil, which, it is emphasised, are the same finally in the Absolute Idea, in God. God, as necessarily self-centred, since there is no other being than he, the infinite, stands both for evil (as it would be in any finite being) and for good. Hence there is none other that is either good or evil. They are all pictorial representations. The same applies to ourselves when we consider ourselves apart from our status as moments of the Idea. It is thus that we picture Christ and Satan or Father and Son. The relation, Hegel says, is, as a “relation of love”, make-believe. What Aquinas says is that the Trinitarian persons *are* the relations and conversely. I incline to think these two accounts have the same content, nor would I accuse either thinker of fourth century Sabellianism, which “pictured” the persons as three aspects merely of the same unitary reality, analogously to Hegel’s representation of the three kingdoms, of Father, Son and Spirit, which he insists are one reality, three approaches to the same. If we will, meanwhile, then we may say that evil, in its place, is good. Is good, conversely, at times evil? Perhaps. Consider, as often put as an example of self-evidence, “Pain is evil!” The claim in fact, this shows, is about the uselessness of these two as metaphysical terms (pain is regularly seen, on the Christian view, as serving the good, as sorrow is “turned into” joy) and perhaps about nothing else, it being a simple truth of Hegelian logic that first Knowledge and then the

Good (in some translated versions Cognition Proper and Will) are subsumed or consumed in the Idea, which is, Hegel declares on the final page or two of the Greater Logic, finally Being, that with which logic began (see the German text we cited earlier).

We may view this as Hegel's way of debunking that persistent foe of sound philosophy and true religion, dualism. Evil is not a contrastive scheme of action and reality, but finds its place in the one and absolute Idea. As Aquinas put it, *malum est semper in subjecto*, understand *bono*, since for him all beings are, or being is, good, something that has rather to be "teased out", as I consider it can be, of Hegel, in contrast, some at least, to Aquinas.

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Spirit's trajectory, *in our thought* (it has no other trajectory), then, brings us to self-conscious self-knowledge of self-consciousness itself, neither mine nor yours, since it is Spirit as "its own community". So the question arises, is this trajectory to be simply dropped and forgotten, as the ladder kicked away, again? Or is it to be ever retained, held in mind as an endless pantheon of "figures" which we may ever survey and draw nourishment from? Not only so, Hegel tells us, but the final Idea *is* itself the *method* of its logical disclosure. It is thus that Art is the ground-form of Absolute Spirit, it really is, if we follow Hegel here (and not, say, Friedrich Vischer, who, while professedly or in the main Hegelian, in his discussion of Hegelian aesthetic theory a century and a half ago put religion before art as, hence, ground-form). For Hegel it seems that religion only comes to itself after the more primal experience of absolute spirit in art, even granted there is some finite experience of religion at an earlier stage of life and upbringing, before the first enfolding aesthetic or thereto related self-unifying experience (such as "falling in love", without which religion is vain or worse). Thus too the process, the procession, bends back ceaselessly upon itself, religion being perfected in philosophy and art in both of these, all re-circling upon themselves. There is thus no privileged point of entry<sup>32</sup>. One has in fact to

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<sup>32</sup> It is, therefore, interesting to note that Friedrich Vischer (1807-1887), just mentioned, in his *Aesthetics* (1846-57), Volume Six, although following Hegel's idealist philosophy generally, yet remarkably "changes the systematic order of the Philosophy of Absolute Spirit", making it begin not with art but with religion, "regarding art as the truth of religion" although, for him too philosophy and not the positive sciences "is and remains ... the highest form not only of Absolute Spirit but also of human knowing in general" (pointed out to me by Professor G. Rinaldi in a private letter which I take the liberty to quote here). If Hegel's ordering rests upon a certain "objective" historical development, from Greek art through Christian

be in it already, thus to have ever been, rather. So it is ourselves we discover, in self-consciousness. “You would not seek me if you had not already found me” or, in Hegel’s words, “The end is realised”, i.e. as such, as *logical* analysis reveals in and with absolute, i.e. not abstractly logical merely, necessity, which is freedom.

The duo we noted, anyhow, of absolute Being and self-existent Self, appears again here (p. 776), where it is noted that figurative thought comes eventually to put them as separable, inasmuch as Being “empties itself of itself”, constitutively even, which is in fact *equivalent* to its being “made flesh”. This is a figurative idea as flesh is a figure (hence the equivalence), is thus “immediate and hence not spiritual”. The assumed form has to become known “as a universal form”. Thus, the Christian event establishes or confirms and perfects “humanism”, flesh remaining all the same a figure, i.e. a representation (*Vorstellung*). But of what is it a figure? We need to keep in mind that God and still more, accordingly, the Idea, does not “have” a body and yet definitionally this is no shortcoming but rather the plenitude which is infinity. The Aristotelian puzzles of Thomas Aquinas over the knowledge etc. of the “separated soul”, over some future if “intermediate” state or even of the status of Christ’s dead body in “the tomb”, have no place here, are, we must surely say, not rejected out of hand but *aufgehoben* into the more developed view, into the crucible, challenging indeed, of absolute idealism (where one asks what is a “body” anyhow in separation from the person, while one need but recall Christ’s “I go to the Father”, the general suspension, or further integration, whether of “body” or “death”), the only consequent way “to date” of thinking about God or about revelation. Religion may make or have made use of the limited views of the past but it is not to be identified with them or with any finite “understanding” of what is ultimately all-inclusive self-consciousness, the “I live yet not I”. For, to

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religion to philosophy yet the change of order might well correspond to the experience of many persons initiated into religion in childhood, which is thus their personal systematic ground-form, who yet discover first its truth, of God as immediate revelation, say, in an experience of art absorbing and fulfilling their religion and out of which their philosophy, of “the true reason-world”, grows as the truth of both in and as Hegelian self-consciousness, not, surely, esoteric even if philosophy itself be thus circumscribed, as maybe *sophia* is not, if we recall the Delphic word to Socrates, “Know thyself”, the same, after all, as all do, in their appropriate measure, within religion and art, wherein, we must surely suppose, metaphysics as the beginning of *der höchste Gottesdienst* is already gestating, whether “brought to term”, to birth, or not. That is, Hegel’s pair, exoteric and esoteric, become known as the same in their difference, in the call of Spirit, enlightening every spirit, to the universal aristocracy, necessarily, of “the people of God”, people and not “masses”.

cite it again, we know what we are but not what we shall be, except that we shall be “like him” (cp. *I John* 3, 2, a text dear to McTaggart and thus far “common ground”), “for we shall see him as he is”. In Hegel’s perspective, though, the seeing and the “being like” are one, while what is “future”, or rather eternal is not a future historical or “material” development but a rising to true knowledge of eternity, of “him as he is” in cancellation of temporal being and/or life, in what we call death, in fact, of one kind or another. Hegel is explicit, death *is* entry into spirit, i.e. it is not death. “I shall not die but live”, the warrior-king declares and the Church takes the text into her worship. The paragraph we have been discussing ends, perhaps puzzlingly, thus:

This figurative idea (*sc.* the becoming flesh) ... becomes spiritual for this consciousness in the process whereby God, who has assumed shape and form, surrenders again His immediate existence, and returns to his essential Being. The essential Being is then Spirit only when it is reflected into itself. (775-776)

It is spiritual, that is, inasmuch as the process is entirely inward or as “spirit is its own community” of Trinitarian life, however more closely interpreted. God is, as was said, “all in all”, not, though, that he literally *shall be* that only, since it is what he *is* (not as reducible, however, to our immediate “now”, which we rather “kick away”), the “he”, even, is absorbed in the first “all”, in Latin *omnis*, singular grammatical form. We might translate, “total in all” or, better, “whole”, Blake’s “world in a grain of sand”.

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Here now I would recall our first two pages and the position outlined there as Hegel’s. It is presented as the full philosophico-theological development of the piecemeal tenets of religious faith and catechetical teaching. We find, however, in the article by Fr. Jamros cited above, that what is intended as intrinsic development is interpreted as distortion or departure from the received faith. I wish to contest this misrepresentation, contrary as it is to the constant mystical interpretation put upon finite religious conceptions by those in the forefront of Christian praxis, as I and not a few others have understood them at least, tis, in fact, being what Fr. Jamros is objecting against.

Before, however, looking again more closely at this excellent and in many ways helpful text from Professor Jamros, cited when we began here, I would make the following remark. Some interpreters would see Hegel’s system not as an ontology, not even a theology of the most speculative kind,

such as, he reminds us, we find in the mystical writings of those who are often but not always professed philosophers or theologians. These “interpreters” claim, rather, that the “speculative” nexus consists in an exhibition of the necessary self-contradictoriness and, so to say, “uselessness” (Sartre), of reason as such.<sup>33</sup> I reply that this is but a continuation of the Kantian *Kritik*, to which it thus *reverts* from Hegel’s solutions. I find no warrant for it in his texts and very much to the contrary, such as I have cited abundantly here and elsewhere. Even more contemptible, when faced with these counter-arguments, is the suggestion, assertion even, that this, Hegel’s true and hyper-Kantian meaning, is in reality a self-protective smokescreen for views that would undoubtedly have been subjected to severe censure. Compare though his section on “The Critical Philosophy” (*Enc.*, paragraphs 40 to 60, the whole, viz. paragraphs 26 to 78, being lifted from an earlier work under the intriguing title “Three Attitudes to Objectivity”), a damning indictment of Kantianism where viewed as “the critical philosophy”, maintained through close on forty pages, whatever acknowledgement Hegel will later make of Kant’s contribution to thought or at least to the phenomenology thereof. He in fact says, it will be found, that Kant was more of a phenomenologist than he was a philosopher.

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“Hegel on the Incarnation: Unique or Universal?” There is a subtlety in Fr. Jamros’s title here which only becomes apparent later. He is not just asking if God becomes incarnate in and as one *individual* or, alternatively, in and as all. That, the maybe initial understanding of the question, we may note, was answered by Aquinas not by appeal to or proof of the first or preferred alternative exclusively, but simply by the remark that the second alternative, later, in the main, espoused by Hegel, is *inconveniens*, unfitting. That did

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<sup>33</sup> We might think that the Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges is an example here, seeming to play with mere paradox, the point or “joke” only emerging as contrary to a reason, the Understanding, to which Borges at least seems to adhere (otherwise his tales would cease to amuse, but nor would I deny to him this deeper side), whereas Hegel, in the name of philosophy and/or of the mystical quest rationally undertaken, than which nothing, but nothing is more serious, be one once called to it. Such persons are often just assumed by the unspiritual not to be serious or honest, i.e. as not even foolish merely, even to “have a devil”, as St. Paul long ago noted. Or, we should say that Borges rather succeeds, with Hegel, in pinpointing the *real contradictions*, subjectively viewed as from a finite standpoint, that *constitute* reason as such, only “called” speculative by a misplaced tenderness to the “rationalist” attitude of so many.



not prevent him from holding a view of the *corpus mysticum*, where *sumit unus sumunt mille*. Jamros remarks here:

According to him (sc. Hegel), the fundamental appearance of God occurs in rational thinking *per se*. It then becomes difficult to maintain the unique incarnation acknowledged by Christian tradition. But since this incarnation assures (for Christianity) the role of Jesus as the definitive saviour and revealer of God, Hegel's interpretation leads to problems ... There is no doubt that Hegel's work raises fundamental questions about the unique position of Jesus Christ in human history. It also seems to make philosophy superior to theology and religious knowledge. (Jamros, *op. cit.* p.276)

On this I remark, in advance of any further analysis, that a fully philosophical approach is not yet in question here. Thus Fr. Jamros employs an unanalysed or unthematized category of "uniqueness", the finitude and hence falsity of which is exposed in Hegel's *Science of Logic*, just that work of the philosopher which Jamros criticises James Yerkes or Hans Küng for not having paid more attention to. What kind of uniqueness is logically thinkable in a logic which deconstructs what then becomes an abstract individuality, i.e. one which "falls outside conceptual thought" (Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, tr. Baillie, Torchbook Edition, Harpers, New York, 1966, p. 772)? In the theological perspective of a Newman, for example, the concept of uniqueness admits of development and/or modification as distinct from denial, the classical model for which would be that of the Trinitarian "identifications in difference" (Hegel), as a development from the confessedly inspired writings of the Scriptures old or new, for a start and before we look at the progressive development of Trinitarian doctrine specifically. Fr. Jamros is thus not prevented from acknowledging this by his commendable assertion of the difficulty of maintaining this datum of faith or of facing up to consequent "problems", as he would doubtless agree. "Ten thousand difficulties do not make a doubt" (Newman). Viewed spiritually, we may add, tradition cannot be other than in course of development, the wind blowing where it will. The Spirit will *lead* you into all truth, it is promised, not merely whisk you into it, so to say.

Regarding Fr. Jamros's final remark in the above citation, that "Hegel's interpretation ... seems to make philosophy superior to theology and religious knowledge", I remark that it is simply one-sided and finite. The philosophical realm *is* that of the infinite, i.e. it is itself the final *theologia* and cannot be anything else, just as it is, in Hegel's words, the "highest divine service" since, as he will say, "the business of philosophy is religion and nothing but religion". Implicit, of course, is that *philosophia* is to

become *sophia*. No true philosophy, anyhow, is “from below” (to preserve the Pauline dilemma here, merely or simply or “ultimately” that between being and nothing once more, after all). Religion, namely, is as regards form a still finite form of the “absolute content” common to philosophy, religion and art as Absolute Spirit, their object. I forbear commenting on Fr. Jamros’s introduction of the term “religious knowledge”, known to me only as naming a subject in secondary schools’ *curricula* in this or that country. Philosophy, as necessarily aspiring to the final *sophia*, cannot be other than superior and indeed supreme, wisdom “from above” indeed, not a “gift” (the term is a plain representation) of the spirit but spirit itself, whose apparently lacking proper name, however, according to Aquinas, might best be precisely “gift”, *donum*. Nor do I believe that Church or Gospel mean anything different, if I may interject a personal view here. Or, one gives gifts to self, the first being or self, however, not being given, as if there were a prior recipient of self, but not being anything at all in abstraction from the infinite, from absolute spirit. To speak of “more beings but not more being” or of “ontological discontinuity”, - there can be no such thing, - is evasive, lazy even, at least as a spiritual procedure, whatever “pastoral” needs may be intruded from the phenomenal arena. We have to *be what we would become*, since that stance, a pure intellection and loving recognition, is the only way of “becoming what we are”. So then, “what do I love when I love my God?” This was a saying of Augustine’s much admired or puzzled over by the late Jacques Derrida, we have noted.

Fr. Jamros, anyhow, now adds that “Hegel can also be interpreted as a defender of the Christian religion”. That would reduce his status to that of an apologist, however. Religion itself, and Christianity in particular, emerge in his thought just because he is a true philosopher, a man at prayer. I mention the particular as dependent upon his thesis that Christianity is “the absolute religion”, i.e. the religion that is not *a* religion (De Lubac called it “religion itself”, coinciding with Hegel’s characterisation of philosophy as *höchste Gottesdienst*. I ignore the “low” imputation of irony or worse his words have suffered here).

Hegel maintains that his own “speculative knowing is the knowing of the manifest [or Christian] religion”. It offers “the true absolute *content*” (*Phenomenologie des Geistes*, in GW 9, Felix Meiner, Hamburg 1980, p. 407, ll. 3/4). Here “Hegel confirms the Christian belief that God appeared in Christ. Nevertheless ... he also seems to deviate from the common Christian tradition which accords to Jesus a divine status given to no other human being ... Hegel’s theory of God encourages this deviation”. Fr. Jamros, the author of these lines, goes on from here to give his account of Hegel’s “theory of God”, a phrase recalling his fellow Jesuit Bernard

Loneragan's title, *Philosophy of God*. He states: "For Hegel God is not a transcendent creator but the substance or essence of the universe". I ask, for whom would God not be "the substance or essence of the universe", whether he exists or not. Nothing less would be God, without or outside of whom creatures are nothing, as it is said that they add nothing to God, *plura entia sed non plus entis*, again. Or we may say, if we think it helps, God is the substance of substances and being of all beings, in harmony with the time-honoured saying, certainly worthy of more honour than "ontological discontinuity", viz. "This also is thou; neither is this thou", finding no fault with this (Hegelian way of thinking), no "discontinuity".

That is the transcendence, not abstractly but in absolute immanence. "In God we live and move and have our being", "closer than me to me". It is indeed universal reason (*nous*) for which the freedom of creation, of "creating", is itself an absolute necessity as *diffusivum sui*, not merely diffusive but diffusive *of itself*, as nature (the material universe) and, finally, as human subjectivity, in Fr. Jamros's terms. The sense in which nature is "material", however, has no more to do with post-Cartesian "stuff" than it did for Aquinas (cf. his *opusculum, De principiis naturae*) or Aristotle (*Physics* II). Human subjectivity, he rightly reports, is for Hegel infinite and not simply or abstractly individual human personality of which universality rather is the principle, which is why all minds converge (without being thereby one "common mind") in absolute self-consciousness, "the intellectual thinking of universal thoughts", while human individuality is *as such* "the appearance of universal divine essence" (stress added), whole in every part (which is thus not a part), every divine idea having to be "identical with the divine essence" (Aquinas, ST Ia 15). Where we do not attain to this, at least *in voto*, we do not belong to it. No other of these "ruined" individuals, i.e. ourselves, found in logic to transcend this (abstract) notion of abstract individuality, can determine the restrictions, if any, to this *votum*. "Thus human personality becomes a divine predicate and even the highest such predicate for it completes the divine self-manifestation" and is thus necessary in any and each of its moments, an end as even or also Kant says. "What you do to the least of these you do to me". It is mere impiety to reduce this affirmatively "theological" affirmation on the part of the "protagonist of the Gospels" to a piece of moralistic make-believe in accordance with a mere "ought" as Hegel analyses this latter. "I in them and they in me" is surely an intensely serious payer, bound to be answered for sure, such that, St. Paul says, Christ "lives in you", become "a new creature". Now to which of us is this being denied and by whom? The whole effort of the modern Church has been in the opposite direction, if I may descend to making a perhaps slightly ad hominem point merely, as it

may seem, although we are also encouraged to drop this demeaning image of the lay-person. How any Christian sees things is how they are to be seen, *ceteris paribus* (this is a better qualification, if there must be one, than “worthy of his salt”, say). So, nor is this a case of not “enduring sound teaching”. Philosophers, indeed, judge more securely than *orbis terrarum*. It is thus they, or the theologians, all agree, who shall interpret this Augustinian phrase, while a philosopher abstracting from or not doing theology, in my book at least, is not a philosopher. Perhaps he is a phenomenologist.

“Human thinking is absolute Spirit”, Jamros interprets, but is therefore self-transcendent *qua* human, one ought to add – “not by conversion of the godhead into flesh, but by the taking of the manhood into God” (*Athanasian Creed*, so-called). Fr. Jamros seems to ignore such a clinching perspective. “The second Adam became a living spirit”, as religion represents things here. “Philosophy thus outranks theology because God is universal reason”, Fr. Jamros is forced to concede, not altogether unwillingly, one senses, and surely no such distinction is made in heaven, where by faith we indeed sit if, as Hegel claims, the end is as such necessarily realised.

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In Hegel’s theory God appears as human thinking, even Jesus incarnates God’s presence in this way. The incarnation thus becomes a rational truth instead of a supernatural mystery. But since rational truths are universal in scope, applying to all instances of the phenomena they describe, divine incarnation should occur wherever human thinking occurs. Hegel’s position would then imply a universal incarnation rather than a unique one restricted to Jesus alone. His position would also challenge the very existence of Christian theology, which acknowledges a revelation centred on a unique mediator between God and humanity.

“But can this really be Hegel’s meaning?” Fr. Jamros immediately goes on to ask, as if sad like the rich young man that he cannot follow. For yes, it can, and is, as he goes on to confirm, ending his essay thus in opposition to James Yerkes’s more positive claim for Hegel’s endorsement of religion, not therefore for its destruction but for its rising again as spirit<sup>34</sup>, the very truth, I would argue, which Fr. Jamros cannot accept.

One wonders however whether Hegel himself would agree with such a claim. Without doubt the Christian religion does reveal to philosophy the concept of

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<sup>34</sup> Compare also Georges van Riet, “The Problem of God in Hegel”, *Philosophy Today* 1967, frequently cited above here.

divine-human unity. But this is before philosophy begins its own work. When thinking for itself, speculative philosophy has to ground its own content in *a priori* reason rather than in revelation or history. As a self-grounding thought the concept cannot appeal to history for its truth, except as illustration or confirmation. What reveals the universal truth of the incarnation for philosophy is not the historical figure of Jesus but thinking itself. Consequently Jesus must have only an external relation to such philosophy, and is not part of its content. His epistemic importance is thus another “image” that has no place in speculative thinking.

Hegel could reply, with the angel at the tomb: “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, he is risen. Go away from here” (to Galilee, in the text). Christ, having lived, has become “a living spirit” and is thus known as spirit in and as mind and thus, necessarily, in and as self-consciousness. It is not, then, that Jesus, the ever-living Christ, has “only an external relation to philosophy”. Philosophy, as theology in its final refinement, directs attention to Christ as “the inherent reality of the religious communion” but not only or essentially this, since the Church as actual now and here is itself still phenomenal, but to the eternal Kingdom of the Spirit, to use his chosen *figure*, perhaps deliberately recalling that of Kant, of the “kingdom of ends”. The “historical figure of Jesus”, that is, is precisely that, a figure, like *all* historical appearances and ultimately, our own birth and death. Trinity, therefore, and hence incarnation also, “belong to the philosophical” order, as Hegel considers it is his and our duty to show, while the opposed presentations, based upon an irreligious because supposed independent realism of created things, not allowing that God is to be conceived as the actual infinite, hold back from where spirit would lead, like the Pharisees of old whose contradictions Jesus uncompromisingly exposed while they had him killed, a destiny he is seen to have willingly accepted, thus incarnating too his own affirmation of hatred of one’s “life in this world”, death being “the entry into spirit” (Hegel), into which all are drawn through this Trinitarian baptism. In this he followed and transcended the precedent of his martyred cousin, John “the Baptist”, taking over his baptism (or those believing in him did so) as the effective figure and mystical identity of his destiny and calling with ours. He is, in other words, still and more so “the necessary mediator” to whom Fr. Jamros witnesses. This is a datum, a precipitate, of Hegel’s logic and/or metaphysics, inclusive of his philosophy of history in particular, in the light of which Christian doctrine has to be interpreted just as it has had to be in the light of “the natural attitude” in general, this latter, however, itself forming no part of what is called “the deposit of faith”, that we should ever remain “naïve

realists” as, for example, Maritain or Pope Paul VI<sup>35</sup> have on occasion at least appeared to demand.

Hegel’s philosophy, in fact, seems better adapted than any other so far to underpin the doctrine of mystical theology that in spiritual life there is a moment at which devout meditations and imaginings upon the phenomenal or historical life of the Mediator or Christ should be left aside as a hindrance (I do not exaggerate) as the spirit beats upon “the cloud of unknowing”. This doctrine, found, just for example, in the anonymous fourteenth century English work of this title, as representative, is systematised in the teaching of St. John of the Cross, himself no mean philosopher, styled, along with St. Teresa of Avila, in whom the principle is not so clear, “doctor(s) of the Church”. This doctrine confirms the hating of one’s “life in this world” as evangelical necessary condition for being Christ’s disciple, since death to it is, in Hegel’s word, “the entry into spirit” as condition, in the words of these practitioners, for reception of divine love, life and/or “grace”. In reality though, Hegel would make precise, such practice is itself initial activation and reception of the same, as indeed reflected in John of the Cross’s “active” counsels for so-called “beginners”. The Cross is already or implicitly, rather, “resurrection” and Pentecost, while “all times are his”. In all this

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. Paul VI’s pamphlet “The Credo of the People of God”, put out shortly after (c. 1967) the close of the Second Vatican Council at the end of 1964. The document appears to claim that we must be such philosophical realists, a doctrine to which, rather, as Jamros seems to claim, philosophy is as such ancillary merely, made or proved to be indeed by the fact of Christian faith or the Christian movement, of which, however, it is but a moment *at most*. For Maritain, see *passim* or, for a more scholarly presentation of the position, E. Gilson’s *On Being and Some Philosophers*, published by Pontifical Institute for Medieval Studies, Toronto, 1952. The recent raising of Duns Scotus to the altars (canonisation), and thus, whether implicitly or explicitly, as “doctor of the Church”, seems to take the ground from under the feet of those attempting to quarantine living philosophy in the name of the Church for ever or in principle even, whatever periods of nervousness have occurred. The Church indeed “judges without fear of contradiction”, whatever its relation to history at different times or places, or whatever history’s relation, rather, to this transcendent Church or “spiritual community”. This community is not a divinisation of mere history in all its finitely separable moments (they are rather one and all “cancelled” in their very subsumption as they appear), unless in Hegel’s comprehensive sense in which error and evil too, as moments, are found in God, which does not help us, or Fr. Jamros, at all just here. Philosophy, *sophia* eventually, cannot be forever ancillary, as it may be seen to have been in certain respects, as it were politically, as reflecting a posture from those styling themselves philosophers, a posture, however, belonging to mundane finitude, along with much of the customary *mores* of some given time or place, and hence lying “outside the Concept”.

Hegel's theology is basically Johannine and Pauline, based upon the "ruin of the individual" in the latter's being shown to be abstract. As each says "I live and yet not I, but Christ (become living spirit) lives in me" so each lives thereby in one another mutually or as all, as all our prayers confirm. Thus Aquinas says that when one receives communion all receive it, *sumit unus sumunt mille*. The belief, the understanding, is constant. Hence the saying that it is only blasphemy against the "Son of Man" *as spirit* that shall not be forgiven. The rest, namely, is representation, *Vorstellung*, as the speaker, in his final identity well knew. "Who are you? Whom do you make yourself?" "Before Abraham was, I am". The teaching of Hegel, as of Meister Eckhart, is that Abraham, through this mediator, through death in resurrection, could in principle have said the same, in what Hegel identifies as self-consciousness, which transcends all particular consciousness of abstract individuality. This again, spiritually interpreted, does not mean that some finite utterance during a person's life-history, where, again, he himself is but a "figure", shall not be forgiven, but that *in* rejecting spirit and the corresponding self-consciousness one has no life or substance in one, is ex-communicate, so to say, from the body, as a lifeless member, separated by a great or "fixed" gulf from the most extreme ecumenism imaginable. Nor is it implied that anyone has reached or could finally reach this ultra-extreme. Who, after all, one might add, is "anyone"? The term, too definite, lacks the universality of the more simple "one", lies "outside the notion", is yet not precisely the *individuum vagum* (literally, "wandering" individual) of logic first signified by the I or O propositions of the square of opposition, rather than any quantitative plurals. The A proposition, rather, is singular, of "every" (*omnis*) rather than "all" (*omnes*), as is intuitively clearer in the universal negative. The Christian position, eminently philosophical, is that *in* someone's, one's ("some" has really no place in logic and its necessity), reaching the *other* extreme of communication or of spirit, ever blowing where it will, all have reached it and that this is mediation, ultimately a mutual indwelling, "I in them and they in me", without distinction, each branch in and as the vine, i.e. as an entity it has that kind of nature rather than that of the vegetable figuring it. This or perfect unity in union, as McTaggart emphasised, is even superior to the subsequent animal figure of "body" used by St. Paul.

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Fr. Jamros fears and/or reproaches a position which "would also challenge the very existence of Christian theology". We have, I believe, shown the falsity of this. What is challenged is a too abstract notion of such a theology,

set in reality to become philosophy just as “the *wisdom* from above”, whether or not foolishness with man whose wisdom is foolishness with God, in St. Paul’s comparison. Religion, that is, can and shall also receive the form of speculative thought grounding it in the first place, at the very dawn of culture even. First when it raises itself to this form, to the level of thought, as it indeed does in true theology, does it correspond to its idea. The Scotist explicitly anti-Thomist notion that theology is a practical science must either be viewed as retrograde, therefore, or it must be supplemented with more thought and discourse upon how philosophy itself (*theoria*) “is the highest *praxis*”. In sum, both religion and theology are identical with in their difference from philosophy, just therefore “from above” and “*höchste Gottesdienst*”.

The best exposition I have found of this “development of doctrine” in regard to Christian proclamation with respect to its highest *telos*, viz. the “mystical” or spiritual life proper as embodied in the “gifts” (seven) and “fruits of the spirit” (traditionally twelve) as expressed in the exercise of the theological virtues specifically, viz. faith, hope and love, in full possession of the beatitudes as proclaimed at the commencement of the Sermon on the Mount, is that presented by Professor Georges van Riet of Louvain, cited above here, in a long address at a Thomist congress held at Rome in the 1950s. This, given in Latin, to specify again, was later published in French translation (RMM), but also expanded, before appearing in English (translated by Joan M. Miller) in the Spring and Summer quarterly issues of *Philosophy Today*, Ohio, for 1967. The stress here on the practical need for a new kerygmatic approach, as supplied by Hegelian thought, in no way interferes with the philosophical presentation of Hegel’s ideas put as in contrastive fulfilment of the thought and text of Thomas Aquinas.

The hesitations, going back to pronouncements of the Roman Holy Office in the 1860s outlawing any introduction of Hegel-based “ontologist” thought into Catholic teaching of religion, stems chiefly from the clerical estate. This is not surprising, since the clear import of the Hegelian vision, of a progressive development of art and religion into philosophy as infinite self-consciousness, as the Absolute Idea, Trinitarian life in the mystical body (of Christ as become “a living spirit”), is an anticipated fulfilment of the prophecy of Jeremiah, in principle endorsed by the teaching Church as teaching the inerrantly developing truth of Scripture, that the day will and must come in which no man shall say to another “Know the Lord”, since, he says quite clearly, all shall know him, rather as all have now obtained “the vote”, despite the insistence in some quarters that “The Church is not a democracy”, an assertion plainly challenged by the Conciliar declaration (Vatican II, 1964) on Ecumenism and its development. Progressive



spiritualisation entails diminished respect for particular places or persons, this being universalised rather, as the Gospel taught from the beginning, putting the last first.

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Returning now to our analysis of chapter VII c of *The Phenomenology of Mind*, we read:

Spirit thus takes up its position in the third element, in universal self-consciousness: Spirit is its own community. The movement of this community being that of self-consciousness which distinguishes itself from its figurative idea, consists in explicitly bringing out what has implicitly become established. The dead Divine Man, or Human God, is implicitly universal self-consciousness; he has to become explicitly so for this self-consciousness. Or, since this self-consciousness constitutes one side of the opposition involved in figurative thought, viz. the side of evil, which takes natural existence with individual self-existence to be the essential reality – this aspect, which is pictured as independent, and not yet as a moment, has, on account of its independence, to raise itself in and for itself to the level of spirit; it has to reveal the process of Spirit within its self. (778)

Each consciousness, that is, is to find his or her identity in and with God, in fulfilment of its first sinful or evil self-assertiveness. *Agnosce o Christiane dignitatem tuam* (St. Augustine), though here what was reserved to the Christian is put as the universal norm, the whole that the part ever stood for. More than anything it recalls the closing pages of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, where Hegel seems to snatch hope from despair:

Philosophy thus stands opposed to two points of view. On the one hand, it appears to be opposed to the Church, and has this in common with culture and reflection (1 and 2 above), that in comprehending the popular religious idea it does not keep to the forms of the popular idea, but has to comprehend it in thought, though in doing so it recognises that the form of the popular idea is also necessary. But the Notion is that higher element which also embraces within it different forms and allows their right to exist. The second way in which it takes up an attitude of opposition is when it appears in antagonism to Enlightenment, to the theory which holds that the content is of no consequence, to opinion, to the despair which renounces the truth. The aim of philosophy is to know the truth, to know God, for He is the absolute truth, inasmuch as nothing else is worth troubling about save God and the unfolding of God's nature. Philosophy knows God as essentially concrete, as spiritual, real universality which is not jealous but imparts itself (naturally, as does

light). Whoever says that God cannot be known, says he is jealous, and so makes no earnest effort to believe in Him, however much he may speak of God. Enlightenment, that conceit, that vanity of the Understanding, is the most violent opponent of philosophy, and is displeased when the latter points to the element of reason in the Christian religion, when it shows that the witness of the Spirit of Truth is lodged in religion. Philosophy, which is theology, is solely concerned with showing the rationality of religion ... This religious knowledge thus reached through the Notion is not universal in its nature, and it is further only knowledge in the Spiritual Community ... But if, after having considered the origin and permanent existence of the Spiritual Community, we see that in attaining realisation in its spiritual reality it falls into this condition of inner disruption, then this realisation appears to be at the same time its disappearance (cp. p. 145 of LPR 3: “when the time for speculative justification is reached then the unity of outer and inner no longer exists in immediate consciousness, reality”, etc.).

The Church, that is to say, is not the Kingdom of God but a sign thereof.

Philosophy has been reproached with setting itself above religion; this, however, is false as an actual matter of fact, for it possesses this particular content only and no other, though it presents it in the form of thought; it sets itself merely above the form of faith, the content is the same in both cases ... For us philosophical knowledge has harmonised this discord and the aim of these lectures has just been to reconcile reason and religion, to show how we know this latter to be in all its manifold forms necessary and to rediscover in revealed religion the truth and the Idea ... But this reconciliation is itself merely a partial one without outward universality. Philosophy forms in this connection a sanctuary apart, and those who serve in it constitute an isolated order of priests, who must not mix with the world and whose work is to protect the possession of Truth. How the actual present-day world is to find its way out of this state of disruption, and what form it is to take, are questions which must be left to itself to settle, and to deal with them is not the immediate practical business and concern of philosophy. (LPR 3)

Meanwhile, *The Phenomenology of Mind* continues,

This particular self-consciousness is Spirit in natural form, natural spirit: self has to withdraw from this natural existence and enter into itself, become self-centred; that would mean it has to become evil. But this aspect is already *per se* evil: entering into itself consists, therefore, in persuading itself that natural existence is what is evil. By picture-thinking the world is supposed actually to become evil and be evil as an actual fact, and the atoning reconciliation of the Absolute Being is viewed as an actual existent phenomenon. By self-consciousness as such, however, this pictured truth, as regards its form, is considered to be merely a moment that is already superseded and transcended; for the self is the negative, and hence knowledge - a knowledge which is a

pure act of consciousness within itself. This moment of the negative must in like manner find expression in the content. Since, that is to say, the essential being is inherently and from the start reconciled with itself and is spiritual unity, wherein the parts as thus represented are absorbed as moments thereof, it thus appears that every part of the representation here receives the or its opposite meaning to what it had before; every meaning completes itself thereby in the other and first or exactly thereby is the content spiritual; inasmuch as every determination is equally its opposite the unity in other-being, the spiritual, is completed; just as, previously (p. 777), whether for us or in themselves indifferently, the meanings united in their opposition and even the abstract forms of the same and not the same, of identity and non-identity, sublated themselves. (The second part of this paragraph is in my own translation, due to accidental page-damage)

Hegel refers now further to the *interiorisation* of self-consciousness itself as, *apparently*, seen as existent evil, i.e. he does not assent to this view of it, saying, rather, if things *were* so (*war* used in “subjunctive” form, as equivalent to *wäre*). This idea of becoming interior is precisely what was elaborated in the mystical tradition in the century or so immediately before Hegel as also in his own time, especially in France. Thus we have *A Manual for Interior Souls* by J.N. Grou SJ, while the treatises of Saints John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila and others wrestle with the same notion, ultimately in thought rather than simply “in life and in thought”. For there too, as in Hegel, life becomes absorbed, “cancelled”, in and by *thinking* or, as they often called this, *prayer*. Hence, “O life that is no life at all” (Teresa) or the ferociously negative counsels of John as regards first entry upon this way of thinking, a going, for example, for the opposite of what is immediately esteemed, e.g. the high regard of others, almost exactly as in Hegel’s account, more purely theoretical perhaps, of the “evil” of the natural attitude. On all this, consult again *Enc.* 159.

In fact this interiorisation of natural evil is not itself evil but *the knowledge of evil*, as we find in *Genesis*. The knowing of good and evil, that is, is not some accidental consequence of the Adamic “fall” into evil (he would not, the myth apart, have been cast out of Eden for such as that) but, Hegel sees or “spiritually” interprets that which is itself spiritual, *viz.* the myth, such knowing is the very essence of this *development as of consciousness*. Evil is known thus, all the same, *as something existent and necessary*, like or even as necessary being itself, which is precisely *known* thus, the disruption (Nijinsky’s “fire in the head”) attendant upon the passage from nature to spirit. Knowing then *is* a becoming evil, he says, but only a becoming of *the thought* of evil. What is really being distinguished here, I would suggest, just as later in the *Logic* of Hegel, is the thought of nothing from nothing at all, which means there is no distinction, that evil is

in its concept redeemed and cancelled. This, it would follow, is precisely why it is not Good that is finally the Idea in this Logic, that is finally “sovereign”<sup>36</sup>. This had been expressed by Aquinas by saying that the honourable or ethical good is not really the Good absolutely or supremely, or at all, but is honoured as simply leading to that Good, which is, he writes, God himself. That is, Hegel’s philosophy will make clear, the Good is *other than itself* and so is not itself, finally or absolutely, good. The finitude of *moralism* or even, in its concept, virtue, here comes to expression in, we might want to say, “the power of spirit”, an insight, we all know, which has proved historically difficult to handle, the new wine breaking the old bottles.<sup>37</sup> The late Colin Wilson’s “outsider” here becomes the true insider in this sense of interiority as standing for or reaching (out to) all, in or as “the spiritual community”, becomes “religious”, as Wilson noted, without perhaps fully grasping its non-regressiveness, in the case of Newman. I would also submit here that this passage we are here considering can well be taken as throwing light upon Hegel’s use of “becoming” as *a* and even *the* needful logical category, which McTaggart so deprecated in his 1910 *Commentary on Hegel’s Logic*. Knowledge that becomes is not the becoming of time or nature, just as talk, even in Hegel, of God before creation refers not to temporal but to logical priority, in abstraction, like the Idea itself (of anything).

This becoming, this knowing, is therefore acknowledged (in the story) as “the first moment of reconciliation”, that man “has become one of us, knowing good and evil”. It is, again, a going back into self from the immediacy of nature. This, that is, is *why* it reconciles. It is a departure from, a desertion of, nature in its externality determined or defined as evil and even the essential evil, in and as finitude. It is this qualification that separates Hegel from historic Manicheanism, the essence of which was to posit dualist equality *within infinity* of the good and evil principles. Hegel is rather referring back to an *identity* of being and nothing (at the beginning of his Logic), which is, rather, absolute monism to which historic dualism, Manicheanism, ought to have been assimilated and, insofar as it has survived the dreadful persecutions and so on, might finally be assimilated,

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<sup>36</sup> As in Iris Murdoch’s *The Sovereignty of Good* or of course Plato.

<sup>37</sup> It is in this sense we can see the “virtue”, the rightness, of Geach’s asking, as a constant in his study *The Virtues*, originally a set of lectures delivered at Cambridge and Uppsala universities, in what sense if at all each particular virtue of the classical list he uses can or might be ascribed to God, thus far coinciding, like religion in general, with Hegel’s search for the Absolute Idea. It is thus no surprise that Geach’s companion volume to of lectures to this set is entitled, and deals with, *Providence and Evil*. The legacy lives on, in ceaselessly self-transforming transmission.

as a real moment of the Idea, namely. But does then the Idea have a *psychopathic* moment, must we say that? I reply that Hegel, after all, gives the Satanic moment (and what else is the psychopathic?) prominence, even making it the first or most immediate expression of spirit in self-consciousness. The late Ruth Rendell, a high-quality exponent of crime, confessed to an especial compassion for just psychopaths, perhaps unknowingly (perhaps not this) approaching contemplation of the one “made sin for us”. As absolute the divine *drama* cannot be less than terrible, as is said indeed of beauty itself, “terrible as an army with banners”. Yet who would dare condemn beauty?

The consciousness of self, here, as Hegel’s final theme, although it may first be consciously approached under the rubric “Why just me?”, as it is in Camus’ novel *The Outsider* or *The Stranger* (French original, *L’Étranger*), for example, refers, though under this rubric, to a or, rather, the process of divinisation or of absorption into the Absolute, not as a drop of water in the ocean or part of the whole, still less, but in concrete identity. Thought, that is, thinks itself, “in us”, maybe, but only as *we* “at first” or temporally represent it. In that sense we are fulfilled in disappearing and this is the so-called “objectivity” of science, i.e. just this is an absolute, concretely universal subjectivity transcending mere individual “participation”. This is death, *a* death, but death transformed from our subjective misrepresentation of it.

Thus Hegel can denominate this inversion, almost this topsy-turviness, the “dying off” (*Absterben*) of “sin”, actually employing here this Biblical category (*Sünde*). He adds here that it is not natural being as such that such a consciousness rejects (*verlässt*) but the knowing of it as evil or, he must surely mean here, what is thus *known* is thereby neutralised in its conceptuality as indeed a moment of the same, of the Concept. Evil, as he says elsewhere in almost Thomist phrase, “is sham-being”, negativity rather. Suffering and pain, like evil itself, however, are here redeemed from their conceptual isolation. As Scripture has it, “Offences must come”. Or again, there has to be an enemy, an adversary, who has also his rights and must play his part, even as Mephistopheles, when Goethe’s Faust asks him to show him hell, replies “Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it”. We can of course no more be satisfied with this than we are with the ovens of Auschwitz. For solution Hegel offers us non-solution, the finitude, the self-contradictoriness, of becoming, the *nothingness* of finitude, of the “unweeded garden” (*Hamlet*, cp. the parable of the “tares”). The immediacy of this reconciling inward-turning, he says, is mediated as presupposing itself, as its own Ground, because in fact Nature, rightly seen, has “already” or *ipso facto* gone into itself, the “groaning and travailing” being, as

everywhere, representation, the “little while” of the Gospel (which is equally its comment upon time itself, whole in every part one might perhaps add), as man must, one must, “for the sake of evil” (or of what evil demands?). Nature, that is, is wrongly conceived when conceived in the “natural” or piece by piece way, precisely why St. Paul, and apocalyptic tradition, pictures it as awaiting temporally its transformation, really our mental transformation. “O life that is no life at all, when shall it end” (St. Teresa), meaning it has not really begun, prayer, thought, liberating from the seeming bondage.

Evil, however, is itself this turning inward, i.e. it is not such a bad idea after all, he seems to be saying, taking, so to say, what must be the divine or absolute point of view, since it, evil, is a fact, although, much more, whatever we are to make of this more, as, namely, a moment of the divine *nous*. This move is the alternative, if it is one, to denying God altogether, which, on other grounds, is found impossible. Or, as some will doubtless say, it is mere *reductio ad absurdum*, this in turn eliciting the Kierkegaardian moment and all that Heidegger, say, made of it, indeed “a blow in the face” to God, who is well used to that. Yet he too had, and has to have, his “moment”, like, more transparently, Nietzsche, or, according to Scripture, the Antichrist itself, which “must come”, but as a moment within the development of Spirit, distinguishable, and yet finally not, from mere Jack the Rippers or more notorious miscreants, since we all share and must share in their wretchedness, this being the vocation even or especially of innocence, Thérèse of Lisieux being the shining example here (cf. her “Autobiography”).

Summing up, *knowledge* of nature as being untrue (and not merely *an* untrue) existence of spirit (a certain critique of existence as such may be here involved, if we refer ourselves to the Logic, where existence noted as a mere passing category), along with what then becomes the universality of the self, is *the reconciliation of spirit with itself*, is, that is, what is entailed in its *conception*. What this process, as immediacy (reflected in the Eden story), thus shows, Hegel now claims, is the necessity of such representation, whether in particular or generally, just inasmuch as knowledge of nature is (true) *knowledge* of the untrue existence of spirit, of mind, as it were thus misplaced. We have just here, in the interiorly developed universality of self, mind’s reconciliation with itself, mind’s own becoming, we might even say (as forever contained, absorbed, sublated within mind as perpetual or motionless motion). That is, this In-itself receives, for what would otherwise be (or have been) an uncomprehending self-consciousness, the form of an actual being thus represented to it, existing precisely in its consciousness of the same. This comprehension, it

follows, is not as such a grasping (*Ergriffen*) of its conceiving (*Begriff*), on the part of the In-itself, that is. Such a grasping would imply knowledge of the transcended or sublated naturalness as universal, as reconciled with itself. Rather, we have a grasping of just this representation, i.e. not of the concept, whereby, through the *event* of the divine being's own externalisation (or self-othering, *Entäusserung*) in its once becoming man and dying, the divine being is reconciled with its existence, i.e. the existence of this representation as itself, so to say "existingly", untrue, and this is the evil or sin which this mediator is said to have been "made for us", upon which our own knowledge of things, which is *sophia*, is made dependent. Thus the Christ incarnate asks, effectively, in great pain, almost despair, if that were possible, "How long must I endure you, suffer you?", i.e. mankind, this being with you, to whom he refers as "this generation". This is philosophy's crown, Hegel is making out, rather than an optional hobby for "believers". It would follow that faith itself is a necessary virtue, as in fact it is treated in the above-mentioned set of lectures by Peter Geach, who yet rejects the surely inseparable thesis, we found above, of the unity of the virtues, such that the possession of one virtue, to be genuine, is at once the possession of all, whatever the appearances. This, of course, can be put over as supreme pessimism or supreme optimism indifferently.

I take this account as a back-handed way of saying that what is pictured as event is or sets forth, as one conception, thought or concept., the *necessity* of the Concept or Notion (*Enc.* 160), *der Begriff*, in the very idea God has of it, of such "incarnation" and death, at the same time, however, as these are conceived, not further pictured, as eternal *act*, the ever on-going on process which *is* the absolute and the Idea, pictured for imagination as these *quasi*-historical (is not history itself only *quasi*-historical? This is the question Küng or perhaps even Rahner do not ask) events. Event as such, namely, is for Hegel a logical impossibility. It can only be because of the *necessity*, in his eyes, of what are usually considered or taken as the specific Christian "mysteries" that they, events, find necessary place here in discussion of mind's ascent to the consciousness of evil, an ascent pictured upside-down, so to say, as a "fall", a picture carried on by images such as "shades of the prison-house" (Wordsworth), images of romantic or even earlier "metaphysical" poetry, these two being identified in their difference:

Happy those early days when I  
 Roamed in my angel infancy,  
 Before I understood this place  
 Appointed for my second race ...  
 (Henry Vaughan: "The Retreat").

That is, what are otherwise distinct as events, one at the beginning, Adam, the other at the end, the Christ, of religion's "salvation history", are here put, read, as one idea and that *the* (absolute) Idea. The event, *das Geschehen*, is so to say down-graded. The grasping (*Ergreifen*) of this representation, in sublation of its narrative quality, *itself* more pointedly expresses what previously, in its exposition, had become known as spiritual resurrection. Hegel seems to take this last as intelligible interpretation necessary even for specifically religious people or theologians, since any literal reliance upon resurrection purely as historically factual (whatever we want to say about just that) is for him, as he claims elsewhere, a failure to understand or, it is implied, a failure to exercise, one's own religion. This view has found its way generally into modern catechetical instruction<sup>38</sup>, for teachers as for learners, in the Church or spiritual community. Resurrection is thus itself the grasping of (the meaning of) the crucifixion, of the death. Nor is this specifically Lutheran, as is sometimes ignorantly repeated, witness the resurrection crucifixes common in Eastern Orthodox tradition from early times, with Christ hanging on the cross crowned and in kingly robes. A similar image is to be found in the final Biblical *Apocalypse*, with its notion, *in picture*, of glorified wounds. This very grasping was in its initial phase the individual self-consciousness's becoming universal in and as the (spiritual) community and or communion, a notion applied first to the crucified one himself and thence to any and every consciousness involved, part or whole, vine or branches, so to say, which means that no one is a part merely. All are ends, in Kantian language.

"The death of the divine man as death is abstract negativity, the immediate result of the movement which concludes itself only in natural universality", writes Hegel. Is he one or all, this "divine man", or both, to recall the Platonic insight or *dictum* that universals are neither one nor many, which is as much as to say they are both? Or which is better, the double negative or double positive? Is this first question the one that Küng or Rahner never seem to ask, in their adhesion to "the historical" at least, one, alternatively, that Fr. Jamros (see above) only excludes himself from this discussion by asking, i.e. asking as an exclusive or "strong" either/or?

The emphasis in Hegel's text, however, is rather on the death, or any death, considered apart from what is called, in a figure, resurrection, which comes to seem more and more like a real contradiction in supposed reality, such that one exclaims: "Well, if he rose up again, just like that, then he

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<sup>38</sup> See for example the books of instruction for catechists by Herman Hendrickx CICM, at one time Professor of Theology at Louvain and later in the Philippines of New Testament studies, especially the volume *The Resurrection Narratives*, Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1978, revised 1984.



didn't die". Hegel, so to say, takes this as read; hence it is not in his text. He wants to say that death as such implies spiritual life, is, as he says in one place, "the entry into spirit", just what it has been the fashion to denigrate from the side of positivist dogmatism, or of plain Christian confession (not inward faith as such, however) even. Death, he adds, loses this or its natural meaning in spiritual self-consciousness. The word "spiritual" (*geistig*) might well be omitted. *All* such consciousness is mental, of the mind. Such consciousness thus becomes indeed the concept of death itself as thus specified. "Dying we live" is a text that comes easily to mind, more easily perhaps for the Bible-reading Hegel. The immediate meaning of death as the non-being of this or some individual becomes here transfigured towards universality of mind or spirit living in its community as daily dying and rising again there, which is as much as to say that it is thus *explained*. I note here that while the dictionary will give "transfigure" as the English meaning for German *Verklären* (the word Hegel uses here) yet the plainly cognate Swedish verb *förklara* simply means "explain" in the first instance. Hegel is explaining (*erklärt*) death. There is deep food for thought here. Spiritual resurrection, a Wittgensteinian might comment, thus "leaves everything as it is", though why not? As it is, yes, but by this alone we come to *know* it, as the animals, say, do not, i.e. man himself, as intrinsically more or other than animal, was the first "revelation" (to himself). This has been precisely the arguments of the poets just alluded to all along: "Turn but a stone and you touch a wing" (Francis Thompson). Similarly, then, when Marx says "Man is God", if he would, he would not be altogether wrong or different from one saying "God is man". That is to say, both utterances might be a case of "taking of the manhood into God" and neither one, as identifications specifically, of "conversion of the godhead into flesh", which, *as distinct from* "taking of the manhood into God", the "Athanasian Creed", we have noted, as did Athanasius himself (that's the historical) excludes. I only say it "might" be such a case. Intentions and subliminal purposes may vary in either camp. Living in the spirit, instantiating absolute spirit, thus might come down to a vote for or against Art, here the poetic, as spirit's first or ground-form. Similarly, Hegel's philosophy might be dismissed as a mere aesthetic or aesthetics might here first be raised higher (well, not first, last rather) to its true and absolute dignity, that of the beautiful (as in Aristotle's quest, under the virtue of *epieicheia* perhaps, for the beautiful action), *to kalon*, or Beethoven's assertion that "music is a greater revelation than the whole of religion and philosophy", which this text of Hegel's here, the larger whole of it, might well support. For who can identify the seat or place of the highest wisdom or *sophia*, of absolute knowledge even, given that it is not found, nor found by Hegel, to be multi-verbal? One is reminded again

of Wittgenstein's Leibnizian "simple proposition" (in *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*), of pure act (Aristotle), of the divine *Word* best approximated to by silence. Hence writing, like life, must come to an end for the genuine philosopher (wait for it!), hence the mediator, himself "Word", wrote only, just once, in sand.

But surely, if music could be the greatest revelation then science too has its limits, whether of demand or expression. Clearly, and that is why among the classical "intellectual virtues" *sapientia* is ordered as above *scientia* as, Aquinas explains, in itself a certain connaturality, a mutuality even, with what it is sought to understand, like the connaturality (mutuality even: the "blossoms on one tree"), in creativity, of God with nature. It is in this way, we have noted, that mind knows only itself. This, though prominent in Hegel's account, where nature is itself posited as word, divinely rational utterance, the abstract philosopher possesses least of the three forms of absolute spirit if he be not first grounded in art and religion both, a requirement Hegel several times spells out. Nature, that is, for absolute idealism, has to be presented as thought in a state of actually being thought, "groaning and travailing" and not, logically not, as some finished finite article – the distinction is made by Gentile, who yet himself, however, one learns, could not accept, the thought being thought, *pensiero pensante*, as a corrective to nature as, to all appearances *pensiero pensato*, though it seems strange that he stayed with this appearance, while modern "natural history", along with entropy-theory, certain seems to present nature as a vanishing phenomenon, due, like logic itself, for absorption in "the Notion".<sup>39</sup>

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What belongs here to the representational or pictured element, namely that absolute spirit presents the very nature of spirit as an individual, presents it rather as a particular (being) as regards its existence (*Daseyn*) or being (whether we add "there" or not), this is here transformed into (or interpreted as, *versetzt in*) self-consciousness itself, into knowing as preserving itself in its *own* other-being (my stress). This is but the classical Greek account of knowledge as such, as a having of the other as other or, then, having it as self indifferently, a view already exercised above in his account of the reconciliation with evil, first sketched as forgiveness. This self-consciousness, as absolute spirit indeed, "does not really die", as the particular being mentioned is pictured as really having died; rather, "its particularity expires in its universality; i.e. in its *knowledge*, which is essential Being reconciling

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<sup>39</sup> See again the forthcoming study by G. Rinaldi, *The Philosophy of Art*, Whitelock Publications, Oxford 2020, referred to above.

itself with itself” (Baillie, p. 781) in the way just explained. Death that is, since it is the *portal* to Absolute Being or Spirit, the Idea, cannot itself be put as having a functional role in that to which it is the passport. *Mors est janua vitae* and so the Mediator says, “I am the life” or, rather, “the resurrection and the life”. Resurrection, that is to say (it is in itself a figurative term related to burial), is the name for this “entry into spirit” more than it can be the name for what is entered into. This is the rationale for those resurrection crucifixes, where the robed Christ in glory reposes, balances even, upon the Cross, itself then seen, I, the Spirit, as the “tree of beauty, tree of light” rather than as in a more or less forcefully imagined Roman instrument of deadly torture from two millennia since. In this way the “realism” of our latterday Western tradition, Iberian or as exemplified by painters such as Matthias Grünewald, for example, should not stand at the centre of our devotional representation, always requiring sublation and eventual cancellation even in and by the Spirit. as compared with these icons of an in the main earlier Christian world. Thus it is in perpetual return to the sources, as distinct from the abstractly “primitive”, that one “gets at” the Notion, as Hegel expresses it. But, having mentioned Spain, nowhere is this better explicated than in the mystical theology of the sixteenth century Spanish Carmelite and Doctor, John “of the Cross”.

Hence, when Hegel says here the self-consciousness does not really die as the particular being *is pictured* as really having died he is not making a particular statement within a realist frame in the style of genuine Enlightenment scepticism about the Christian claims. He gives, rather, the rationale of ascetical theology’s counsel to avoid, after a certain initial stage of spiritual life, forced imaginative dwelling upon the details, gory or otherwise, or as in the main unspeakably beautiful, of Christ’s earthly life and death as recorded. Even musical representation of this, such as Bach’s celebration of Christ’s passion and death, rightly listened to as sacred art (Hegel though has made all art sacred, i.e. absolute), transcends, as does art itself, the incidental emotional seizures that may occur to the listener and even interfere with or hinder his or her grasp of the whole.

Hegel, that is, is rather making a statement about history itself in its phenomenal character, with its recorded events, as to how it stands in a perspective of absolute idealism, the “dogma”, he says, of philosophy. Self-consciousness, thinking, takes over the role of event, as thinking and knowing evil took over the role of actual evil in the Eden story, meaning by actual evil what is generally taken as such. This, as McTaggart emphasised, and it is a point recently made by Cyril O’Regan in his *The Heterodox Hegel*, represents a general downgrading of events as such in Hegel’s thought. Events belong with the phenomenal, are finite categories. It is, so

to say, the God's-eye view, an eternal knowing, where there are and can be no spurious happenings, only act in necessary process, which is the freedom of self-consciousness itself, a view approximated to by Aquinas who teaches that our acts are free when God makes them so. So this denial of our picture of death has nothing to do with a particular denial that the crimes of World War II, say, actually took place but gives rather what might be the meaning of saying that *anything* took place. Self-consciousness does not die nor, it would seem, is it nor can it be born. Mind is eternal and infinite. "No birth, no death" (Buddhist saying). That is Hegel's implicit thought here, as can be seen from birth's phenomenal character as event. In this perspective the flesh adds nothing. God does not take on what he did not have before, even when "found in fashion" as a man. Hence the human pair are expelled from the paradise of innocence because of their *knowledge* of good and evil, at once their reconciliation with both of these taken together, of "essential Being ... with itself" (p.781) in their incipient self-consciousness. So

That immediately preceding element of figurative thinking is thus here affirmed as transcended, has, in other words returned into the self, into its notion. What was in the former merely an (objective) existent has come to assume the form of *Subject*.

This is precisely "the loss of innocence". By that very fact, he here adds, pictorial thinking finds its legitimate place in the scheme of things, in the economy of Absolute Spirit, one might say, such spiritual freedom, as thought, as logic, grounding all necessity and the necessity of all, in "realised end", necessarily not known by time-bound beings. Hegel styles this the "cunning of reason", cunning as absolute, cunning which *is* reason, therefore, rather than "of" it, of the Absolute merely, like a conceptual addition, though it only appears so to the finite being not "yet" (i.e. it is time-bound, not "earlier in" time merely) knowing itself as the other of itself. As we say, "man proposes, God disposes", all such proverbs and everyday expressions being identified by Hegel as part of "the true reason-world" which is the property, the life-giving ambience, of every man, woman or child indifferently (cf. *Enc.* 82 with its addition).

The vision here is totally Chalcedonian, whether by accident or design, were we to suppose these separable, accident being as such "subjective". The divine person, the Christ, suffers and dies but in or as to his human nature. Only in that sense does God die. At the same time, however, as Hegel brings out, an analogous "death of God" in regard to a particular concept of God, occurs along with this death of "the human God", in Hegel's own unexceptionable phrase. God himself, in his nature as divine, does not suffer and his love is all the stronger, i.e. infinite, for that. This, of

course, is but to downgrade suffering conceptually and not meant merely to excite the imagination. God suffers, namely, in the assumed finitely human nature. In itself, however, his benevolence transcends the sympathy in which it has been manifested (to us), is in itself as absolute absorbed of necessity into the true being of the Idea thinking only itself *in actu*, into being as such, in utter peace or Bacchanalian revel indifferently. Again, though, it, or where we have come to, is unimaginable. “Human kind cannot bear much reality”. Nor can we forbid the practical conclusion that it is best not to use this name “God” in philosophy, or in ultimate judgments, just as we can hardly imagine it, or any other name perhaps, being used “in heaven”, where all are indeed “in” God, but each and all by identity, not as in a box. We have to do, rather, with the name, given to Christ by God, by the Father, which is “above all names” and which is as well given “before” as “after” Christ’s earthly trajectory, either being eternally had, i.e. it is a name not simply, as sometimes mistranslated, above every *other* name but also above itself, or beyond naming, being rather Word as such, i.e., in the text, as “Lord”, *kyrios*, the language here remaining religious while expressing profound philosophical truth, such as we are here trying to expound or re-utter, beyond all dead or achieved fact, the accomplishment consisting in its ever being achieved, hence ever new as ever known without beginning or end. Nor, therefore, is this a reward for self-humbling, as is *pictured*, but rather its cause in so far as humbling, or *kenosis* thus understood, can be made to stand for “the Divine Being’s transition into otherness” (p. 773), something as perpetual as it is immutable. He is supremely or infinitely great as smaller than small (Nicholas of Cusa; cp. *Enc.* 136, on Force or “might” as used to characterise God: omnipotence is rather the transcendence of such). Yet this is indeed the *ineffable* name of God, which he gives, it is said, to the Christ, according to theology as developed, from Christ’s beginning, which is eternal. “*In the beginning was the Word*”. He was never without it/Him. That is, again, the why and “wherefore God has highly exalted him”, not really “after” his death but as he is eternally, in that heaven whence he came down without ever leaving it. That is, his coming down was our (or his) coming up or assumption, “into God”.<sup>40</sup> This is reflected in Hegel’s treatment of Being, especially as a divine name. It underlies his formulation, his thought, which is also

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<sup>40</sup> This might be related to Mary’s assumption, as *theotokos*, just as we have parsed the Son’s resurrection as trans-historical, more than event. As such it would not be “witnessed” by the senses, any more than is our new birth in God. Thought through, this entails that in *none* of the sacraments, Baptism, the Body and Blood, may a temporal moment of transformation be pinpointed.

Aristotle's as he goes out of his way to emphasise (at the close of the *Encyclopaedia*), of the Absolute Idea knowing only itself.

As regards death, then, this portal of and to Spirit is not in itself, nor could it be, a *temporal* moment, being rather ever present, as defining the moments, under temporal conditions, such as those under which we think or philosophise. Thus Hegel concurs wholly in Aristotle's recommendation of its practice, of *athanatizein*, death-practising, as ruling philosophy in its finite exercise, as distinct from *sophia* itself, "holy wisdom", to which Hegel thereby aspires in "*höchste Gottesdienst*". This is the "hating one's life in this world", in the Gospel "figure" (as in a measure it surely is), without which we get nowhere. *Ave crux, spes unica!*

This "return of the whole into itself" is rather, thus, the containing of all its moments, to be thought or heard "all at once", as Mozart said of his *symphonic* inspiration. Thus grasped the death of the mediator sublates his pictured "factuality" in "independent existence", "this particular self-existence has become universal self-consciousness". This "spiritual resurrection", furthermore, *qua* spiritual or mental precisely, is a logical and not a temporal "development", a progressive unveiling of what it always "was to be" (Aristotle's definition of "essence"). Conversely, or equivalently, the universal is self-consciousness, is "the principle of personality"<sup>41</sup>, as personality, that of the mediator, is shown here to be principle of universality and that not merely of consciousness. In the beginning *God* (whom Hegel calls "the absolute person") created heaven and earth, *Genesis* opens by saying. This is often taken as referring to God's first waking, so to say, to action. But this cannot be the meaning since it would say nothing of note. Creation, rather, is incipient life in the spirit. God is in this action and nothing apart from it. The one posits the other, equally, as, in Biblical terms, God's word, his outwarding, is God.

All this is first known by the stress on Spirit as thought, in perpetual motion, a breathing wind. Because of this the universal "is self-consciousness". Bare thought "has become actual", i.e. is revealed as that, by Hegel's analysis, of knowing specifically. Or, it is the same, what is perpetual has nothing apart from it, not even otherness. This is the claim of self-consciousness, whereby there is no "where I come from", no other, negative place. Time, rather, as bits "at a time", like Nature, is the negative. Thought, spirit, however, is death to natural or finite life, which is "only the Idea immediate". In and by this self-consciousness, of spirit's divinity in each and every part as in the whole,

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<sup>41</sup> *Enc.* 163, *Zus.* (1).

The death of the mediator is death not merely of his natural aspect, of his particular self-existence: what dies is not merely the outer encasement, which, being stripped of essential being, is *eo ipso* dead, but also the abstraction of the Divine Being.

We are at a different level here from the traditional “realist” assumptions (what else were they?) of theology whereby the dead flesh of Christ in the tomb, his “body” (though this is as such an abstract term, as Aquinas pointed out) had inescapably to be thought hypostatically united to the godhead, with all the problems that produced (for theology: compare questions as to whether the bread at the last supper could have been truly consecrated as Christ’s body, by his very own and still “living” hand, namely). We are talking about “the abstraction of the Divine Being”, and here Hegel might at least *seem* to go beyond the thought of Thomas Aquinas in saying, as he does, that this abstraction is what “dies”.

In Aquinas, anyhow, there is really no such abstraction in so far as this being is characterised as *act*, unique to God, in no normal sense a universal, universal though it may be as being of all being, rendering all finite being analogous with respect to it, rather as St. Paul says of the universal fatherhood, that it and all finite or earthly fatherhood is *named* after the heavenly Father, analogy being precisely of *names*, in whatever direction. It is moreover a species of equivocation, which explains why Hegel dismisses all finite “realities” or judgments as untrue or false. Hence it is “the fool” who has said in his heart, i.e. who thinks, that there is no God (*Psalms*), since God is the name for the all, for all in one, whatever it is. There is indeed no God in the “there is” sense of “is”, as *object*. Here Hegel might be seen as more Thomist than Thomas. For him, anyhow, God is *subject*, the realisation of which he describes, names, as “loss of the substance”. To this death, pictured in the crucifixion scenes, corresponds “bitterness of feeling”, of “the unhappy consciousness”, crying “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” God is no longer “there”, but deep within, closer than self. We are not here essentially concerned, one must repeat, with imagined or in any case finite psychological states, of one or more historical figures, with all that that phrase connotes in context of absolute idealism with respect to truth and the Concept, the Idea. The mystics equate Christ’s cry with their “dark night of the soul”, which can go on for years or even be permanent *indifferently*, already at one remove speculatively from any historical record real or pretended, indifferently again.

This consciousness “feels that God himself is dead”, that object has become subject, become *self* in fact. For in general here to be *a* self is to be self. We may relate this to Hegel’s marking of a difference between the

majority will, of a people and what Rousseau called “the general will”, though without telling us how to identify this difference directly. The relation between normal representative democracy and vote-counting *referenda* on this or that specific issue may have something to do with it. Hegel is clear in general that “bare difference of magnitude and multitude ... falls outside conceptual thought”, just as trying to “grasp evil in the Divine Being”, as wrath etc., “is devoid of the notion”, on account of his analysis of evil in relation to God. The point becomes important for a philosophical understanding of the traditional syllogism, as of the propositions of “the square of opposition”.

But if to be a self is to become self, which is what God is now understood to be, then the self, in the sense of any self, is God or, as Hegel has established independently, God is the (spiritual) community and *is only known in his community* (cp. *Enc.*, “The Philosophy of Spirit”). Meanwhile, we have “the return of consciousness into the depth of darkness where Ego is nothing but bare identity with Ego, a darkness distinguishing and knowing nothing more outside it”. This is in fact precisely the posture of Absolute Idealism, where all knowledge of anything is of that thing *as known by me*, by the subject. It is “the loss of the Substance and of its objective existence over against consciousness”, Nijinsky’s “fire in the head”, in fact. Entailed is a strictly inverted view of subject in regard to object. Subject becomes object and *the* object, known as the other in identity with self as knower. Knowledge is indeed, ultimately, or in its totality, self-knowledge (as the old Oracle had understood in its reply to Socrates). This, as God, as the notion, as self-consciousness, is neither within nor without. In being closer than close it is further than far away, demanding interiorisation again, or a living with oneself in love, which is at the same time extreme hate, since one is not and cannot become what one would be. For Hegel this is resolved at the level of absolute knowing, in a way reached with difficulty by the devout but which he describes as freedom of the spirit, finding it reflected in quite some measure in Luther’s doctrine, as one might also find it, again, again, in the teaching of Therese of Lisieux, her “little way”, perhaps wrongly emphasised by Hans Urs von Balthasar (or, *mutatis mutandis* Anders Nygren) as a final specifically Christian and modern triumph of active love over Greco-medieval contemplation. For Hegel these are the same, rather:

For thinking means that, in the other, one meets with one’s self. – It means a liberation, which is not the flight of abstraction, but consists in that which is actual having itself not as something else, but as its own being and creation, in the other actuality with which it is bound up by the force of necessity. As existing in an individual form, this liberation is called I; as developed to its



totality it is free Spirit; as feeling, it is Love: and as enjoyment, it is Blessedness. (*Enc.* 159)

This text repays careful, word for word meditation. As loss of the Substance it means in fact the “pure subjectivity of Substance” in its final truth, “the pure certainty of itself, which it lacked when it was object or immediacy, or pure essential Being”, as abstraction again. Here Hegel’s philosophy of faith as final “subjective” certainty is referred to, in contrast to that theological “faith” he mentions which consists only in grasping the teachings of this or that Council without ever asking, he implies at least, what such teaching means to me personally, to the subject. Much Trinitarian “faith” is of this kind. “This knowledge is thus spiritualization, whereby Substance becomes Subject”, of self or God, who is thus self. This is Hegel’s clear teaching, paralleling, we might say, Augustine’s “closer to me than I am” (*intimior me mihi*). To translate here with “than I am to myself” is to put the insight in deliberately paradoxical form. Compare the popular translation of *Deus meus et omnia* as “My God and my all”, an equivocal phrase being here substituted for “all things” or “everything” (or just “all”).

What we have, therefore, is “real, simple and universal self-consciousness”, belonging to no one and nothing in particular:

In this way, then, Spirit is Spirit knowing its own self. It knows itself: that, which is for it object, exists, or, in other words, its figurative idea is the true absolute content. As we saw, the content expresses just Spirit itself. It is at the same time not merely content of self-consciousness, and not merely object for self-consciousness; it is also actual Spirit. It is this by the fact of its passing through the three elements of its nature: this movement through its whole nature constitutes its actual reality. What moves itself, that is Spirit; it is the subject of the movement, and it is likewise the moving process itself, or the substance through which the subject passes. (*Phenomenology of Mind*, 782)

Note the reference to the three elements of Spirit’s nature, a constant theme. Hegel also says that “Spirit is its own community”. It absorbs us rather than we it, though McTaggart seems to contest this, perhaps out of a wrong-headed notion of liberty, divorcing it from its foundation in absolute necessity. Both, rather, are two sides of the one foundation of self-consciousness, the Idea, called at the end of the Greater Logic true being or the actual. One could as well say subject, though this looks again like a transliteration of *hypokeimenon*, substrate, substance even, all of these becoming reciprocal in the infinity of the Idea.

Hegel here develops Aristotle's *unmoved mover* from speculative paradox into a *perpetuum mobile*, which is more fundamentally a perpetual *self-mover*, the perpetuity cancelling all duration, along with all duality, grammar's *representation* of "voice", active or passive namely, only partially overcome by the old reflexive "middle" voice of Greek. "This movement through its whole nature constitutes its actual reality". What distinguishes it from Aristotle's mover, in fact, is that it does not move anything else, simply because there cannot nor could there be anything *else* for it to move. It, Spirit, is in fact *thought* and, in its unity, just one thought, in the sense of neither one nor many, the Concept. "What moves itself", without the subject-object or active-passive distinction, "that is Spirit", blowing like wind as a breathing without a breather, or which is its own "breather", as Spirit is its *own* place, *own* community even.

Hegel equates "the process, in which what is absolutely in opposition recognises itself as the same as its opposite" with forgiveness (of evil) seen, again, as spirit's putting aside its "own simplicity and rigid unchangeableness". Forgiveness is thus spiritual as expressing identity of sameness and difference. The peak of this quality was reached, again, in the discussion of good and evil as effectively sublating both, as it were unspiritually. That is to say, spirit supremely exemplifies itself in this its own quality, recognising its own opposite in it, just as, in religion, the highest was "made sin for us", it was said and is believed. Hegel's discussion, above, of the self-conscious feeling, at its peak, that "God Himself is dead", while clearly reflecting something in Hegel's own experience, reflects with equal clarity, and is thus an attempt to explain, the last cry of desolation from the Cross in the moment that, Hegel would say, self-consciousness enters into its full inheritance as universal spirit or mind, in "spiritual resurrection", that I referred to above as the dialectical inversion of the Kantian despair (of knowledge), where the particular individual as such gets to know its universality, "I in them and they in me". What then becomes of the spiritual community, guaranteed to break through the gates of Hell, "cannot be helped", Hegel remarks (LPR 3, end). At this juncture, in fact, he gives his fullest indication of this spiritual body's nature as trans-organic, all in one and one in all. The full expression, after all, always comes in one individual, as we see in the necessity of the one concrete mediator underscored by Hegel, or in the unique prominence for the specifically medieval and/or narrative shape of this dispensation given by Maritain's interpretation of Aquinas's account, as given once by philosophy to Aristotle, *the* philosopher as, at that time, Averroes was *the* commentator (on Aristotle), or as the Jews are put as *the* "chosen people". Thus love too comes in the choice of wife or husband,

“forsaking all others”, as is generally felt in the heart still even of the one who yet tries, perhaps in vain, to forsake. As Hegel puts it, “the individual is the universal” while the latter is the final individual, or God “the absolute person”. Hence too all God’s children must, as such, be “gathered together into one” in what is just now seen reflected as “globalisation”, led again from *one* centre, in what is the dialectical inversion of a previous “Eurocentrism” in our “increasingly Chinese world” (words of the late Fr. Osmund Lewry OP in 1963, during a logic class). There are so many illustrations to hand of Hegel’s philosophy of spirit.

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It will be seen that what Hegel here sketches, or tries to expound, is the whole process gathered together in the Bible, as canonical setting forth of the content of Christian religion become, as he claims, in its having been perfected in its own at times iconoclastic self-thought, philosophy. The whole point about this process is that it is what Spirit is, is Mind, is God. It is not something that God does after finding or positing himself in being. It is a case of “In the beginning God created heaven and earth” ... posited good and evil, became visible as man then, or at once, assumed into spirit as community, from thence looking back or, rather, looking over the whole, passing perpetually from one moment to the other without ever leaving the whole, which each of the moments thus is. Inasmuch as these moments “acquire a substantial existence” they are, by the very fact of existence, of “standing out”, “in opposition to each other” as themselves subjects, that “stand confronting each other” (769).

When the self-conscious Being cancels and transcends its immediate present, it is as universal self-consciousness. This notion of the transcended individual self which is Absolute Being, immediately expresses therefore the establishment of a communion which, while hitherto having its abode in the sphere of pictorial thought, now returns into itself as the Self: and Spirit thus passes from the second element constituting it – figurative thought – and goes over to the third – self-consciousness as such. (775)

“This notion of the transcended individual self which is Absolute Being”, that is, note, not simply God but “Absolute Being”. This, note further, is precisely the difference of Hegelian Absolute Idealism, the “dogma of philosophy”, from such as the empirical or finite idealism of Bishop Berkeley, something which C.S. Lewis apparently forgot or failed to notice, regrettably, in his presentation of his mental development in *Surprised by Joy*, saying that Hegel’s Absolute Idealism only adds “mystifications to the

simple, workable, theistic idealism of Berkeley”. Let Hegel speak for himself:

But now this category, or simple unity of self-consciousness, and being, has difference within it: for its very nature consists just in this - in being immediately one and identical with itself in otherness or in absolute difference. Difference therefore is, but completely transparent, a difference that is at the same time none. It appears in the form of a plurality of categories. Since idealism pronounces the simple unity of consciousness to be all reality, and makes it straightway the essentially real ... still more incomprehensible is this second position, viz. that in the category there are differences, kinds or species of categories ... But to pick up the various categories again in any sort of way as a kind of happy find, hit upon, e.g. in the different judgments, and then to be content to accept them, must really be regarded as an outrage upon scientific thinking. Where is understanding to be able to demonstrate necessity, if it is incapable of doing so in its own case, itself being pure necessity? (*The Phenomenology of Mind*, pp. 276-7)

Hegel continues, after this not so veiled criticism of Kant:

Now because, in this way, the pure essential being of things, as well as their aspect of difference, belongs to reason, we can strictly speaking no longer talk of things at all, i.e. of something which would only be present to consciousness by negatively opposing it. For the many categories are species of the pure category ... not opposed to them. But ... they, in point of fact, contradict the pure category by this plurality, and the pure category must sublimate them in itself, a process by which it constitutes itself the negative unity of the different elements.

Compare the saying, “This also is thou; neither is this thou.”

We see pure consciousness here affirmed in a twofold form... declaring itself as this certainty of being all reality, of being both itself and its object ... Reason knowing itself in this sense in its object is what finds expression in abstract empty idealism; it merely takes reason as it appears at first, and by its pointing out that in all being there is this bare consciousness of a “mine”, and by expressing things as sensations or ideas, it fancies it has shown that abstract “mine” of consciousness to be complete reality ... But it fails just as completely as scepticism to link up its contradictory statements about pure consciousness being all reality, while all the time the alien impact, or sense-impressions and ideas, are equally reality ... Such a kind of knowledge is at the same time asserted by the very principle of this idealism itself not to be true knowledge; for only the unity of apperception is the real truth of knowledge ... But actual concrete reason is not so inconsequent as this. Being at first merely the certainty that it is all reality, it is ... driven on to raise its

formal certainty into actual truth, and give concrete filling to the empty “mine”. (*Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 278-280)

## CHAPTER THREE

### ABSOLUTE KNOWLEDGE

Having so elevated religion Hegel ends this previous Chapter VII of *The Phenomenology of Mind* with a certain downplaying of it as against Absolute Knowing in self-consciousness as defined. I referred to the role given to forgiveness in, so to say, unlocking absolute spirit as religious, concluding the section on Conscience as passage to religious consciousness, some fifty pages back. Hegel virtually repeats this here, though with an expansion that brings out the unity of his topic, forgiveness, with speculative logic and hence, ultimately, with *Das absolute Wissen* (title of his eighth and final chapter) as the Idea or absolute subject, all substance otherwise gone.

In this way, then, Spirit is Spirit knowing its own self. It knows itself; that, which is for it object, exists, or, in other words, its figurative idea is the true absolute content. As we saw, the content expresses just Spirit itself. It is at the same time not merely content of self-consciousness, and not merely object for self-consciousness; it is also actual Spirit. It is this by the fact of its passing through the three elements of its nature: this movement through its whole self constitutes its actual reality. What moves itself, that is Spirit; it is the subject of the movement, and it is likewise the moving process itself, or the substance through which the subject passes. We saw how the notion of Spirit arose when we entered the sphere of religion: it was the process of spirit certain of itself, which forgives evil, and in so doing puts aside its own simplicity and rigid unchangeableness: it was, to state it otherwise, the process, in which what is absolutely in opposition recognizes itself as the same as its opposite, and brings forth this recognition as the Yes between these extremes, - the religious consciousness, to which absolute Being (*Wesen*) may reveal it, contemplates this concept, and sublates the distinction of itself from what it beholds,. As it is the subject, so also it is the substance, and is also itself spirit, even because and in so far as it is this movement. (782 f., with some slight changes to Baillie's translation)

As concluded in *The Science of Logic* the Absolute Idea is the true Being and conversely; Spirit's final Object is as such Subject. So even as thus "figured", i.e. as object, it is "the true absolute content" – the implication is

that figuration as such does not hinder this, hence that religion is, if not formally (as is philosophy become *sophia*, the final “intellectual virtue”), yet still *a form of Absolute Spirit*. “This also is thou”, in its simple entirety. “Take this ... this is my body”, this might be seen, taken, religiously therefore, as expressing this, Spirit’s “figurative idea is the true absolute content”, “the moving process itself” as the spirit, explicitly, as Hegel affirms, of *forgiveness*, of other as of self, it is clearly implied, such a duality having no part here. In neither case is this, as forgiveness, a mere matter of an indifferent “condoning” in self-complacency, this being just what would empty forgiveness of its notional content. One must “endure the Cross, despising the shame”, words of the Apostle that Hegel is perhaps too modest or reverential to cite (so “fools” must “rush in”, as we say). Or, as a saint is said to have heard God contradict him when he pleaded that he had given him everything: “You have not ... Give me your sins”. That would be precisely the state of self-consciousness as universal, as knowing all or, in a religious context, giving all, with its corollary, “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin”, i.e. is not known, not conscious, not believed in ultimately, “is sin”. *Age quod agis*, this motto, might be the practical equivalent. This, I would claim, is not a uniquely or specifically Lutheran stance, as it has been wrongly seen as.<sup>1</sup>

The community, however, is still not perfected in this its self-consciousness, with its content remaining in figurative form. It has not the consciousness of what it is, viz. spiritual self-consciousness beyond some other objectivity. So it does not open itself to consciousness of itself, or not initially at any rate. This is what faith leads to, I would claim, the link here being precisely that universal forgiveness Hegel places as a kind of pivot. Meanwhile everything goes through picturing representations from which self is excluded, our natural approach to “the world” after all. Self-consciousness, indeed, eventually becomes more inward, spirit indwelling as it is put, quite rightly if this is spiritually understood, as coming to knowledge of being-in-itself (*sich innerlich werden und zum Wissen des Insichseyns gelangen*). It puts aside its natural existence and/or being and wins through to pure negativity, the “cloud of unknowing” of mystical tradition, in fact. But the positive meaning of this, viz. that this negativity or pure inwardness of knowing is Substance in its absolute simplicity, self-identical Being or indeed Essence (*Wesen*), this is not revealed to the devotional consciousness as such, which still tends to say, to breathe, “My God and my all”, my private treasure, so to say, rather than “My God and all things” (*Deus meus et omnia*), that, namely, which Hegel’s thought, or

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<sup>1</sup> On this topic cf., for example, Hans Küng, *Justification. The Doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic Reflection*, New York 1964/London 1965 (with a Preface by Barth).

thought itself, wins through to, so to say beyond personal goodness, which it rather here approaches as its object become subject. The devotional consciousness typically grasps just this, this fact, that pure or inward knowing, feeling etc., is in itself the substance of its inward life as being absolute simplicity, so to say unquestionable therefore, as the representation of something essentially beyond his power of conceiving, as, that is precisely to say, the action (*Handlung*) as a reconciliation from outside of thought, not within his power of conception. Thus he understands faith, even. Yet the mystical tradition, as well as the philosophical, shows precisely, Hegel thinks, how and why faith was called “the victory that overcomes the world”, in a new knowledge, namely the absolute, in which all can participate according to their natural or infused capacities without falsification as to content.

Or, we can put it so at the same time as that the pure self has this depth, is the power whereby the abstract essence is pulled out of its abstraction and through the power of this pure devotedness is elevated to being Self. As theology has it, the action of grace is such as to make a person’s actions all the more his own, something to which Aquinas, like Hegel if differently, supplies metaphysical underpinning. Even through this, though, the action of self keeps its meaning against itself, as though it is not itself that so acts, since self’s self-emptying from *its* side, even if an in-itself for it, is not such that it can grasp or conceptualise it, as if finding it in its own activity as such. We are almost in Freud’s world of strange unconscious powers both belonging and not belonging to the self.

Insofar, indeed, as this unity of essential being and the self is at all realised consciousness has also, all the same, this picture of its reconciliation, but as pictured or imagined. It attains thereby satisfaction, that it adds outwardly to its pure negativity, in the positive meaning of the unity of itself with essential being (*mit dem Wesen*). This satisfaction thus remains burdened with the opposition of a beyond. Its own reconciliation comes through this into its consciousness as something far away in the future, just as the reconciliation which that other self brought about appears as far away in the past. Thus, as the individual divine man has an in-itself father, only his mother appearing as real, so the universal divine man, viz. the community, sees its own doing and knowing as its father, but eternal love, which it only feels without having it in its consciousness as real immediate object, as its mother. Its reconciliation is therefore in its heart, but with its consciousness still split, its reality broken. What enters its consciousness as the in-itself of a pure mediation is the reconciliation lying beyond; but what is present to it under the aspect of the immediately existing is the world as still awaiting its transfiguration. This is indeed reconciled with the essence in itself, of which it is indeed known that it no longer knows its object as alien to it, but in its love as like to itself. But



for self-consciousness this immediate presence has not yet the form and shape of spiritual reality. Thus the spirit of the communion is, in its immediate consciousness, separated from its religious consciousness, which declares indeed that these two modes of consciousness inherently are not separated; but this is an implicitness which is not realized, it has not yet become an equally absolute explicit self-existence. (p. 784-5)

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The first page or two of this final chapter, “Absolute Knowing”, encapsulate much of the foregoing, to which he immediately refers:

The Spirit manifested in revealed religion has not as yet surmounted its attitude of consciousness as such; or, what is the same thing, its actual self-consciousness is not at this stage the object it is aware of. (p. 789)

It is aware, that is, of something else, this being a state he has already disqualified as “figurative thinking”, thus previously:

There is something in its object concealed from consciousness if the object is for consciousness an “other”, or something alien, and if consciousness does not know the object as its self. This concealment, this secrecy, ceases when the Absolute Being *qua* spirit is object of consciousness. For here in its relation to consciousness the object is in the form of self; i.e., consciousness immediately knows itself there, or is manifest, revealed, to itself in the object. Itself is manifest to itself only in its own certainty of self; the object it has is the self; self, however, is nothing alien and extraneous, but inseparable unity with itself, the *immediately universal*. It is the pure notion, pure thought, or self/existence, (being-for-self), which is immediately *being*, and, therewith, being-for-another, and, *qua* this being-for-another, is immediately turned back into itself and is at home with itself (*bei sich*). It is thus the true and solely revealed. The Good, the Righteous, the Holy, Creator of Heaven and Earth, etc. – all these are predicates of a subject, universal moments, which have their support on this central point and only are when consciousness goes back into thought.

As long as it is *they* that are known, their ground and essential being, the Subject itself, is not yet revealed; and in the same way the specific determinations of the universal are not this universal itself. The Subject itself, and consequently this pure universal too, is, however, revealed as self; for this self is just this inner being reflected into itself, the inner being which is immediately given and is the proper certainty of that self, for which it is given. To be in its notion that which reveals and is revealed – this is, then, the true shape of spirit; and moreover, this shape, its notion, is alone its very essence and its substance. Spirit is known as self-consciousness, and to this self-consciousness it is directly revealed, for it is this self-consciousness itself. The

divine nature is the same as the human, and it is this unity which is intuitively apprehended (*angeschaut*). (pp. 759-60)

So he now says:

Spirit as a whole and the moments distinguished in it fall within the sphere of figurative thinking, and within the form of objectivity. The *content* of this figurative thought is Absolute Spirit. All that remains to be done now is to cancel and transform this bare form... (p. 789)

He is referring to the *finite* form of objectivity. He adds immediately, however, that this surmounting of objectivity

is not to be taken one-sidedly as meaning that the object showed itself returning into the self. It has a more definite meaning: it means that the object itself presented itself to the self as a vanishing factor ...

There never was nor is, that is to say, an object, except in terms of the ideality of the finite, of finite ideality therefore. Saying this, however, he simultaneously affirms, as noted above, that “The divine nature is the same as the human”, interpretable not as reduction but as identity including, therefore, the converse, “not by reduction of the godhead into flesh but by the taking of the manhood into God”. The point is well made here, even given that the theological Athanasian style can seem to picture this identity as event, i.e. this is not its final or spiritual meaning. As the liturgy explains, but also retaining the picture, God came down from the heaven he never left or, more generally, “I am the beginning and the end, alpha and omega”. This, I further note, sets forth the final outcome of any genuine doctrine of the eternal return of time, of time itself, that is, which, we noted Aristotle saying, neither comes into being nor cease to be. Nor of course does eternity return except, again, without going away. Hegel, meanwhile notes,

furthermore, that the emptying of self-consciousness itself establishes thinghood, and that this externalisation of self-consciousness has not merely negative, but positive significance, a significance not merely *for us* or *per se*, but for self-consciousness itself. (p.789)

“Thinghood”, we recall, or will later learn, is a finite or passing category of logic, not as such therefore “vanishing”, since it has not first been there, as is asserted of the object or, more generally, nature (“In this its”, i.e. mind’s, “truth Nature is vanished”: *Enc.* 381), but, rather, has no significance or truth outside of its position as a moment of the Concept, a moment, that is, of the whole. Again, there are no things, while this “emptying of self-

consciousness” was the main topic treated here in Hegel’s previous chapter we have just finished analysing. What I say here concerning “thing” (or “nature”) is approximately what Aquinas says concerning “body”, that, as abstract, it is a term for logicians, not for metaphysicians, an insight, however, that his texts do not always reflect, while the positive significance of this negative “emptying” mentioned here has, again, been just treated of by Hegel under the rubrics of creation and incarnation, where it was found that these are only pictorially presented (*vorstellt*) as particular events. Scripture in its own way indicates this by saying, at its own very beginning, “In the beginning God created...”, i.e. as first step of that *act* which is his own being as spirit. If there were some other beginning then God as God would be excluded as a first step in this vision of things, i.e. the beginning was or would be *there* before him, before He, too, *was*. There is no “was” before creation in which God “was” simply logic, even if Hegel should have momentarily said so. We may, with Baillie, note Aristotle here: “Movement can neither come into being, nor cease to be, nor can time come into being, nor cease to be” (*Metaph.* 1071b). In general anything God “does” will be *ipso facto* necessary, as are the categories of the contingent or of the existent, as of freedom itself and, indeed, necessity, all being absorbed together, beyond sign or speech (cp. *Enc.* 458-459), in the Idea. It is not conceivable, is outside the Concept indeed, that logical categories should precede God, even logically, as determining Him. This is not the rationale of our indeed having to reason towards God, the necessarily self-evident, as not evident for us or immediately, *quoad nos* (cp. *Enc.* 12, on our knowledge of God, the addition 24 on the “disruption” of mediation, also 65-67). Nor, however, does he *invent* the categories. This, their “method” and order, *is* the divine being, as Hegel states of the Idea at the close of the Greater Logic. The positive significance (of this negative “emptying”), of course, refers to Hegel’s thesis that in God truth has to appear as and be *result*. The whole incarnation dogma is later explained under this rubric and watchword. Explaining it as we have just done for creation, as not an event; its meaning, is, again, that “The divine nature is the same as the human ...” (p. 760). This, again, is not meant as reduction but identification. Recall, again, the Athanasian “not by conversion of the godhead into flesh but by taking of the manhood into God”, which, as pointed out above, retains the picturing of and as an *event*, a “taking”, while implicitly eliminating it, given proper understanding of God’s eternal nature. This simple observation, however, seems to be too subtle for some of our more popular modern theologians, such as Hans Küng or Karl Rahner, both of whom insist on “real change in God”, an event even less intelligible than a genuinely initial “big bang”. If God changes then he can change again, so we had better watch out! This

fictitious eventuality was McTaggart's stated reason for his atheism. Meanwhile Scripture *represents* divine immutability as fixed by a divine *repentance* ("I repent me" in one translation) for having during his formative period(!) changed his attitude towards man by sending the Flood, which he will now never do again, the rainbow being the pledge, as an unchangeable change, so to say, merely, of this first "covenant" with man (that of nature), whose nature, we have just noted with Hegel, is the same as his, as God's, the more changing or moving the more the same. God is man's apotheosis, man's becoming God is the true significance of what is represented as God's becoming man, mediation thus logically absorbing or subsuming immediacy. "Becoming" itself, however, is hereby *aufgehoben*, as becomes progressively clearer as the logical method's exposition progresses (Saying this, of course, concedes that language itself is necessarily representation, even if only of itself, the Wittgensteinian point, as one might say).

"Self-consciousness knows this nothingness of the object" in itself externalising itself. Thus it establishes itself, subject, as object, "sets up the object as itself", for it "is thus at home with itself in its otherness as such". This logical movement of mind, ultimately comprising the whole *method* of inwardisation to the exterior, is in fact Spirit's basic Trinitarian stance, approached here precisely in transcendence of "religion":

Spirit is content of its consciousness to begin with in the form of pure substance; in other words, it is content of its pure consciousness. This element of thought is the process of descending into existence, or individuality. The middle term between these two is their synthetic connexion, the consciousness of passing into otherness, the process of imaginative presentation as such. The third stage is the return from this presentation and from that otherness; in other words, it is the element of self-consciousness itself ... These three moments constitute the life of spirit. (p. 765, re-cited here)

In this identity consciousness equally takes up a relation to the ever-vanishing object, be it nature as a whole or, again, itself as other. It is thus, or realises thus, its infinity, all previous moments absorbed, so that it ends, is realised, in its beginning, is realised as *self-consciousness*, having become what it is, all becoming thus cast away in its very idea. The method rolls itself up as it goes along, finally rolling up this very going along. But equally, with this the object is thus made, is seen to be, rather, "inherently a spiritual reality", misperceived, to use McTaggart's word, as object. Having "taken up a relation to the object in all its aspects and phases", or as such, consciousness apprehends every determinate characteristic "as self", in the way that Hegel illustrates in the case of Krishna at *Enc.* 573.

The object, then, is vanished, its illusory form surmounted. That is the meaning of “absolute knowledge”, thought thinking itself, as Aristotle had expressed it. It is, says Hegel, partly “a *thing* in general – corresponding to immediate consciousness”. We have in English the word “something”, of very general application. What is not something is “nothing” (there it is again!), *nichts*. Corresponding to perception we have the object as “determinateness”, while for the understanding it is “essential being or in the form of a *universal*”. Hegel thus correlates objecthood with the (as to form) tripartite consciousness making up section A of his book, B and C standing for self-consciousness and “free concrete mind” respectively, such that the former fully realised, and thus, in a sense, “vanished”, is the latter:

Self-consciousness, thus certified that its determinations are no less objective, or determinations of the very being of things, than they are its own thoughts, is Reason, which as such an identity is not only the absolute substance, but the truth that knows it. For truth here has, as its peculiar mode and immanent form, the self-centred pure notion, ego, the certainty of self as infinite universality. Truth, aware of what it is, is mind (spirit). (*Enc.* 439)

So truth knows, while self is infinite universality, or just infinite. These are two important self-knowing truths. Their identity is that of God and man, the two natures, of course in their difference, otherwise we have that upside-down monophysitism which constitutes the *bourgeois* spirit or practical atheism, the closed, even descending ceiling. The Nestorian alternative, whereby a woman is in no way “mother of God” (*theotokos*), is effectively the same. If the divine and the human are not thus identified in their difference then knowledge, mind, is as such “vanished”, illusion of illusions, and argument is babble.

Rather, this being “at home with itself in its otherness ... is the movement of consciousness, and in this process consciousness *is the totality of its moments*” (p. 790, my stress). This totality though, as forming a perfect or, it is the same, infinite unity, is in no sense quantitative or composite but notional, the Concept in fact as uniting being and essence in transcendence of them. It is in this sense that Hegel can say, as we just cited him saying, that it is the truth that knows, aware of what it is, “the absolute person” as he elsewhere says, but not in contradiction of the Trinity of persons since, here too, “it is useless to count”. This consideration as to uselessness may well be applied to the theism versus atheism debate, in some of its aspects at least. As the Canadian philosopher Leslie once remarked, McTaggart, just for example, presents what is in effect a Trinitarian philosophy but one of an endless number of persons nonetheless united in a unity expressly more perfect than that we call organic. The Pauline metaphor or picture of such a

perfect unity the same Apostle yet dismantles in employing it, as when he speaks of these *quasi*-bodily members as “members one of another”, which destroys the idea of a member or limb. Again, we should recall, if Christianity is “religion itself” (De Lubac) or “the absolute religion” (Hegel), then it is not “a religion” and the atheist challenge does not really rub off on it. It is rather a or the movement, spirit, developing ceaselessly into the other of itself, which is the same. If God is the light *in* which we see then he is no longer before or in front of us merely, but “all in all”, the Concept in a word, thought the self-thinking.

The object, say world, is an inherently spiritual reality inasmuch as consciousness apprehends each or “all of its aspects and phases” as self, thus “at home with itself in its otherness as such” (cp. Aristotle: “all men desire to know”), in specifically spiritual relation as shown above. Thus the object too, as *relatandum*, is spiritual, while there are three stages or moments to this spiritual relating to otherness (see A: I, II, and III, of this book of Hegel’s), viz. immediate consciousness (of a *thing*), perception (of *determinateness*) and understanding (of a *universal*). “These three specific aspects, then, determine the ways in which consciousness must know the object *as itself*” (p. 790, my stress), this last being precisely the point, it should now be clear. Or, conversely, “the being of the ego is a thing”, which Hegel says is “the infinite judgment” or Reason’s “highest stage”. Yet the ego is equally, or just thereby, “an immediate thing of sense”. This seems unspiritual until we realise that it is thing, or immediate sense, that is being uplifted or raised to spirituality as native to it, as is later “proved” by the Idea’s taking flesh, a view he in many ways both affirms and implies. One might anyway ask, indeed, how it could be otherwise, given all these elements together. The Idea is whole in each of its moments, God is what he produces or makes, “the highest cannot stand without the lowest”, which is therefore most high. Or, as Hegel puts it,

In point of fact, thing is transcended in this infinite judgment. The thing is nothing in itself; it only has significance in relation, only through the ego and its reference to the ego. ... Things are simply and solely useful, and only to be considered from the point of view of their utility.

Hegel is found saying the same thing throughout, such as, in “The Philosophy of Spirit”:

Self-consciousness thus certified that its determinations are no less objective, or determinations of the very being of things, than they are its own thoughts, is Reason, which as such an identity is not only the absolute substance, but the truth that knows it. For truth here has, as its peculiar mode and immanent

form, the self-centred pure notion, ego, the certainty of self as infinite universality. Truth, aware of what it is, is mind (spirit). (*Enc.* 439)

After all, what do we or can we know of the world that is not the-world-known-by-me, not as restriction but in correlation, of spirit with spirit necessarily? For, again, it is truth that knows it, knows the other in knowing itself. Hence, I “know as I am known”, this Biblical phrase, and hence blessedness itself (*Enc.* 159), being of more universal or direct application than one might at first realise. In knowing, namely, logically analysed, one is known. Or, says Hegel, since it is self-consciousness that has given up itself in self-alienation, thus *producing* the thing as itself, it thus “knows the thing to have no independence” and, we may add, in thus knowing it, the thing, it makes it so, that it has “essentially and solely a relative existence”. Here self-consciousness is applied to God creator and to self indifferently or, rather, the self as individual is here sublated, “ruined”, just as, in Hegel’s analysis of theology, of what is actually proclaimed, believed and known at all or at any level, the risen Christ *is* his community, the body of “believers”. By this, as it were contrariwise, “sense-certainty (sense-experience) is announced as absolute truth”, just as in, say, Thomism. We see what we see, seeing is a success-verb, as the analysts say, whatever false judgments we go on to make, as to the size of the moon, for example. Yet at the same time this “is a moment which merely disappears”. That is its nature, the nature of this “absolute truth”. It “passes into its opposite, into a being at the mercy of an ‘other’”, he says. For one thing it changes as we observe it and thus remains, so to say, unobservable, below the domain of knowledge, unlike the schoolteacher’s individually known midges (he supposed God to know them thus), an example Hegel will later cite, without mockery, however, of a possible naivete involved, perhaps recalling those falling sparrows forever noticed, one by one, by “your heavenly father”, who, after all, as infinite, must know also the negative, know vanishing, as sparrows are “vanished”. This view is generalised in Hegel’s whole account of the past tense and of history, whereby he says that the *gemeinte* figure of the Gospels passes to where he only “has lived”, that the Concept is not to be confused with strictly unknowable origins, a point he again picks up, in a different perspective, in his introductory essay to the Logic, “With What Must Science Begin?” This is in general his account of *the perfect tense* of grammar, that what *has been* finished, like a life, equally *is now* finished or perfected, is perfect, now, at the last, or, in true reality, in truth, is first itself. The view might or might not derive for Hegel personally from the Johannine last word from the Cross, as Jesus dies, “it is finished”, *tetelestai* (the *telos* is realised), in the perfect and reflexively passive tense as “it has been accomplished”. Thus also, as philosophers, to be such in its full sense, we

must be able to say, as it were exclusively, “I have lived”, have “perfected” the Aristotelian *athanatizein* or, literally, “deathing”, doing to death, something beyond as more radical than piece by piece mortification even. “’Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished” at least, “ruining” the individual into the universal, where “if just one dies then all die”, again. Thus Hegel demonstrates, or so far indicates, the dignity and worth of logic as *form* of both subject and object, of the world, necessarily confirmed, he at the least implies, in any authoritative Scriptural or apostolic proclamation, spirit or mind being its own witness. His is a project of elevation rather than reduction and so, to universalise with Hegel, philosophy should be viewed, also by “the religious party”. Understanding this is the distinction of art also, necessarily; it is *aesthetic*, a matter of *to kalon*, the beautiful, final arbiter of the right or the good as the only available rationale of *epieicheia*, the higher justice describable as knowing when to break the law, a consideration Aquinas seems to apply, just to give a drastic example, to capital punishment on the part of the state, just as it applies to a decision to practice death for the sake of, or rather as exercising, philosophy, the *vita contemplativa* of the monks, but not only they. For thinking doth make monks of us all, to adapt *Hamlet* again. Thus, once more, heaven, McTaggart’s philosophical state, “is here where Juliet lives”, life in general being “the Idea”, if only as “immediate”. But, or hence,

The thing must become known as self not merely in regard to the immediateness of its being and as regards its determinateness, but also in the sense of essence or inner reality. This is found in the case of Moral Self-consciousness.

Here Hegel pays tribute, perhaps surprisingly, to Kant’s universalization of duty, and not merely “the sense of duty”, as is often maintained. The interest must lie in just *why* he does that just here. In fact he does it in order thereupon to proclaim that in mutual forgiveness, that life of the family, universal or particular, which Nietzsche pictured as “a rainbow after long storms”, “this rigid fixity gives way and *renounces its claims*” (my stress). This passage, these two or three pages, appear(s) to be crucial for the transition from religious representation and its consciousness to absolute knowing in self-consciousness. We must further examine and note them.

But I will note here in advance, lest it be forgotten, that mutual forgiveness as described here and frequently by Hegel, includes, by the findings of Hegel’s logic, forgiveness of self as other, as of other as self. Yet if this dimension is necessarily included then it can only be included, necessarily, as the heart and kernel of the whole situation of forgiveness he identifies here as bridge to “absolute knowing *in self-consciousness*”,



returning thus to the Socratic and indeed Delphic “Know thyself”. I do not know how deeply Fyodor Dostoyevsky read Hegel, nor does it matter. His novel *Crime and Punishment* is about nothing other than forgiveness. In the operatic setting of this novel by the Swiss musical “operator”, *Tondichter*, Heinrich Sutermeister (born 1910), this composer very “consequently”, whether or not this scene appears as such in the novel, builds upon Dostoyevsky’s description of Raskolnikov’s haunting by his *alter ego* (or should it be super-ego?), who (or which)

is leading him to commit suicide, telling him there is no other way out. Raskolnikov refuses to accept this; he challenges his *alter ego* to look him in the eyes and to understand him. When his *alter ego* slowly drops his eyes Raskolnikov goes up to his double, and embraces it in forgiving compassion. The *alter ego*, the demon of his split personality, returns into Raskolnikov, giving him the strength to admit his crime. When Sonia comes to him he can now ask her for the cross and with her tread the path of penitence.<sup>2</sup>

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Regarding, anyhow, the “mode of experience” that Hegel here, in the wake of Kant, calls “moral”, he writes:

This mode of experience knows its knowledge as the absolute essential element, knows no other objective being than pure will or pure knowledge. (p. 792)

Well, that is, in the first place, why he calls it *self-consciousness*, albeit “moral”. There is close connection with the general position, the identity of the ego and God or, indeed, being. “Moral”, we thus find in the following, is used in just this sense, one signifying devotion to objective, initially heteronomous, duty. That is, we start off with an enormous contradiction, of self and other, just the one that Kant tried to remove, but, in his case, only with a kind of “hypothetical-actual shuffle”<sup>3</sup>, as reproduced in the moral philosophy of the Oxford philosopher R.M. Hare<sup>4</sup>. The key unlocking this is Hegelian self-consciousness, as a development of the Aristotelian posit that “All men desire to know” actual being, which is truth for the intellect,

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<sup>2</sup> G. von Westerman, *Opera Guide*, Sphere Books, London 1964 (1970), p. 532.

<sup>3</sup> I cite from discussion with Peter Geach when supervising my research project, 1976-1979 (see note following).

<sup>4</sup> R.M. Hare, *The Language of Morals*, OUP Oxford, 1952; *Freedom and Reason*, 1965. Cf. our *Morals as Founded on Natural Law*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt-am-Main, 1987, 1988: first chapter, also *The Recovery of Purpose*, Peter Lang, 1993.

good for the will and the beautiful generally, while such being as inclusive of non-being or evil or both is known to the gods.<sup>5</sup> This, in one Hegelian word, is self-consciousness, and we might well drop the word “moral”.<sup>6</sup> Once again, it, self-consciousness,

knows its knowledge as the absolute essential element, knows no other objective being than pure will or pure knowledge. It is nothing but merely this will and this knowledge. Any other possesses merely non-essential being, i.e. being that has no inherent nature *per se*, but only its empty husk. In so far as the moral consciousness, in its view of the world, lets existence drop out of the self, it just as truly takes this existence back again into its self. In the form of conscience, finally, it is no longer this incessant alternation between the “placing” and the “displacing” [dissembling] of existence and self; it knows that its existence as such is this pure certainty of its own self; the objective element, into which *qua* acting it puts forth itself, is nothing else than pure knowledge of itself by itself. (p. 792)

This is at the same time nothing other than the foundation for Absolute Idealism, known to philosophy, lived in religion, sensed in art. We may note the close linguistic connection between *der seine selbst gewisse Geist* (spirit certain of itself, i.e. self-consciousness) and *das Gewisse*, whereby universal pardon or forgiveness arises. Meanwhile, this knowing of knowledge or, literally, self-consciousness, *takes the place of* knowledge of something else, viz. being or existence<sup>7</sup>. In this sense *that which is not being is the true being*, as is understood by this (moral) consciousness as the genuine self-consciousness which it, as it were logically, is. The counterpart of this in mysticism, that which shows that it *is* mysticism, is the doctrine of John of the Cross that any union with God occurs necessarily *in the will*. For the will is our name for the *locus* of human or “moral” action.

To this corresponds exactly Hegel’s placing of Will or Volition (Love) *after* Cognition Proper as a category, precisely as fulfilling Cognition, and

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<sup>5</sup> Implied in this is relation to Aquinas’s doctrine of the transcendental predicates, independently (it seems) developed by Hegel, of which there is only one *per se*, viz. being, since truth and goodness are “transcendental” *secundum quid* only. Thus intellect and will are not flatly synonymous with thought itself or the Absolute Idea as “the true being”, which they accordingly precede in Hegel’s logic. By this, then, *being is* - simply, as in self-consciousness I am or as thought thinks only itself. Whatever the status of such “faculties” there is nothing *else* with which one thinks. Nor, however, does one think *as a man* (note here Kant’s preference for the more open term, “rational creature). Thought thinks itself.

<sup>6</sup> See also, again, our “The *bonum honestum* and the Lack of Moral Motive in Aquinas’s Ethical Theory” in *The Downside Review*, April 2000, pp. 85–110.

<sup>7</sup> This is to go one step further than note 95 above.

as that from which the Idea Absolute immediately develops, in the system of Logic. It is all declared and foreseen in this passage from *The Phenomenology of Mind*. Self-consciousness is a knowing of knowledge as nothing other than self and this is precisely what is first of all “the moral point of view” (Kurt Baier, in the book of this title). This is what Hegel says here, viz. that it, self-consciousness, “knows no other objective being”. It is, in other words, his account of God, no more (nor less) God’s denial than “I and the father are one”, though also called there, yet more radically, uniquely so, “I and *my* father” (Luke’s Gospel, *eu-aggelion*, “good news”, gospel, indeed), the same source teaching us, however, to pray “*our* father”. Hence, later, “I ascend to my father and your father”, whether as anticipating Hegel’s logic or as bringing it forth, again. Both Hegel and Kant, it must be remembered, were “soaked in Scripture”, whatever we should say of ourselves severally.

So “the moral consciousness”, which is self-consciousness, “lets existence drop out of the self just as truly as it takes existence back into itself”. It is thus that it disappears as specifically moral, Hegel forbears to add here, being replaced or fulfilled in love, i.e. by Hegel’s Will or “volition”, itself virtually “the Absolute Idea”, to which indeed all the categories, beginning with being, with which “science must begin”, have been aspiring. This disposes of McTaggart’s criticism that Hegel replaced love by knowledge, which McTaggart claimed has no place “in heaven” or as the eternal truth<sup>8</sup>. Existence and self, finally, are here identified by Hegel, this being the answer to questions as to why or how I exist. Your I itself is *the* I, like mine, and hence, he says, it is “our affair” to replace the natural attitude with this philosophically and hence religiously grounded attitude, causality as ever working in both antithetical directions and hence “sublating” itself in its notion. So existence here becomes “the pure certainty of self”. *Dum spiro spero*. The latter, hope, now taken as a form of certainty (what else is this virtue, even though there be a “beyond hope?”), absorbs and fulfils life (“only the idea immediate”) and its “spiration”. So it is this certainty which becomes “the objective element” and not existence. That is to say, again, that it is what existence is. Thus hope, like all the individual virtues, is swallowed up, sublated, in this unity in simplicity of being, of thought, of the Idea, a state which Hobbes correctly states one will or can, rather, no sooner know than enjoy, leaving open whether the enjoying is ultimately in the thinking, the knowing, or the knowing in and only in the enjoying.

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. McTaggart, *Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology*, Cambridge University Press, 1901, Chapter Two, “Immortality”.

Yet there is a certain correspondence with R.M. Hare and much later philosophy, with its “anti-ontological” stance, truth, necessarily *in mente*, as it was for Aristotle and Aquinas, tending to as it were supplant Being but as, at the same time, true being. “I am the truth” gave the cultural since religious warrant for this. Only on this foundation is it added, “Before Abraham was, I am”. For Hegel this is what I, the I, necessarily says, and this has been exploited to his disqualification, without sound reason, however. His interpretation is easily placed among the traditional classes of Scriptural interpretation, from literal to “anagogical”, though I refrain from attempting a more precise judgment on just where it should be placed. It rather instances all of them, three or four as they are usually posited. “I in them and they in me” applies across the board here, and in theology first of all.

Note that Hegel means to say here what Being is, viz. self-consciousness as defined, corresponding to or fitting well with the “I am who I am” of *Exodus*, something Gilson may have rather missed in his own appeal to this text as confirmatory of Thomist ontology supremely. For Hegel, however, being that has no nature, Aristotle’s “the things that are”, is only being’s “empty husk”. To this corresponds in great measure, all the same, Aquinas’s stress on the uniqueness of the divine or absolute being, to which all other being is analogous merely (hence *we* speak of this divine being as itself analogous to finite being or beings). Compare St. Paul on God as Father “from whom all fatherhood (but including itself, in reverse direction: i.e. ‘on earth or in heaven’) is *named*”. For if his own fatherhood is named from him then he is himself beyond that form of address which is yet named *from him* and not from earthly fatherhood. Why, though, would this be so unless, quite properly, fatherhood is a moment of the Idea as absolute, necessary, however, as freely chosen? Or, fatherhood corresponds to the necessary diffusiveness of being as good, if this is what characterises, gives point and meaning, to goodness, *is* its meaning, as Plato had claimed, and hence ultimately that of being itself, which is without limit precisely because it could only be limited by being over again. Yet being could not just *find* itself so. It has to be self-positing, even positing as such, of self as of other, of other as of self.

At the same time, we go on to see, this moral action, in self-consciousness, or knowing of knowing, is action that is not action. In moral self-consciousness there is no break between thought as act and action in general, but each is the other. Whether I think or act I “do God’s will”, act, indifferently. Thinking is action or, in Aristotle’s words, “the highest praxis”. To arrive at this state, however, and it seems Hegel’s clear teaching, there has to be universal forgiveness which, it follows, includes pre-

eminently forgiveness *of self*. This thought yields straightaway another, internally related aspect of what he is calling self-consciousness, where one is united, identified, in spirit with all, as are each with all, and no one is “better or worse than he should be” (McTaggart), for, as Hegel puts it, “the end is” *ipso facto* or precisely as end “accomplished”. This has to be. It is, in the words, not without figure, of the Mediator who *has* lived, *qua* mediating, that “second coming” of which he says, “I shall see you again”, that is, in and with the Spirit, also then to come, the mediator who taught us to pray, to *think*, to say: “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us”. In Hegel philosophy carries on and further unveils that teaching and so here we do the same, religion fulfilled, given its own perfect form in philosophy, *der höchste Gottesdienst*. Hegel’s adoption of that phrase would be tasteless mockery otherwise. Man’s union with God, identity rather in the Idea (even etymologically “union”, from *unum*, signifies, says, “oned”: hence “atonement”, at-one-ment), and his or her reconciliation with himself or herself are inseparable.

These are the moments which compose the reconciliation of spirit with its own consciousness proper. By themselves they are single and isolated; and it is their spiritual unity alone which furnishes the power for this reconciliation. The last of these moments is, however, necessarily this unity itself, and, as we see, binds them all in fact into itself. Spirit certain of itself in its objective existence takes as the element of its existence nothing else than this knowledge of self. The declaration that what it does it does in accordance with the conviction of duty - this statement is the warrant for its own action, and makes good its conduct. (p. 793)

All that is good and true in Kant is here taken up, amid all the well merited and deeply discerning criticism. Nothing is said here about the erring conscience, or that earlier statement that those who persecute you will think that they do God’s will. St. Thomas says such a conscience obliges but does not excuse, the resultant perplexity being perhaps his own rather than that of the *homo perplexus* he there postulates, as meaning the man who can’t “get it right” either way (but see *Summa theol.* Ia Q14, all sixteen articles, perhaps especially here the replies, at the article there headed “Does God know evils?”, to objections 2, 3 and 4). Hegel’s vision is more simple, yet “all of a piece” with this. Judas goes to “the place appointed for him”, appointed since, indeed, it is God who “hardens Pharaoh’s heart”. Ask no more. Our freedom is “in the lap of the gods”, indeed it is, and Aquinas too says as much.

Hegel adds, in summing up, that “Action is the first inherent division of the simple unity of the notion, *and the return out of this division*” (stress

added). For in fact, if theory is the highest praxis, then *all* is praxis, action, which is or corresponds to Hegel's account of spirit as not merely perpetual motion but, immutably, motion itself, which, as Aristotle had said, "does not move". Still, "the unification still a-wanting is the simple unity of the notion" (p. 794). The page or two between this statement and our previously cited paragraph is at first sight anything but simple. Knowledge of duty, put as "simple", is contrasted with "the distinction and diremption that lie in action as such" as supplying the key, in its simplicity, unlocking this oppositional *stasis*. Duty here, namely, becomes action itself in its proper character. Doing what you (most deeply) want to do is doing what you have to do, as freedom, again, is necessity, for God as for man, if, but only when immediately viewed, differently.

In my early twenties I submitted a paper to my ethics professor entitled, idiosyncratically, "Contemplation as a Moral Virtue". I put the case, unknowingly, for exactly what Hegel is getting at here, self-consciousness, namely, as union with the divine will, with the Idea, wherein action and theory, movement and rest, sublimate or cancel one another. Here all thought is identical with itself as knowing itself and only itself in whatever it "does". Duty, as rule and manner of life, is the, so to say, secular counterpart of the "thy will be done" stance. In such a union with absolute will, the Idea, what Hegel calls self-consciousness, thought, never loses contact with itself. Absolute will is in fact, necessarily, always "done", absorbing all our deliberations into itself without any need of recourse to finite notions of original and "consequent" willing, though it might seem legitimate to *speak* so on occasion, God himself knowing nothing, i.e. knowing as nothing, both occasions and occasional speaking.

This is the point, of course, of the religious in the sense of *monastic* vow of obedience, reckoned the most fundamental, which Hegel himself shows prejudice against while here perfectly reflecting it. It is the death of the abstract or lone individual, its Gethsemane, in favour of a unity or oneness no longer isolated, but of rational system rather. This is the counterpart in the moral sphere of the seeing God in all natural things as declared by the poets. "Turn but a stone and you touch a wing" or, further, as cited in *Acts*, "In Him we live and move and have our being". Thus, too, again, action sublimes itself back into indwelling rest, both His and ours.

Duty was put by "beautiful souls" as "a rigid reality confronting action", says Hegel. Pardon, he finds, forgiveness, transforms that, teaching us to see everywhere the Aristotelian "beautiful action", *to kalon*, in an unbroken contemplation (or action, it is now the same), more beautiful than that first alluring beauty of the aesthetes. It extends, as noted, to a self-forgiveness become acceptance and self-certainty inseparable from the self-consciousness

of “knowing that one knows”, which has to be carefully distinguished from mere presumption. For it is this that invalidates all judgment, where practical as upon individual actions, as does the conviction, the assurance, of each and all of the the saints that they are “the greatest of sinners”, too easily dismissed as a form of rhetorical *insurance*. In my first year as a university student I asked my tutor, the young Alasdair MacIntyre, if he considered moral beauty to be a valid concept. He replied, with some spirit, that he did not, but later gave me the mark of “A” for a paper defending just that view, viz. the union of the good and the beautiful as transcendental predicates. So here the right hand does not know what the left one is doing, action being controlled, or rather freed, by an unbroken and non-servile consciousness of self as finally, Hegel shows, not-self, vanished or swallowed up in what for us can seem to be mere “moments” of contemplation, such as philosophical writing, as distinct from that to “Aunt Maud”, has the duty of faithfully representing. One is freed, is free, for an at least inchoate absolute knowledge. Could it ever be anything else, as “ever new” as, even or especially within time “new every morning is the light”, time being our best guide to eternity, symphonic or sounding together in its very passage therefore.

This “individual self ... is immediately pure knowledge or universal”, in “the knowledge of ego as identical with ego”. A sense of loneliness is an inevitable subsequent moment, therefore. Confronted by just nothing, one is made an or rather the “outsider”, the whole world now upon one’s shoulders. One cannot “let this cup pass”. Horatius, or Leonidas, or Athanasius, must hold the bridge or mountain-pass, *contra mundum*. This we have already met as “the feeling that God is dead”, being now so close, in an identity, the first made last, the highest made sin, even. Action here, all action, is thus included in knowledge. It is the “reconciliation of consciousness with self-consciousness” as defined. It resembles very much the “dark night of the soul” of the Spanish Carmelites, or even the older *Cloud of Unknowing* (as indeed knowing “only itself”), which John of the Cross had put into poetry, upon which his whole philosophico-mystical writing is a commentary. Hegel’s otherwise odd reference to “Spanish poetry” at one place in the *Encyclopaedia* might well be seen, again, as awareness of this spiritual current. It would be playing a role, in that case, similar to Wittgenstein’s Schopenhauerian background, the two being one in not mentioning such backgrounds (only hypothetical of course in the one case), which thus get ignored by busy-minded commentators. But to anyone who knows these texts, or even the French classic, *Self-Abandonment to Divine Providence*, by Fr. J.-P. de Caussade SJ, nearer to Hegel’s own time, these baroque or rococo become “classical” parallels will occur. One has

only to recall the then comparatively recent and very public philosophical and theological controversies in pre-Revolutionary France over Jansenism or “quietism”, recalling how aware Hegel shows himself of French culture, its *raisonnement*.

Reality has here, *qua* immediate existence, no other significance for self-consciousness than that of being pure knowledge; similarly, *qua* determinate existence, or *qua* relation, what is self-opposed is a knowledge partly of this purely individual self, partly of knowledge *qua* universal. (p. 793)

No half-measures, that is, can be tolerated here. What is overthrown by absolute knowledge, it here begins to emerge, is *opinion* as such, self-opposed when posited as universal. Around the time of Hegel’s death a papal “encyclical” letter (*Mirari vos*) condemning “liberalism” gave as ground for the condemnation that the liberal stance “overthrows the nature of an opinion”. For good or ill that is what Hegel is doing here. If reality is itself knowledge the strife of opinions is transcended, whatever genuinely philosophical work, reflecting various partial understandings in the course of development, remains. One can claim, despite the papal letter, that this is in fact what has gone on down the centuries, opinion being the mere froth on the spiritual cauldron, centuries which thus themselves disappear, as getting taken up into an actually present mosaic, of which the pattern emerges for anyone entering this room of knowledge in self-consciousness. This also was the line pursued by St. John Henry Newman, to cite the dignity recently accorded to him, in his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* of 1845, a work written, we may well further note, by and as the Anglican minister of religion that Newman then “happened to be”, as we say merely, for he was “not really” one such, nor *is* anything that “was”, though we should note that Hegel, while sharing this classic view, all the same habitually uses “really” or “reality”, better, in just the sense which he himself claims likewise to transcend. It is significant therefore, anyhow, that the Church Council (Vatican II, 1962-4) which confirmed the validity and hence “orthodoxy” not only of development but of the *ecumenical* stance, one of universal respect and tolerance for one another’s truth (as in process of “truthing” itself), was declared by the then Pope, Paul VI Montini, also now “sainted” by his Church, as having been “Newman’s Council” (summoned of course by Paul’s predecessor, now, he too, Saint John XXIII Roncalli, who may go down in history, one might well hope, as John the Great, though this nomenclature seems, with such “canonisations”, otherwise to have ceased with Nicholas I in the ninth century, for good or ill).



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Absolute knowledge, then, is indeed but knowledge of knowledge, in self-consciousness, and nothing else. It is not therefore to be diluted, *per impossibile*, by the vagaries of self-opposed “determinate existence”, inclusive of “this purely individual self” as (immediate) agent. All this, again, is but the philosophical equivalent of the “religious” conviction that God alone moves “us”, without himself being changed therefore, really something more than “pre-moves” (*praemotio physica*) us, in all our actions, this alone being the sense in which they are “free”. This is the Scholastic, in particular “Thomist”, “physical pre-motion”, i.e. of any other “motion” whatever, contested by the Jesuits against the Dominicans at Rome in 1607, in the *De auxiliis* controversy, as the papally chaired meeting became entitled. Had the Pope had Hegel to hand there he might have taken the much-needed decision in favour of divine and infinite will and, more importantly, staved off a resurgent decadent voluntarism hostile to the divine or Absolute Idea as properly or logically worked out, whereby this Idea is “the true being” and final self-consciousness, transcending not only the “pre-“ but ultimately the pre-positional “in” of the Johannine and Pauline writings, in favour of the non-abstract identity also to be found there, God as *ultimate* Object being no longer thereby outside as confronting consciousness, universal as against individual, staying rather within the ambit of religious representation but, for genuine theology underlying and supporting evangelical proclamation, “closer than close” in an identification of being with what is indeed nothing apart from this identity, “closer than close” – as it is said, “without me you can do nothing”.

There is something in its object concealed from consciousness if the object is for consciousness an “other”, or something alien, and if consciousness does not know the object as its self. This concealment, this secrecy, ceases when the Absolute Being *qua* Spirit is object of consciousness. For here in its relation to consciousness the object is in the form of self; i.e. consciousness immediately knows itself there, or is manifest, revealed, to itself in the object. Itself is manifest to itself only in its own certainty of self; the object it has is the self; self, however, is nothing alien and extraneous, but inseparable unity with itself, the *immediately universal*. (*Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 759)

Hegel’s view of consciousness, it should be clear, in its beginnings a psychological play or search amid conflicting representations, is as of an earlier and finite stage (thus as temporal in itself representation only: i.e. this is a *false* consciousness) giving way to as being absorbed, even logically thus absorbed, in the final eternally realised self-consciousness as end,

which is the Idea itself and of which especially it is true that “there is no empirical nature of the thought-process” as Scholastic thought had in the main emphasised, surely not forgetting, however, the “confused mists “ with which Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* opens, surely nothing if not subjectively empirical or at least only implicitly, to the eventual contrary, self-consciously “spiritual”, this being the final goal and hence, indeed, nature of thought.

Self-consciousness, therefore, Hegel will declare, is God and the Idea, the truth as personal, pure ego. Theory and action, then, are the same, namely act. In this sense one may say, if one will, that truth “becomes”, grows out of, evil and/or what is ultimately false and that it even necessarily or exclusively does so, as representation, whether in logic or in time as picturing this, of the eternal rest or, equivalently, eternal restlessness as pure and constant *act*, that of “generating” the Word as Trinitarian theology expresses it. In the beginning was the deed, *der Tat*; thus Goethe “translates”, willy-nilly, the Biblical “word” in his *Faust*. As being in the beginning, however, this “deed” is not an event, this deed or act as such, this knowing, this active truth, which is at once, for religious tradition, way and life.

This reconciliation of consciousness with self-consciousness thus proves to be brought about in a double-sided way; in the one case, in the religious mind, in the other case, in consciousness itself as such. (p. 793)

It is the change in consciousness as such, Hegel seems to imply, that filters down, or up, to the religious mind, appealing to the order followed in this his book.

As we have considered them (consciousness and self-consciousness), they at the beginning fall apart. In the order in which the modes and shapes of consciousness came before us, consciousness has reached the individual moments of that order, and also their unification, long before ever religion gave its object the shape of actual self-consciousness. The unification of both aspects is not yet brought to light; it is this that winds up this series of embodiments of spirit, for in it spirit gets to the point where it knows itself not only as it is inherently in itself, or in terms of its absolute content, nor only as it is (objectively) for itself in terms of its bare form devoid of content, or in terms of self-consciousness, but as it is in its self-completeness, as it is in itself and for itself. (p. 794, parenthesis added)

He adds that “this unification”, of the religious mind and consciousness as such has already taken place “by implication... in religion in the return of the figurative idea (*Vorstellung*) into self-consciousness”. This appears to

refer, or to take up again, what he had said earlier about religion amounting to a revelation just in the Idea's appearing in and as a particular incarnate figure able to be touched, heard, seen and so on although he adds in close conjunction with this that this was "not according to the proper form" (of the Idea) since the form of religion "is the aspect of the essentially independent (*Ansich*)" and thus "stands in contrast to the process of self-consciousness" (stress added).

Religion so to say catches up with and confirms the normal development of reason as outlined, in his book, prior to its consideration, though of course in the temporal process of the world it, religion, had been going on all the time, as anthropologists would later confirm, one school of them in fact claiming to find that the earliest or more primitive forms of religion were more closely allied to philosophy than were many later religious or idolatrous developments (Schmidt). Hence the religious moment is a part of this same development that it unifies, a part, that is, with respect to its being a "reflection into self" which, as such, "contains itself and its opposite... only implicitly" (*an sich*) or "in a general way". That is, the unifying agent, religion, by its nature stands apart from that which, as object, it unifies. It does not, like self-consciousness, perfect itself in its own self-absorption as ceasing to be an object for itself. The genuine or final unification, that is, would not be "reflexion into self" but would contain itself and its object explicitly (*für sich*). Religion would be there but as perfected in and under Absolute Spirit's own genuine form and thus "expressly developed and distinguished" as in Hegel's own "philosophy of spirit" (i.e. *Encyclopaedia* III). This other aspect, of untrammelled self-consciousness (compare the previous chapter, at Baillie's page 759: "there is something in its object concealed from consciousness if the object is for consciousness something 'other', or something alien, and if consciousness *does not know the object as itself*"<sup>9</sup>) will have been brought to light in "the unification still a-wanting" or "the simple unity of the notion ... already given with the aspect of self-consciousness", as we have just noted, but, like everything else so far, in "the form of being a particular mode or shape of consciousness".

Hegel might easily be taken here as exhorting to a giving up of discursive thought as such, to a mystical "ceasing of all thinking" as before a final knowing easily identifiable with a kind of "unknowing" and indeed he returns us here to his figure of "the beautiful soul", now posited or pictured in a positive light previously lacking to his presentation of this as such unforgiving figure. The beautiful soul is "the self-intuition of God himself".

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<sup>9</sup> Italics not in Baillie's text, cited previously above here.

Nor is this any kind of “laughing matter”, as we say. It is but the next and almost final state prefigured in this phenomenological development.

This self-intuition, in fact, cannot be other than God himself. He could not have an intuition of himself in seeming separation from himself, for that would be finitude. Being, we must say, is self-intuiting, not forgetting Hegel’s argument or claim that it is the Idea that is being, and God. From this it follows that being, the Idea, truth too, is personal, a person, “the absolute person” (Hegel), however faceted *vis à vis* the Trinitarian relations (*personae*). The beautiful soul, then, is totally comprised in self-intuition and that not merely his or her own, as some finite individual with parts independent of one another. He vanishes, then, not “into thin air” but into God. So he is in a manner destroyed, ruined, as individual. His pure and total individuality is oned with universality, as having all and being all.

For not only did it previously “disappear into thin air”, as “one-sided”, but we saw it, Hegel says, “positively relinquish itself and advance further”, attaining the form of universality, of which, for Hegel, pardon, forgiveness, appears to be the index. We are here at the heart of “the Lord’s prayer”, where we ask to be forgiven our offences “as we forgive those of others”, i.e. not merely to the possibly limited extent that we, so to say habitually, forgive (we want more than that) but as now declaring forgiveness in declarative or “performative” act, “as we forgive”, here and now. Through this act beautiful souls, learning to be forgiving themselves, “attain the form of universality”, in prayer, of which philosophy, when or as *sophia* (so why not in love too, *philia*, for just that?), is the perfect form. What remains is the notion’s true and realised form, he says, “in its truth, i.e. in unity with its externalisation”. Implied here is that the imperfection of form, as distinct from content, that he ascribes later to Art and Religion refers to them as abstractly considered, i.e. as not partaking of as absorbed, and yet *aufgehoben* or transcended, in *sophia*. This is a brief recall of his thought concerning *incarnation* of the divine. This self-consciousness “is knowledge of pure knowledge”, that is what it comes down to, overthrowing opinion as we said. It *is* it, the beautiful soul’s or our own consciousness, not just an “abstract essence” as is duty, “but in the sense of an essential being which *is this* knowledge, this individual pure self-consciousness which is therefore at the same time a genuine *object*; for this notion is the self-existing self”. This, he had said above, “is not merely intuition of the divine, but the self-intuition of God himself”, which is a way of saying what God is (or is not). It is a giant step, but one implicit all along in Hegel, the unity in identity of God and man, without reduction of the former in this elevation of the latter, appropriate to the Absolute Idea, to the necessary

divinity of infinity which is what Hegel calls the *blessedness* of thinking (EL 159).

But why, o why,  
 Designer infinite,  
 Must thy harvest-field be dinged  
 With rotten death?

Well, it would be funny if it wasn't, the philosopher in effect replies, as it were disdaining "the heartache and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to", heir indeed to the extreme of grief, if it be now, if it be not now. "With Christ I hang upon the Cross", said one. "In the Cross is strength and life", said another, calling it "the royal road". For his part Hegel declares these things so flatly that his readers have often felt free to ignore them, ignore "the ruin of the individual", the mere immediacy of itself as product of "our" finite imagining. Life, rather, "is no life at all" and only from such despair is hope snatched. As the Buddhists, or some of them, again, express it: "No birth, no death", an insight generalised by Hegel as the equivalence of being and non-being (*Enc.* 87 with the addition) with special reference to "the Buddhists". Nor is the Idea, therefore, in being declared the true being, set apart from this negativity, of which the positivity (of this negativity) is, again, "the knowing of knowing", which "as feeling... is love" (EL 159), bringing with it, again, grief as a "moment". *Der Tod ist schlimm* (Joseph Pieper, in conversation).

We might think he is dealing here with the mind or consciousness of Christ as taken by faith. For it fits the case exactly. The best answer is that he both is and isn't thus dealing: there is no exclusion. From the premise of identity mentioned the utterance "Behold the man!" acquires this universality in the intensest individuality, which is the whole burden of the Hegelian logic, put as logic in its truth. The stance, in fact, is as found in the Gospels, with their "Whatever you do to the least of these you do to me", itself asking for immediate generalisation or, at the least, imitation. But Hegel does not, for the most part, feel called upon to be more explicit, though it is false that there is no mention of immortality or similar in his writings. I am all things, says Krishna, for one, at the end of the *Encyclopaedia*.

This notion gave itself its fulfilment partly in the acts performed by the spirit that is sure of itself, partly in religion. In the latter it won the absolute content *qua* content, or in the form of a figurative idea or of otherness for consciousness. On the other hand, in the first the form is just the self, for that mode contains the active spirit sure of itself; the self accomplishes the life of

Absolute Spirit. This shape (mode), as we see, is that simple notion, which however gives up its eternal essential Being, takes upon itself objective existence, or acts. The power of diremption or of coming forth out of its inwardness lies in the purity of the notion, for this purity is absolute abstraction of negativity. (*Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 795-6)

Here we clearly find that we are engaged with the incarnation of the Word, but as a general phenomenon, just as he has said there are two ways of notional self-fulfilment, partly by natural development towards self-consciousness, partly by religion. Christ, the Word, is born in the soul of each, as Eckhart had once expressed it, while just as that one man stands for every man, or woman, or child, so each thus stood for stands, in the exercise of his own spirit-life, for each and all of the others, this being precisely the universality of mind, of thought. This is what we found Fr. Jamros objecting to as going beyond the Christian vision of things. Can one really go beyond it, though, the absolute religion? As Thomas Aquinas had already expressed it in his eucharistic hymn, where one receives (communion) a thousand receive, *sumit unus sumunt mille*, the individuals go in and go out in perpetual mutual interchange, forming one subject. In this way, again, God and man are the same, one spirit, in the way we have described it, like being and nothing in the logic, in fact, elevating Nothing rather than reducing Being, as is clear also in the treatment of good and evil. Evil has what appears to be a good role to play, *est semper in subjecto*, says Aquinas, *in subjecto bono*, i.e. is never absolute, we may interpret. The notion in itself is knowledge of pure knowledge. As such it “is the self-existent self”.

What does seem clear here is that Hegel’s bringing of the spirit to the threshold of systematic science is seen by him as depending upon the background of religion and indeed of absolute religion, wherever that is to be found, even though it lies in such religion’s nature that it has to come late on the scene and, therefore, itself form a stage of an already ongoing process, as in this very book of Hegel’s. Indeed it does result from or typify a stage of developing consciousness, as everyone admits, as lying upon the surface of things. But Hegel, as taking the absolute viewpoint, sees it still as, so to say, directed from heaven, as infinity requires in its concept. The Idea, he says, is and must be its own result. This, indeed, is what is also called the method of logic, of thought, of the Idea, the way that it is found to go, as it is discovered piecemeal by us in our finite state:

This notion gave itself its fulfilment partly in the acts performed by the spirit that is sure of itself, partly in religion. In this latter it won the absolute content *qua* content, or in the form of a figurative idea or of otherness for consciousness. On the other hand, in the first the form is just the self, for that

mode contains the active spirit sure of itself; the self accomplishes the life of Absolute Spirit. (p. 795)

This means that there is a fusion in difference between our life and God's, that all that we do or that happens to us indifferently reflects eternal and necessary truth and just for that reason is in itself nothing. Just therefore religion will declare it subject to mercy at one moment, to justice at another, the truth being that these turn out to be the same, differently viewed, to be necessity and the Idea, though mercy, to what is "but dust", be paramount. In the end God knows only himself, as himself being his knowing, and has no relation to some spurious externality. In that thought we, as no longer external, since the external itself is done away with, should rest. So yes it is true that the beautiful soul has no actual existence, as Novalis or anyone else, inasmuch, that is, as it is itself "self-consciousness, which knows this pure knowledge of pure inwardness to be spirit, is not merely intuition of the divine, but the self-intuition of God himself". The same could be said, however, of *anything* whatever, as viewed *in* God, the true "in itself", of any "moment" of the Idea and this from God's side, as is required logically by the very notion of the Idea, which is the notion of the notion, the Concept. We have here the unification of the individual moments, let us say, of "the method". "This also is thou; neither is this thou". Each of these moments on its own, conversely, must "disappear into thin air" when or as the Idea, God, self-consciousness, I, "shall be all in all", something that cannot be equally applied to the mathematical One, as Findlay, for example seems to suggest, as if Hegel's application of this infinity in self-consciousness to the I exclusively were quite arbitrary, though it certainly finds its echo in mathematics, as it should if it is valid (Findlay, p. 165f.), or if they are valid, since this unit "is as good an example of Being-for-self" as "the advanced case of self-consciousness", but only in those respects that Findlay specifies, which do not include consciousness or subject as transcending substance, do not include knowing.

The mere existence of the logic, in fact, as systematically set out, its method, is, it becomes clear, just what our temporal representation, time itself in fact, measures, or what, rather, measures out time *as time*. In this sense the logic is not "God before creation" since there is no before in God. It is, rather, mind in itself, the "going forth" as creation being mind's so to say simultaneous self-representation in a series, the temporal, parallel to the logical which it represents and into which thought from the start, or simultaneously again, re-absorbs it. "In God we live and move and have our being". "In God alone is my soul at rest". The Idea is finally "the absolute Person", again. So it is, then, that just as the ideas unfold in development in the logic, the false generating the true, so this same logic, as one and only,

is represented with respect to its development in the constitution of Nature, the human form not abstractly developing in obedience to a law of development from the simplest life-forms or earlier but rather itself determining them to be what they are, in imitation. Thus the monkey truly apes or anticipates or starts to bring forward the human, light and water here playing their role as what Hegel calls Nature's idealities, water, for example, being a truly neutral substance without specific quality, like matter in hylomorphism. Something of Thales is retrieved here. Or the latter's insight is at last given its rationale, remarkably. Because if water is "truly neutral" then the abstraction of Logic and Nature from one another is at an end, while, as we have noted, something similar might be derived from matter, inasmuch as this is both some kind of primordial substance, though this phrase already in part "gives the game away", in the sense almost of "stuff" and, equally, a metaphysical or "truly neutral" principle.

Behind Hegel's discussion in general there lies here awareness of the reciprocity of self and otherness, the latter being stressed by "religion", the second of the two ways requiring unification in reconciliation of consciousness with self-consciousness:

This shape ..., as we see, is that simple notion ("the spirit that is sure of itself"), which however gives up its eternal essential Being, takes upon itself objective existence, or acts. The power of diremption or of coming forth out of its inwardness lies in the purity of the notion, for this purity is absolute abstraction of negativity. In the same way the notion finds its element of reality, or the objective being it contains, in pure knowledge itself; for this knowledge is simple immediacy, which is being and existence as well as essence, the former negative thought, the latter positive thought. This existence, finally, is just as much that state of reflection into self which comes out of pure knowledge - both *qua* existence and *qua* duty - and this is the state of evil. (pp. 795-6, parenthesis added)

For why shouldn't and wouldn't this conceptual knowledge know existence as much as it knows everything else in its own act exclusively? This, though, is automatic reflection into self, since it is as individual that I exist, in an existence to be transcended. Here the same saving ambivalence meets us which obtains between knowing evil and being evil, ambivalence because one is not had without the other, something which must have as final consequence that "good and evil are the same". Being and existence, Hegel says here, "are negative thought" (p. 796). One can only connect this with the apostolic statement that the incarnate Word, *in existing*, "was made sin for us". Note that Hegel includes the sense of duty under this same state of evil as a reflection into self which is incompatible with self-consciousness. Obviously "the *self*-intuition of God himself" (p.795) excludes all thought



of heteronomous duty. Implied further, however, is that the analytical process we have gone through above, guided by Hegel's texts, yields an integration or unity in identity of the moral imperative, of self-conscious admission of it, with God's own self-intuition not, to say the least, made explicit in Kant. One would rather need to go back to Augustine's "Love and do what you like" or if, as Aquinas liked to say, "we would but consider", the Johannine "We love him because he loved us". Nonetheless, the Kantian moment was and hence is clearly necessary for the emergence of Hegel's position, which, once again, is *opposition* in deep identity, both positions having transcended the old tables of virtues and precepts, these two, as *ius* and *lex*, having been also in their time opposed in their complementarity, while the identity of good and evil contemplated, and posited, by Hegel clearly invited the explicit future affirmation of a beyond to both with Nietzsche, this very explication however, once again, lying there to be seen in Hegel. In this sense then, as in Hegel's logic, self-consciousness as such, identifiable with "the moral point of view" as this later philosophy reveals it, lay dormant not merely in philosophy's beginnings, in Plato and Aristotle, as in religion, though above all or most immediately in art, but in the very concept, the knowledge, of knowledge itself. Philosophy then is its own self-destruction towards *sophia*, wisdom, the final "intellectual virtue" in connaturality of subject with object, to their mutual disappearance, under the older scheme. "Behold I make all things new", even old things just in their antiquity, "not one jot or one tittle" passing away. This, and the following, is precisely what is stated in advance in summary form in the first paragraph of this, Hegel's final chapter here:

The Spirit manifested in revealed religion has not as yet surmounted its attitude of consciousness as such; or, what is the same thing, its actual self-consciousness is not at this stage the object it is aware of. Spirit as a whole and the moments distinguished in it fall within the sphere of figurative thinking, and within the form of objectivity. The *content* of this figurative thought is Absolute Spirit. All that remains to be done now is to cancel and transcend this bare form; or better, because the form appertains to consciousness as such, its true meaning must have already come out in the shapes or modes consciousness has assumed. (Baillie, p. 789)

This says, in effect, that Spirit's self-consciousness has to be its own object, exclusively, and that this self-knowledge, since it is Spirit, is, as to its content, Absolute Spirit, the Absolute, God. Or that this is a surmounting of this name in favour of "the name that is above all names". It makes no difference, nor is this final chapter no more than the putting of "a full stop",

as Gregor Moder<sup>10</sup> suggests. It is, rather, full-blown mystical theology, take it or leave it.

We have here, in fact, the thought underlying the superiority of Art or the aesthetic moment as to why this is seen as the first form of Absolute Spirit, while morality and state-craft, or the state itself, remain with the finite. This is in fact the impression given by an attentive reading of the Gospels' portrayal of Christ, both in his relaxed way of being and in the form itself of citing the law so as to go beyond it, even in apparently contradictory form. Thus "you have heard" that, or it is written that, or Moses allowed you to do this or that, but I say to you, love your enemies, don't divorce, be perfect like your father sending his rain on the just and the unjust, something totally missed by Goethe<sup>11</sup>, and in fact we can well wonder if we have always understood. Thus the remark about adultery in the heart, which the listeners recognise is virtually universal, exclaiming "Who, then, can be saved?", seems better to harmonise with the character of Jesus's action and teaching if one interpret in the opposite sense, even though he limits himself to the perhaps somewhat weary or wary(?) answer, "With God all things are possible", something like his saying well, you all do it really, so stop stoning these poor women and so on, or maybe forgive yourselves for a start, just as he wanted to point to the superior virtue of the tax-collector as public sinner not daring to raise his head in the Temple. Get spiritual, worship "in spirit and in truth, neither on this mountain nor that".

This final *sophia*, closer to self than self, is not and cannot be a matter of words at all. Hegel and Wittgenstein are at one in this. One is to surmount all mental intentions in a "dark night of the memory" (John of the Cross), "casting all one's cares away". Whether one will still draw one's academic salary is not germane, not in the least. One leaves the world or uses it "as though one used it not" (from a Pauline Epistle), indifferently. Spirit as a whole, meanwhile, including even philosophy, he seems to say here, fall within figurative thinking and "the bare form of objectivity" (Of course God is the object, he says elsewhere), simply as found within the sphere of language. Yet consciousness "has to know the object as itself" (p. 759). So he aims throughout to cancel "this bare form" of objectivity. This is but the simplest piety, after all, as in the prayer "God be in my heart and in my understanding, God be in my eyes and in my looking" and so on. This is what these well-known "spells" mean, what "our Father" means. This form, though, clings "to consciousness as such". Hence it and all its modes have

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<sup>10</sup> Gregor Moder, *Hegel and Spinoza: Substance and Negativity*, Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, USA, 2017 (cf. the review of Moder's book by Ryan Haecker scheduled to appear in the journal *Religion and Theology*).

<sup>11</sup> See the relevant poem.

to be transcended towards “self-consciousness”, actually the death of this as normally understood, the passing over to the heavenly viewpoint of “responsibility for all”, which Hegel finds already in what he calls “the moral consciousness” but in fuller flower simply in “thinking”. The treasure lies in our own back-garden.

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Contrasted against the religious mode as an imperfect form, then, like art, of Absolute Spirit, is this Spirit as being, necessarily, “sure of itself”, as Hegel repeatedly stresses. His model, clearly, is the progressive desocialisation of God in Scripture, away from the “ten” commandments, as *Sittlichkeit* within a finite society exclusively, to the Deuteronomic law or concept rather (as its own “law”), of love of God and neighbour, fulfilling and cancelling in one, as finally becomes the case, all such separated principles. This spiritual (*geistlich*) self-sureness is no other than the knowing of knowing constituting the Concept. In place of the social composite we have the knowing or loving union of all in all (and not merely “with” all) as a being “for itself” in one “body”, one self-consciousness. Is this the total immanence of God? It is, but not in abstraction, or to the exclusion of the total transcendence of the finite, with which it is to be identified. This is church, the faith community as Hegel identifies it as being, referred to immemorially in religion, in a figure perhaps first made explicit in the prophetic document of *Hosea, q.v.*, as “she” or “bride”, the spiritual communion which is a simple unity in identity, where if one suffers, or rejoices, then all suffer or rejoice, if one knows then all know or, in final “scientific” analysis, knowing knows itself. This unity, however, is “called out” of time (*ec-clesia*, and not merely God’s assembly, *qahal*), is not as such “on earth” or on all fours “beside” the state as finite Objective Spirit, “God on earth” (Hegel) or, equivalently, the Concept in one of its *logically* transitional and hence necessary moments. Thus Hegel’s phrase, taken in harmony with his basic findings, is effectively earth’s denial. God is on earth, necessarily, as its effectively final denial, the quarrels of church and state in such a perspective being an irrelevant contingency, a transcendence, as Hegel in his own time and place would emphasises, not always respected by the ecclesiastic authorities, those Catholic in particular. In this way the trajectory of the Divine Man proper is reproduced, echoed or imitated in every man, woman or child, since it is thought itself in the omnicomprehensive unity of one Word. *Ecce homo!*<sup>12</sup> This community’s

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<sup>12</sup> Hegel at one point declares the specific Catholicism of his time and place a “different religion” (from Lutheranism), as one heard Peter Geach not long ago

being “a stranger upon earth”, meanwhile, is equivalent to their being, finally, i.e. in final understanding, no earth, pictured by Isaiah as the drop of water on the rim of an essentially empty bucket.

Hegel refers here generally and throughout to things “taking place”, in *logical* sequence, that is to say, in establishment of “the method” of all thought, the method which thus *is* thought, the Idea. McTaggart’s rejection of this identity, seems, again, mere misunderstanding. Hegel has already said, established even, that there is a qualified identity of thinking, of which the method is method itself, with self, with liberation, love and, he says, blessedness (*Enc.* 159). This method is precisely what natural development or evolution *represents* or, a more forceful term, here an expression (Hegel’s own, following Kant in this), *stellt vor*, the emphasis lying with the prefix abstracted by the natural genius of language for that purpose. So Nature is *in itself*, as second member of the encyclopaedic triad, representation, whereby logic, the Concept, modulates finally to Spirit as disclosed by the Method. In this sense the representation of being is itself a being or being simply, insofar as it is at all, yet not yet “the true being” which is the Idea. It is thus analogous or more than so, in its necessity, to that, to the being, of the Aristotelian *phantasmata* without which no concept, nor, *a fortiori*, the Concept, is available. It is the process of which the redemption of evil in the knowledge of evil, outlined in the previous chapter, is a doubtless privileged or prime instance, instantiating itself:

Now what in the first instance takes place implicitly is at once for consciousness, and is duplicated as well – is both for consciousness and is its self-existence or its own proper action. The same thing that is already

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declaring Protestantism a different religion (from Catholicism). Neither of these statements is easily reconcilable with the stand of the Second Vatican Council of over fifty years ago now on “ecumenism” or with the latest theology as represented, for example, by Hans Küng’s argued claim that the Lutheran justification by faith alone does not after all differ from the Catholic position, a thesis which Karl Barth, to whom Küng’s book was dedicated, did not in his acceptance deny. Luther, had he not had the threat of deadly violence before him, might well have sought and found reconciling acceptance of his doctrine thus understood, before now, therefore, and those following him may and should find this ecumenical position, a mere four hundred years of schism, not the oldest, not able to withstand all the effort now being expended from both sides upon the possibility of such reconciliation. Our Hegelian studies do not lose their philosophic character through their being relatable in thought to this need of the day, as nor do his studies through his incidental remarks upon the same, and that in the main body of his text, chiefly at *Encyclopaedia* III, Section III.

inherently established, thus repeats itself now as knowledge thereof on the part of consciousness and as conscious action. (p. 796)

This refers both to the “pure knowledge” of the Concept and to its “evil” bondage to the limitations of life and, more generally, existence, united principally, this good and evil, as both good after all, as both moments, that is to say (compare the *bona consequentia* of traditional logic), in “the mediator”, considered necessary by Hegel, or in Christ<sup>13</sup>. Or, rather, what is shown in Him, is, for Hegel, the truth of things, the Concept. Here, as in his analysis of the *Genesis* account (previous chapter here or *Enc. 24, Zus.*), the reconciling role or function of knowledge is stressed, a role as of “gods knowing both good and evil”. “Have we received good from the hand of the Lord and shall we not receive evil?” This question Job will later pose, if rhetorically, in first reaction to his sufferings, a knowing because an enduring of evil (in this sense the expulsion from evil represents further extension of the first knowledge, as previously exclusive to the gods, of evil, prior to apart from its being anything else, e.g. pain, in our case at least), nor is this retracted in the later complications of the story, while as regards reconciliation:

Each lays aside for the other the independence of character with which each appears confronting the other. This waiving of independence is the same renunciation of the one-sidedness of the notion as constituted implicitly the beginning; but it is now its own act of renunciation, just as the notion renounced is its own notion. That implicit nature of the beginning is in truth as much mediated, because it is negativity; it now establishes itself as it is in its truth; and the negative element exists as a determinate quality which each has for the other, and is essentially self-cancelling, self-transcending. The one of the two parts of the opposition is the disparity between existence within itself, in its individuality, and universality; the other, disparity between its abstract universality and the self. (p. 796-7).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Van Riet, whom we have cited extensively above, here appears to modify, even backtrack, in a measure, upon his basic thesis concerning the Christ “made sin for us”. After citing LPR III, p.98: “the human, the finite, frailty, weakness, the negative, is itself a divine moment, is in God himself; that otherness or Other-Being ... is not outside of God ... does not hinder unity with God” Van Riet adds. “No doubt he did not take evil upon himself ... but one understands etc.” *Op. cit.* p.82.

<sup>14</sup> See also our commentary on the Introductory to Hegel’s greater, first version of *The Science of Logic*: “With What Must Science Begin?” in *Hegel’s Theology or Revelation Thematised*, Cambridge Scholars Publications, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 2018.

Mutual forgiveness is once again stressed as the form of this reconciliation. It is also put, we may note, as the morality of the *Übermensch* in Nietzsche's thought, as "a rainbow after long storms", as what is the typical norm in families, he says, somewhat wistfully perhaps. Here appears the unity of philosophy, of its "experience" also, even among seeming opposites, as well as its coincidence with religious wisdom as itself *höchste Gottesdienst* (Hegel).

By this process of action spirit has come to light in the form of pure universality of knowledge, which is self-consciousness as self-consciousness, which is simple unity of knowledge. It is through action that spirit is spirit so as definitely to exist; it raises its existence into the sphere of thought and hence into absolute opposition, and returns out of it through and within this very opposition. (p. 797)

Here, Hegel means, the content of religion, as imaging an other, here becomes, or is, "the action proper of the self". We might interpret, say, that what is imagined there as other is here acknowledged as closer than self (*intimior me mihi*), as, it must then be so, the proper or true self. Again, "It is through action that spirit is spirit so as definitely to exist." This, it will be clear, is *Absolute Knowledge*.

This last embodiment of spirit – spirit which at once gives its complete and true content the form of self, and thereby realises its notion, and in doing so remains within its own notion – this is *Absolute Knowledge* ...

Spirit here "gives its complete and true content the form of self". Hegel could be paraphrasing St. John's Gospel: "I am the way, the truth and the life". He adds here a new or yet more explicit statement of his general thesis:

Truth is here not merely in itself absolutely identical with certainty; it has also the shape, the character of certainty of self; or in its existence – i.e. for spirit knowing it – it is in the form of knowledge of itself. Truth is the content, which in religion is not as yet at one with its certainty. This identification, however, is secured when the content has received the shape of self. By this means, what constitutes the very essence, viz. the notion, comes to have the nature of existence, i.e. assumes the form of what is objective to consciousness. Spirit, appearing before consciousness in this element of existence, or, what is here the same thing, produced by it in this element, is systematic Science. (p. 798<sup>15</sup>)

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<sup>15</sup> I cannot help but see in this passage a kind of picture of the life and death (welcomed by him with "*endlich!*", at last!) of Ludwig Wittgenstein, who as far as I know had little knowledge of Hegel, nor, of course, Hegel of him.

There then follow three extremely condensed or, rather, focussed pages which end in the following not, in context, precisely new declaration:

The content of religion, therefore, expresses earlier in time than (philosophical) science what spirit is; but this science alone is the perfect form in which spirit truly knows itself. (p. 801)

The translator's (Baillie's) parenthesis "philosophical" here is not in the original: *früher in die Zeit als die Wissenschaft*. Neither is the word "systematic" in the previous citation, which has *Der Geist... ist die Wissenschaft* simply. For German speakers *Wissenschaft* would be immediately apprehended as a more or less "formal" apprehension of *Wissen* merely. On the other hand this whole book, as published in 1807, is subtitled, presumably by Hegel, as the "first part" of *System der Wissenschaft* as later including the three parts of the *Encyclopaedia* as well as *The Science of Logic* in its original, uncompressed version. So there is a certain looseness there, or here.

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Hegel continues, on page 798 of our text, saying that this science has been shown to be "pure self-existence of self-consciousness", is *Ich*, this and no other I (Baillie translates with *ego* throughout), while it is "at the same time, immediately... mediated, or sublated, universal ego", i.e. *I am that*. The coincidence with this Indian truism here is as fortuitous on my part as it is significant. It means, anyhow, as does "self-consciousness" generally in Hegel, that in becoming knowing, or "scientific", we are at one with the Concept and the Idea, even, which then speaks through and in us. His knowing, his science, is thus the knowing of God, if truth in its wholeness, of which the Gospels speak, but which is indeed the ideal of "science" in the ordinary sense. We look to it, to science, to tell us how things are. What is added, both by Hegel and the Gospels, is that this, or "thinking", is "eternal life" or (EL159) "blessedness". This too is part of his ideal of unification or reconciliation after momentary rupture, despite the fact that he presents spirit itself, which is what is in question throughout, as discordant irruption into the natural way of things. As he says in effect himself somewhere, it is the hand that wounds that heals.

The content "is itself the ego", in its "pure negativity" or self-division (*sich Entzweyen*), or "it is consciousness" - not exactly what we would normally call *systematic* science. That comes in, rather, when viewing Hegel's philosophy, his "philosophical science(s)", as a whole. What is

distinguished from the ego, meanwhile, is, *in* this distinction, “itself the ego, for it is the process of superseding itself”; i.e. in its “pure negativity” the ego, and hence the content, is not itself actually anything, is, rather, a process, which, therefore, itself, it would seem to follow, is properly *known* only as process. This at once makes all Hegel’s seemingly technical terminology, precisely as philosophical, fleeting and even potentially *analogous* as between the various employments of such terms. Precise or technical language is used, that is to say, precisely for finite or particularised sciences only. One cannot be “instructed” in philosophy, therefore, but has to participate, as is true also of logical theory; “the content is the spirit”. It “possesses the shape of the notion in its objectivity”, while or so that, rather, if you don’t “see” it for yourself you can go no further. This is true of logic as it is not true of mathematics, and *that is the ineradicable difference*. Frege, that is to say, is not the or a new Pythagoras, simply because he is a philosopher. But was not Pythagoras that? Only in so far as he was, then, does Frege succeed to him. Meanwhile one is free to dissent, in some measure or other, from Frege’s account of predication.

What, though, is this shape of the notion? Hegel here says it, or science, rather, “does not appear in time and in reality” until spirit becomes self-conscious. For this spirit as such “it does not exist before” spirit masters and constrains “its imperfect embodiment”. He immediately qualifies this as “the task of procuring for its consciousness the shape of its inmost essence”, what it “was to be”, we might say, in Aristotle’s phrase for essence, as it were “all the time”. Hegel does not say as much here, however, but speaks of “bringing its self-consciousness level with its consciousness”. Spirit “*as such* has not yet reached the substance, or is not in itself absolute knowledge”. In fact Hegel on occasion refers to “spirit” as a representation merely (by us) of absolute knowledge.

So here is traced, phenomenologically, exactly what is traced in the Logic, either version, as “method”, both method and time being taken up (*aufgehoben*), “at the end”, in that end which is ever, in itself, “realised end”. Time is itself, so to say, the propaedeutic, which, therefore, itself has no end as it had (but surely “has” would be better, truer?) no beginning, circling upon itself “for ever” in a circle that, as such, disallows *all* linearity. That is, it cannot be *said* to have end or beginning, is ever curved back upon itself, as “all times are his”, hence ours. One cannot measure the measure. In consequence every moment is seen with and in the whole and conversely, seen because it *is* thus situated. That is the layout, the ground plan. This is not another sense of moment; rather, it reveals the depth in the one univocal sense of that term, exclusive of the temporal. Thus is a moment understood in music: you hear the whole symphony at once or you don’t hear it at all,



every bar recollecting the whole plus one of the previous. In a sense, then, any single movement is itself a whole symphony (though positing in one ordered work a meta-symphony, if still a symphony indeed). This explains, in part, the drive, in Sibelius and others, yet implicit in the prologue to the last movement (moment), which shall encapsulate all, of Beethoven's "Ninth" particularly, generatively, towards the "one movement" symphony (*nicht diese Töne* are his words, his wish to unite with poetry, first inspiration towards *Gesamtkunst*, though not at all as renouncing, his later work witnesses, any instrumental type whatever), corresponding to Mozart's saying that before transcription he heard his future symphonies "all at once". This thought seems capable of infinite development, however, witness Peter Maxwell Davies, inspired by a commissioning of ten string quartets at once to start composing them as one mammoth work:

I am very aware that this is the first in a sequence of ten quartets, which enabled me to think from the outset of an architecture spanning the whole cycle ... This feeling is not entirely new. (Naxos Quartets 1 & 2, composer's note, 2002, 2003)

Indeed not! Hegel's thought, thus far (but why not say thought itself, as Aristotle was once styled "the philosopher", before the Hegelian identification had been made explicit?), might be viewed as a musical aesthetic, therefore, ever returning upon itself in time's self-annihilation. Thus, in the mystical life, the great "spiritual directors" envisage a time, a moment, in the "life of prayer" as it is or was called, when the subjects, no longer neophytes, are "meant to cease all (discursive) thinking". Nor did Hegel spend all his time *writing* philosophy, whether on paper or "in his head", we may be sure. The end and aim of all particular movement is rest, which, in the final case of the essence of spirit, Hegel tells us, is movement itself as itself, again, eternal rest in blessedness, love and liberation into self-consciousness, "called I" (*Enc.* 159) or "what we shall be", - namely, according to the "religious" source, "like him", *one with* him, with spirit, with Christ as "way truth and life", as it is more usually put.

Sometimes *Wissenschaft*, "science" (as analysed above), is put on a par with *absolutes Wissen*. So here Hegel says of spirit (*Geist*):

Spirit in and for itself is, when distinguished into its separate moments, self-existent knowledge, comprehension (*Begreifen*) *in general*, which as such has not yet reached the substance, or is not in itself absolute knowledge. (p. 799, italics original)

Thus he says, again, we noted, that

*science* does not appear in time and in reality till spirit has arrived at this stage of being conscious regarding itself. *Qua* spirit which knows what it is, it does not exist before, and is not to be found at all till after the completion of the task of mastering and constraining its imperfect embodiment”.

e.g. in religion (pp. 798-799). This is *theology*, though Hegel does not say so here, and the reference is clearly to his own temporal “scientific” efforts and not directly to some temporal “arriving” of spirit itself. For spirit, he has made abundantly clear, is whole in each of its moments, its end in its beginning and *vice versa*. Yet he can say:

Now in actual reality the knowing substance exists, is there earlier than its form, earlier than the shape of the notion. For the substance is the undeveloped inherent nature, the ground and notion in its inert simplicity, the state of inwardness or the self of spirit which is not yet there. (p. 799)

This last phrase is clearly speculative, i.e. by a contradiction trying to say the unsayable, about which we cannot, as spiritual beings, “keep silent” (contrast Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 7). The knowing substance is the self of spirit which is not yet there. Or say it is there before it is there, like those angels of children which “behold the face of my father in heaven”, a way of affirming the infinite personal dignity of the small child as equal to that of the mature man or woman, something enshrined in the severity of the law, in all civilised countries, towards murder, i.e. that is their definition as “civilised”. Yet substance in this first sense is just what Being is not. Hence angels, one might, with Hegel, unscrupulously posit, though he avoids the term, speaking only of Satan and associates, good or bad!

It is an indubitable fact that the relaxation of capital punishment for murder has tended in practice to reduce this awe before the sanctity of human life that was previously felt in society. One was horrified by the examples of contemporary persons who lived and walked as fellow citizens with oneself before, nonetheless, their lives were ended in prison by the hangman’s noose. One would have thought that the abolition of this barbarity, or horror, at least (barbarity is not so easily pinned down conceptually), would itself serve to spread that veneration for human life which those urging it professed the desire further to promote. But that has not happened. Murder is more common than ever, the attitude to it more casual. Murderers walk among us with no stigma of horror attaching to them, at times crowing over the humiliated and/or heart-broken relatives of their victims. But perhaps just this is more civilised, or so the more

progressive among us seem to think. Orwell has already called this “the decline of the English murder”. The strain is more severely felt, though, to repeat (the case merits repeal) when those bearing their surely heavy burden appear to flaunt their impunity before those they have injured, aspiring to become public figures in some other capacity, politics for example. There is bitter grief in Spain in particular about this type of situation, while the associated activities of Lord Longford, “Frank”, in England are equally thought-provoking or worse, for some. Yet it is murder itself that is the great trouble and challenge for all, as is war, epidemic disease and all the rest, and it is just here that Hegel’s metaphysics are brought to bear as descended from that fearful and yet strengthening injunction to “hate one’s life in this world” amid all one’s pleasures, as it may be.

The obvious instance of this general problematic is the change in our attitude to heresy, which no longer goes unpunished either. We have here instances of *the teaching function of law* in its severity, which obviously, it must be pointed out, if one goes further back into history, does not find justification for unlimited and indeed unjust severity thereby. Aquinas argued for death for just heretics, but also murderers, on account of society’s need for protection from the evils they, when living, unstopably cause. He argued this as an instance of *epieicheia*, or the higher justice which knows when to break, in appearance, the moral law, e.g. against killing anyone at all.<sup>16</sup> In the same spirit, and within the same material, he asks “whether war is always a sin”, as, he concedes thereby that it generally is, and replies in the negative, calling those foolish who think otherwise, as indeed, surely, they are.

What was wrong, however, with this whole social and historical situation, thus illustrating its finitude, and hence evil and falsity, was the idea of the identifiable *action*. This is what Hegel’s speculative logic systematically dismantles, as he expresses by claiming that there must be evil in God, citing the figure of Satan, since, as he says, God is no longer infinite if the world, or Satan, or a “fall of man”, constitute a limit to his power and will, as

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<sup>16</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Comm. in II Cor.* c. 11, lect. 1, edn. Marietti, 1929, 490. I refrain commenting on death penalties for heretics, misapplication not affecting the principle itself, here of *epieicheia* as a “higher” justice, of *ius* originally over *lex*, though this leads here and there to the *ius* becoming *lex*, e.g. *lex martialis*, as in the execution of murderers or the preparing and carrying out of war if that should ever become “the order of the day”, as we say, through another’s trespass. Cf. Stephen Theron, “St. Thomas Aquinas and *epieicheia*”, in *Lex et Libertas*, Proceedings of the Fourth Symposium on St. Thomas Aquinas’ Philosophy, Rolduc 1986, Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1987, pp. 171-182.

conscious mover of all things to an unlimited degree, i.e. to no degree at all but absolutely, such that “things” as such evaporate before the Absolute Idea, the divine infinity, unless indeed they are seen *in* the Idea as one of its moments with which, like all the other moments, it is identified in difference. In this sense the Lord *is* in Elijah’s earthquake, is, like love, or beauty, “terrible as an army with banners”, even granted that in himself, in “the self of spirit”, which, it may be, “is not yet there”, he, she or “the Lord”, is rather “the still small voice” of conscience, Newman’s “aboriginal vicar of Christ”, in, rather, the silence and stillness of *thought*.

Hegel is referring here, in the above quotation, to what he calls “actual reality”. It is an error to think, however, that this phrase, as it might appear, signifies what would be for him the final touchstone of truth. It is, rather, the *evil* which, he finds, exists even in God, as the contingent, the spurious, the finite itself as a whole, which he finds, again, to be a necessary moment of spirit, this seen as in its infinite self-consciousness necessarily *resulting from* such evil, whether by logical *method* or, it is the same, as what is represented in human terms, consequent upon an again necessary incarnation (Hegel is, at first sight at least, at one with Scotus rather than Aquinas here), as “a life and death struggle” writ large, so to say. One does not become anything, he says, without “risking one’s life”, a factor, it too, that must find its counterpart in the Absolute Idea, that reality which transcends as including what he here calls the “actual reality” of finitude and/or existence. Note here that finitude and existence are not two separated if related concepts but two moments, rather, as what is the same in its difference. The finite, then, is what is destined to be absorbed, it is nature as a whole, “groaning and travailing” towards that point where God is found to be “all in all”. As he now says here: “Time is just the notion definitely existent”. Time, then, is this evil but necessary incubus from which Absolute Spirit, the good, true and holy God necessarily results by his own initiative and that eternally, in eternal act, transcending time and thus ever new, necessarily results in that if God is a result then he is “his own result”, as it were ever resulting from himself. “Behold I make all things new”, not yesterday, as if already getting old, but always. I quote from what are clearly Hegel’s own main sources, but which, in the Enlightenment climate, which we here transcend without regressing therefrom, he will be the last to mention, viz. the Biblical. This is the prime source of speculative logic as Hegel expounds it. The nearest he comes to acknowledging this is his appeal to those who “used to be called mystics”.

Hence it is that “spirit necessarily appears in time”, in “this empty intuition” of before and after, in logic prior and posterior. It “appears in time so long as it does not grasp its pure notion, i.e. so long as it does not annul

time". This must be taken seriously, despite the jest involved in saying something is temporal only "so long as". Spirit annuls time, despite Findlay's regrettable efforts to conventionalise this scandalous assertion, as he sees it, towards being a mere "philosophical" attitude. "The spiritual man judges all things", inclusive of all things taken together, as is done here.

Time is the pure self in external form, apprehended in intuition, and not grasped and understood by the self, it is the notion apprehended only through intuition. When this notion grasps itself, it supersedes its time character ...

That is, one is "wiser than the aged", even should one be eighty years "old", as men speak. These considerations were virtually ignored by Heidegger and the phenomenologists generally. It is as if they did not know what to do with them, though they have been arrived at here by an unimpeachable logic, which McTaggart will make more explicit in his 1905 "refutation of time" (in the journal *Mind* particularly), over which philosophers are still arguing, those opposing the Hegel-McTaggart view doing so with a particular lameness, however, beginning with G.E. Moore's counter-proof from the assertion that he "went to the pictures yesterday night" (just what is in question) but most noticeable in the case of Geach's reaction to it, motivated, apparently, by his belief that it contradicts the Christian idea of freedom as determinative of salvation. We might as well argue against McTaggart, or Hume, say, from the "fact" that "we" have a legal system. Here, anyhow, Geach uncharacteristically sides with the Jesuits against Thomas Aquinas and his Dominican successors in their controversy (which came, if I may cite this again, to a head in 1607 at the papally summoned discussion *De auxiliis*) as to the divine causality of even or especially our "free" or rational acts and decisions. Geach concludes, pointing to contradictions he claims to find in McTaggart's Hegelian argumentation, that "we had better stay with the common-sense view", presumably motivated as I have suggested.<sup>17</sup> The phrase "common-sense", as signifying a virtue, does not signify philosophically, in Hegel's view, inasmuch as he says this, philosophy, is "not for all men". In the light, however, of his final position concerning the Idea on one side and self-consciousness on the other, which just as self and other are, they too, the same, we may counter-

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<sup>17</sup> P.T. Geach, *Truth, Love and Immortality*, subtitled "An Introduction to McTaggart's Philosophy" Hutchinson of London, 1979, Chapter 7, "Time": but compare Michael Dummett, to whom Geach refers: "A Defence of McTaggart's Proof of the Unreality of Time", *Philosophical Review*, Vol. 69, especially page 497.

assert that it both is and is not for all men, women, children and the aged or mentally infirm (who is not that?), as constituting “the true reason-world”.<sup>18</sup>

Time, in a word, like space in this, belongs to the immediate world of sense-appearance, as the Kantian “*a priori* forms” of understanding, in the sense of an extrinsic determinism. For Hegel, on the other hand, the *a priori* is intrinsic to mind itself, is self-consciousness or ego simply, as “the outside is the inside” or as inside and outside are the same. There *is* nothing outside, in this abstract or “one-sided” sense, to determine it. Once mind awakes from such shadows and dreams they “no longer” have a contrasting and past reality. Appearance is not itself a phenomenon or appearance, not itself the reality with which it is *logically* contrasted, i.e. it cannot be *said* to be that, as does not apply to those pairs in the category of Correlation (*Enc.* 135 f., cp. 45 and 131 and the addition *in toto*). The things which appear in that world are not things at all, the Platonic cave once emerged from does not itself still lie there abandoned. This is the answer to those arguing that we do really seem to see, or even see, what we seem to see (the so-called “success verbs”). One might as well say that one really saw you in a dream of you. But this is not part of the meaning of “having a dream”. Auguries do not augur what they may be taken to represent.

So spirit frees itself from or, rather, “annuls” time, since this, like the world, “is in *esse* and *posse* null” (*Enc.* 50), is appearance, i.e. time, in which it, spirit, as first an appearance, must, logically, first appear. There is not an appearance “of” time; it is the appearance that *is*, conceptually, time. Spirit annuls time in and as grasping “its pure notion”, since “time is the pure self in external form” exclusively or abstractly. There is a parallel with evil in respect of the knowledge of evil, as discussed above. Thus, logically, spirit “supersedes its time character” as grasping *itself*, “comprehended and comprehending” (p. 800) *in one*, a clear variant upon the Pauline “knowing as I am known”, where two identical concepts, unlike twins, are one concept. Identity indeed is a relation *in* logic and only there, is indeed *the* logical relation as opposed to “real” relations. This Scholastic heritage is thus further fulfilled in Hegelian thought. Meanwhile, when spirit becomes “complete within itself” the “not yet”, viz. time, that appearance or dream, “is vanished”. As spiritual men have tried to express it: “With the Lord a day is as a thousand years, a thousand years as a day”, Roman numerological imagination not extending much beyond this *mille* or M, while, as Hegel points out, where not slaves, or where there are no slaves, we are all lords.

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. *Enc.* 82, *Zus.*: “If we consider ... the true reason world, so far from being the exclusive property of philosophy, is the right of every human being ... which would justify man’s ancient title of rational being. ... Thus the reason-world may be equally styled mystical ... merely because it lies beyond the compass of understanding”.

That is why this esoteric doctrine, at first blush, is really the most exoteric of all, in universal invitation or application. Thus, it may seem, I play with Hegel's texts and words since, as he himself says, "the notion is pure play", in the first place of itself and, hence, with itself, a clear reminiscence, again, of a Biblical text with Trinitarian resonance, in *The Proverbs of Solomon*, describing wisdom as, feminine, playing eternally before the throne of Yahweh, the Lord. So spirit

is the development of itself explicitly to what it is inherently and implicitly; and only as this process of reflecting itself into itself is it essentially and in truth spirit. It is inherently the movement which is the process of knowledge - the transforming of that inherent nature into explicitness, of Substance into Subject, of the object of consciousness into the object of self-consciousness, i.e. into an object that is at the same time transcended - in other words, into the notion. This transforming process is a cycle that returns into itself, a cycle that presupposes its beginning, and reaches its beginning only at the end. So far as spirit, then, is of necessity this self-distinction, it appears as a single whole, intuitively apprehended, over against its simple self-consciousness. And since that whole is what is distinguished, it is distinguished into the intuitively apprehended pure notion, Time, and the content, the inherent, implicit, nature. Substance, *qua* subject, involves the necessity, at first an *inner* necessity, to set forth in itself what it inherently is, to show itself to be spirit. The completed expression in objective form is - and is only when completed - at the same time the reflection of substance, the development of it into the self. Consequently, until and unless spirit inherently completes itself, completes itself as a world-spirit, it cannot reach its completion as self-conscious spirit. The content of religion, therefore, expresses earlier in time than (philosophical) science what spirit is: but this science alone is the perfect form in which spirit truly knows itself. (p. 801)

The parenthesis "philosophical" is, again, not in the original. Hegel speaks of Time itself as showing "itself to be spirit". *Only as "a world-spirit" is self-consciousness spiritually complete.* Hence this knowledge is accomplished "as actual History", *that is to say* not, for example, in the mere writing of philosophy (by some individual or other), a point the Marxists grasp in their fashion. History must over-reach, leap over, itself. The final generation, therefore, cannot be simply that, when or, rather, since Time, the "time character", is necessarily here superseded. There is a reversion to "Jewish" apocalyptic, essentially representation, unless spirit, that "single whole", is seen as present in the sense of eternal or logical reality, as it was, idiosyncrasies apart, by McTaggart, thus also interpreting Hegel. As *appearing* in time we, i.e. the spirit, "does not grasp its pure notion" in self-consciousness, a grasping which we only *express*, without fully knowing, in corporate or other "worship", something, be it noted, that Hegel finally

identifies with a perfect development of philosophy or, *equally*, a perfect developmental process of the same. “In my end is my beginning”, as he has said effectively just here.

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Hegel next shows that it is indeed worship that he has been thinking of here. “The religious communion”, as “at the outset the substance of Absolute Spirit”! What a great claim this is! And what is this “outset”? The call of Abraham? The resurrection of Christ? Adam in the garden? Equally, it is surely “our” *beginning to think*, thus ourselves becoming, or begetting, spirit. For this we do not even need to be “religious” in the conventional sense, since thinking is itself religion, *Gottesdienst*, he says, truly enough. It means though that this communion, the final body, is the body of thinkers, the body of thought itself. “Now you are the body of Christ” or, again, “It is where the body is that the eagles will be gathered together” *and conversely*, a Hegelian will want to add. The eagles are one and all *incarnations* or, in the developed philosophy, *in* the incarnate one and conversely, “they in me and I in them”, with which, all the same, each one, *qua* “member” of that “body”, is approximately or in difference identified, the mediator being thus or thereby distinguished from himself.

Thinking, be it noted, is everyone’s property, not least that of small children. Thus the religious communion, he says, in words almost identical with Newman’s,

is the crude form of consciousness all the harsher and more barbaric the deeper is its inner spirit; and its inarticulate self has all the harder task in dealing with its essence, the content of its consciousness alien to itself.

Hegel adds that in effect the communion returns into self-consciousness insofar, only, as it abandons that “alien method” of trying to cancel the “foreignness”, the alien character of scholastic and associated theology in the first place, I judge him to be saying, whether or not he would include Patristic thought generally, which I would rather doubt, unless we take him as throwing in the Bible as well with that, which from a certain point of view one might concede, since it is, and yet is not (cf., on this point, an address given by C.S. Lewis at Oxford as a sermon, “The Weight of Glory”), an “alien method”, like all pedagogy in its beginnings, after all. His whole achievement might thus be seen as an overcoming of the alien method of formal logic by the “at-home-ness” of speculative method and all its manifestations in story, proverb or art and religion in general. For here it, viz. spirit and/or the religious communion as “the substance of Absolute



Spirit”, “turns to itself”, which “means returning into self-consciousness”. This “returning” can be taken either as Protestant prejudice merely or, more probably and worthily, as expressing a constant motion of return in the very movement of spirit itself. So he comes, as was the intention all along, to give the rationale of the modern philosophical movement as he sees it.

I note though, as it were in passing, that there is a double alienness or otherness involved, indeed referred to, here: first, the alienness, to the “natural” consciousness, of the religious impulse as such, as directed to or coming from otherness specifically, the transcendent; second, of the cultural and philosophical method(s) adopted for dealing with or making intelligible the “revelation”, whether to mind by mind or however conceived, of this otherness, destined eventually to be found closer than close (Augustine’s *intimior me mihi*). Note, again, that the first turn to otherness is natural to the self-same, due, as Hegel reasons at length, to the essential character of mind, as not, like nature otherwise, *determinata ad unum*, but, as mind, *ad opposita* in its very self-constitution, the Goethean contrast noted above. This, says Hegel, we know but “forget”.<sup>19</sup> The horror attaching to the first religious manifestations is thus in a measure self-horror, at this so to say inbuilt self-denial, sometimes called “shadow”, as cast by the sun itself in our encounter with it as closer than self, again. The “friendliness” of reality is thus only slowly and with care to be revealed, if so it is.

This returning, *by the religious communion*, he here says, anyhow, to “the actual present”, as it “thus discovers this world in the living present to be its own property”, this is no more nor less than what it *means*, he says, “to supersede that alien method”. There is a whiff, an anticipation here, of Nietzsche’s remark upon how bad it was for the Germans, this foreign method of scholastic learning delivered to them as it were with Christianity in one package. In actual fact a major part was played by the new peoples themselves, in Gaul or Germany, rather than by late Roman conservatives such as Boethius or Cassiodorus, at least in developing the actual method of the schools. No matter! The question would be, does it, did it, mean this? One recognises a still in Hegel’s time and milieu standard Protestant paradigm here. The beginnings of modern science alongside and within Scholastic method, brought out by later scholars, are ignored, perhaps unconsciously. Galileo added his telescope to Copernicus’s speculations, but did not himself invent that instrument. The “turning to the world” is, rather, dateable much earlier, to the reintroduction into the West of Aristotle’s manuscripts, though even saying this is to ignore what there was

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 777 (Baillie): “forgetting the character of thought, where the moments as much *are* as they *are not* – are only the process which is Spirit.”

of “Dark Age” science and that not only in the adjacent and newly emerging Islamic world, with which the Crusaders and others had been making contact since the close of the eleventh century.

Hegel’s point, though, transcends such considerations, when he speaks, in *his* sense, of the rise of modern philosophy in particular as a return to “self-consciousness”. Only in his aesthetics lectures does he go into the somewhat earlier aspects of this return in art and not only science and philosophy, where he has to jump forward abruptly to the 1600s and Descartes, as if he had forgotten his own affinities with Eckhart or, a little later, Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa or Kues, a true Franco-German, these two peoples being originally one, ruled from Aachen or Aix-la-Chappelle, as Hegel will have known. Such self-consciousness, anyhow, he says, as being returned to in this discovery,

has taken the first step to descend from the ideal intelligible world, or rather to quicken the abstract element of the intelligible world with concrete selfhood.

All the themes, superficially contrary to one another, are sounded at once here, but in the recollected person of Descartes, who found “existence in the shape of thought”, thought as existence, as God in fact, he himself, however, being, as it seems here, but a prelude to Spinoza, “the Substance of the Orient”, a clear allusion to Spinoza’s Jewishness, which Hegel will make yet more explicit in the *Encyclopaedia*, under the aspect of something pre-Christian overcome in Leibniz, who, says Hegel, “recoils in horror from this abstract unity, this self-less substantiality”. Well, maybe he did, maintaining “as against it the principle of Individuality”, externalised then *by Spirit* “throughout the whole of existence” into Utility, says Hegel again, as principle of the *Aufklärung*, as Baillie notes here. This individual existence “in the sphere of absolute freedom” (this absoluteness is the “spiritual” element) is taken up by Kant as Individual Will. Thus, in consequence, Spirit “then brings to light the thought that lies in its inmost depths, and expresses essential Reality in the form Ego equals Ego”, the Fichteian standpoint from which, not without enthusiasm, Hegel takes off, historically as he claims.

This “Ego identical with Ego” is, however, the self-reflecting process; for since this identity *qua* absolute negativity is absolute distinction, the self-identity of the Ego stands in contrast to this absolute distinction, which - being pure distinction and at the same time objective to the self that knows itself - has to be expressed as Time. In this way, just as formerly Essential Reality was expressed as unity of thought and *extension*; it would here be interpreted as unity of thought and *time*. But distinction left to itself, unrelenting, unhalting

time, really collapses upon itself; it is the objective quiescence of extension; while this latter is pure identity with self – is Ego. (pp. 802-803, italics original)

Here, I take it, we have Hegel commenting upon Fichte. The text will have been noted and meditated upon, by Heidegger, according to his lights. It is worth recalling that Hegel had wanted to be buried beside Fichte, further testimony to his seeing himself as one in a line of development as much temporal as logical, as his previous long paragraph has made clear. Self-seen as such, he clearly would have expected to have successors developing his thought. Nor does the idea of surrendering an “alien method” contradict the belief, the principle, that a development of Spirit will have been also there at work, as is now more clear to us. Nothing illustrates this better than the clear picture of Hegel as “the new Aristotle”, Aristotle who was referred to for centuries as *the* philosopher.

Pure distinction, then, absolutely contradicts thought, identity, which is the thought of identity, compelling us to express in a doubled successivity just what we are meaning to identify, identity being *the* logical relation, of which difference is merely the negative form. That is, identity is itself absolute distinction, Hegel’s main logical thesis, seen here to have clear Trinitarian roots, whatever was the case with Fichte. Far from being merely formally Christian, there is a depth of faith at work here simply not seen by the average de-Christianised commentator today, since to him it would appear mere foolishness, though it is in fact *the* spiritual viewpoint. Its ancestor is Augustine, in his *De trinitate*, to which Hegel scarcely if at all refers, however.

Once more then, what we have here relates to Hegel’s earlier word on the Ego’s being *nothing but* this bare identity with Ego (p.782). Following Leibniz, he finds that the only true universal is the individual. Just therefore there dies with the individual death of the Mediator, just as, however, with any death, “the abstraction of the Divine Being”, the “simple abstract element of thought” on its own, which is rather, actually, one with existence, as Descartes found, *is* the individual existence. “It is evident that it is this man who thinks” (Aquinas), this man, however, who is *one with* thought. Individual thinking is not abstractly individual, since individuality is itself the very denial of abstraction. Hence thought is “concrete”. As Spirit the self gets, will get, “equal worth and value” with “essential Being”, the Idea. “The death of this pictorial idea” here means the death of the mediator as, until reconciled with all in and by death, “something one-sided”, inasmuch as setting himself apart from or to one side of a Father still for him object (Hegel simply ignores or forgets here Johannine statements, not necessarily spoken by the earthly Christ, such as “I and my father are one”, though one

need not find this improbable). So we have, in the Hegelian sense, “a pictorial idea” and this is what dies, death being otherwise, for Hegel, “the entry into spirit”, i.e. it is not death, death is its picture. Compare the text, otherwise contradictive of the whole story, of the raising of Jairus’s daughter; “She is not dead but asleep”. With this picture, of the death of death, dies “the abstraction of Divine Being” when “not yet affirmed as a self” or, the sense seems to be, as *myself*. This death is felt as bitter, in “unhappy consciousness ... that God Himself is dead”. This expresses “inmost self-knowledge which has simply self for its content”, a return “into the depth of darkness”, knowing *nothing* outside of it. What this is, this feeling, is “the loss of (the) Substance” (my bracketing) as “objective existence over against consciousness” (cp. p.759, “There is something in its object concealed from consciousness” ..., etc.). Yet this pure subjectivity of Substance is “the pure certainty of itself” or of *myself*. This is the “spiritualisation” of being as the Idea (cp. The Greater Logic, final page), whereby “Substance becomes Subject”, thus making the latter the true Substance, we might add. It is “real, simple and universal self-consciousness”, with which all and each are and hence must become identified. We recall here, as never having left it, Augustine saying “There is one closer to me than I am to myself”, since this is the thought that Hegel anyhow simply develops.

This is what we find referred to equally at the end of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*:

The spiritual community, in thus realising itself, falls into disruption ... this realisation is its disappearance ... Yet it is founded eternally ... Spirit lives in it ... how can it be helped? ... This (discordant) note is actually present – recognised by Christians ... That is, when the time for speculative justification is reached then the unity of outer and inner no longer exists in immediate consciousness, reality etc. ... Philosophical knowledge harmonises this discord, it sets itself merely above the *form* of faith ... But insofar as thought begins to place itself in opposition to the concrete, the process of thought then consists in carrying through this opposition until it reaches reconciliation (LPR3 149, stress added).

Here Spirit “brings to light the thought that lies in its utmost depths, and expresses essential Reality in the form Ego equals Ego” (*Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 802). This identity, we found him saying, is clearly absolute negativity, all (else) being put away. It is pictured by John of the Cross as the “dark night of the soul” (which is yet “more lovely than the dawn”, he says), for which philosophical reasons have here been given. It is *absolute* distinction though and not simply from all *else*, since it, the I, is not itself

one among many, not an “it” at all. It is a non-knowing. Just therefore, though, as *pure* distinction “known (as objective) to the self that knows it”. I, the Ego, am in absolute contrast to such absolute distinction, which is and has to be expressed as Time. I, thought, am, though, outside of time, where nothing remains itself nor is recollected in the next ever momentary transformation. Time, Hegel is saying, is simply this plight of the Ego and not some objective feature of a physical universe or, better, this says what the physical universe, nature (treated of in the central part of the *Encyclopaedia*), is and is not. These, though, are the same, so nature retains its surface-being independently of these reflections upon it. So we have now Essential Reality as *unity* of thought and *time*, rather than of thought and extension. Distinction though, or time, “really collapses upon itself”. As Ego it is sublated into thought, itself known non-temporally, necessarily, as evil was earlier overcome, recognised with good, sheerly in the godly knowing of it. For as we know it, if we do, so it is. As spirit, *Geist*, thought has no further judge. Thus, really, there is no “rule of faith” but only, if at all, of the *expression* of it, while faith or spirit sublates, i.e. cancels while preserving the one, any one, supposed to “have” it. Hence the Apostle says “I live yet not I”.

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Ego, then, “is not merely itself, it is identity of self with itself”. In this “complete and immediate unity with self”, no longer therefore, as if it ever were, just one object among objects, but knowing all things *in* such self-knowing, “this Subject is just as much Substance”, i.e. as compared with substance as previously viewed. This identity of self with itself is that of Subject (subjectivity) as such, uniquely rather than “exclusively”, there being then nothing “else” to exclude. It must also be remembered always here that in saying that Subject “is just as much Substance”, inasmuch as here particularly he has just referred in context to Spinoza, Hegel is not envisaging a plurality of substances. Rather, that is precisely what he is excluding, as in all his talk here and elsewhere of abstract individuality. “Every function and ‘moment’ of the notion is itself the whole notion (§160); but the individual or subject is the notion expressly put as a totality” (*Enc.* 163).

Substance by itself alone would be void and empty intuition (*Anschaung*), or the intuition of a content which *qua* specific would have merely a contingent character and would be devoid of necessity. Substance would only stand for the Absolute in so far as Substance was thought of or “intuited” as absolute unity; and all content would, as regards its diversity, have to fall outside the

Substance and be due to reflexion, a process which does not belong to Substance, because Substance would not be Subject, would not be conceived as Spirit, as reflecting about self and as reflecting itself into self. If, nevertheless, a content were to be spoken of, then on the one hand it would only exist in order to be thrown into the empty abyss of the Absolute, while on the other it would be picked up in external fashion from sense perception. Knowledge would appear to have come by things, by what is distinct from knowledge, itself, and to have got at the distinction between the endless variety of things, without any one understanding how or where all this came from. (*Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 803)

The key to this passage, as it seems to me, which our translator marks as comment upon Schelling in particular (though it might well be referred generally back to Spinoza) as standing between Fichte and Hegel, so to say, is in my opinion supremely to be found in the long passage upon Krishna's assertion of his union in identity with all other "things" as cited at the very end, significantly, of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. The theme uniting the two passages is fulfilment of the oracular advice uttered to Socrates, viz. "Know thyself". Then, that is to say, you will know all things, since, as another text has it, "All things are yours".

This Krishna passage tends to be passed over as a mere idiosyncrasy of Hegel's, though in that case it would mar the whole careful construction of that three-part work just mentioned. What this earlier passage here shows is that the later one is put, rather, in illustration of Hegel's most fundamental thesis, that concerning self-consciousness in logical relation, of identity therefore, with the Idea. Insofar as it is Krishna who attains identity with the Idea, a mythological or "ideal" figure, rather than some actual human being, not even the earthly Christ in so far as living his finite and hence crucified life, the example tends to support what I have suggested earlier, namely that the evocation of Absolute Knowledge constituting this final chapter is not put as *of necessity* attained or attainable under temporal conditions. As always, Hegel is concerned to present the divine or absolute viewpoint he sees as proper to philosophy. He thus leaves open, on the surface at least, whether or not actual individuals *as we know them* can or ever do or will attain to this absoluteness. This, it seems to me, was the interpretation of McTaggart, that this state belonged to "heaven", with the rider, however, that we are actually "in heaven" now though without correctly perceiving this truth, which we "shall no sooner know than enjoy" (Hobbes, *Leviathan*<sup>20</sup>). The difference, rather, between McTaggart and Hegel is that

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<sup>20</sup> Peter Geach, I would recall here, and it is my personal testimony from my fortnightly meetings I was privileged to have with him from 1976 to 1979 during

the former has or makes use of no genuine concept of infinity, or else it remains to be shown and could be shown that he does, a possibility that, on the texts available, I by no means feel entitled to discount. For whether McTaggart thus shows that the thesis of God, the Idea, the infinite, infinite self-consciousness, is spurious or whether he has, rather, demonstrated the reality of the infinity that these four labels equally name, while simply discarding the first label, “God”, *qua* label, this would be, indeed is, a dilemma requiring not merely a lengthy unravelling but a far-reaching overhaul of all the terms necessarily involved, rather as is attempted in today’s ecumenical theology and associated disciplines. Alternatively, my own view, it should, by analogy and/or exemplification of Hegel’s presentation of logical development, be shown to be no dilemma at all or, better, spurious as to form, necessary as to content.

So if we return now to the passage just cited from *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trying to see how, for example, the Krishna passage relates to it, as I have suggested, then we may note that Hegel says here that Substance not yet equated with Subject would be either void and empty or intuiting a contingent content devoid of necessity. It would be agreement upon the bare unit of “ultimate reality” concerning which otherwise no one can have any idea as to what it is. All known content would in its diversity “fall outside” Substance, thus become spuriously finite, as “due to reflexion, a process which does not belong to Substance” since it would not be Subject, “would not be conceived as Spirit, as reflecting about self and as reflecting itself into self”. This, thus far, is precisely what corresponds to McTaggart’s later declaring that we simply “misperceive” the reality, in a reflexion of ours “which does not belong to Substance”, accordingly. I add here that if one reads over McTaggart’s account of the “perfect unity”, more so than a merely “organic” unity (*Studies in the Hegelian Cosmology*, 1901, Chapter 2), one cannot affirm with certainty that the unity thus eternal of spirits, being perfect, does not coincide with that unity of Absolute Subjectivity we call God, but as described from the *New Testament* perspective of all being in one another, bearing one another’s burdens, viz. the burden which each *is*. Up to that point where God’s being “all in all”, as St. Paul describes the final moment, can be simultaneously read as bearing two distinct senses of “all” (not specified in the text as such), insofar as God is seen as naming a transcendent reality, on the one hand, as the all that is in all the finite beings, in unresolved paradox or, on the other, as the entirely reciprocal all reducing the proposition “in” to being an approximative picture of a perfect unity of each with all and of all with each, in that very state expressing, declaring

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term-time, was convinced of the probability, at least, that Hobbes was a Socinian Christian.

and being the godhead as having become, viewed from a temporal perspective, that which each, all and everything simply *is*, not as term to a process of thought-assimilation of disparate objects one upon another *ad infinitum*, still less of *temporal* moments, but, as Hegel here indicates, Spirit reflecting about self and as reflecting itself into self. The mutual *knowledge* involved would be the same as, would be the essence of, Spirit itself, ever having the other as other as its own. God himself, in any sense as previously thought, disappears in this conception, this being the essence of Trinity and, in the same movement of thought, Incarnation. They are not two separate and distinct realities. “What is man that thou art mindful of him?” Here we have the answer. By this same process, furthermore, each becomes all, all abstract plurality, as we found with individuality, is absorbed, cancelled and thus fulfilled, in accordance with the outcome of logical method as Hegel has traversed it. “There is one closer to me than I am to myself” or, more simply, closer than me to me, *intimior me mihi* (Augustine: one cannot cite it too often). Nothing less is the perfection of love as enjoined, just as Love (Volition), by the science of Logic, by logical science, is the perfection of Cognition (*Enc.* 225)<sup>21</sup> and is this in the act of transcending it towards the Absolute Idea.

“The end is realised” (Hegel). The logical and hence spiritual realisation this affirmation represents lies, acknowledged or not, in any confident declaration that the future “lies with” some movement, for example Marxist communism, that the speaker identifies with, even if he chooses to speak in terms of “matter”. Only this, i.e. present (in the sense of ever-present) realisation of the end at the conceptual level rather than the historical, removes the glaring contradiction of a final generation enjoying a short-lived paradise prepared for by the toil of previous generations, maybe uncountable. Time is really sublated, superseded, as McTaggart showed, such that we really are becoming what we are, i.e. the sense of “becoming” as a category of Hegel’s logic is a very special sense, the sense of a movement of unmoving, ever restless thought. Movement itself does not move. Thought has no parity or comparability with time, nor does eternity generally have it, therefore. Communism is thus in essence an attempt to recreate the Christian spiritual community as if it were not already with us. It sets itself up as the other of that which yet belongs to it and must be absorbed by it, though this be first understood, by those concerned, as a duty to absorb it rather. Liberation theology was or is an attempt to deal with this problematic. It is called and calls itself to just that. If this is understood then

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. Kant: “Practical reason is nothing but the will”. The two are distinguished, however, by Aquinas in *Summa theol.* Ia-IIae.



liberation theology gets itself absorbed into theology as theology becomes absorbed into philosophy and philosophy into wisdom, *sophia*.

Knowledge then, to answer Hegel's concluding words there (p. 803), knows first of all itself and therein all else. Thinking thinks itself. He continues:

Spirit, however, has shown itself to us to be neither the mere withdrawal of self-consciousness into its pure inwardness, nor the mere absorption of self-consciousness into Substance and the nothingness of its (self-)distinction. Spirit is the movement of the self which empties (externalizes) itself of self and sinks itself within its own substance, and *qua* subject, both has gone out of that substance into itself, making its substance an object and a content, and also supersedes this distinction of objectivity and content. That first reflexion out of immediacy is the subject's process of distinction of itself from its substance, the notion in a process of self-diremption, the going-into-itself and the coming into being of the pure ego. Since this distinction is the pure action of Ego-equals-Ego, the notion is the necessity for and the rising of existence, which has the substance for its essential nature and subsists on its own account. But this subsisting of existence for itself is the notion established in determinate form, and is thereby the notion's own inherent movement – that of descending into the simple substance, which is only subject by being this negativity and going through this process. (pp. 803-4)

Spirit, that is, is not a withdrawal from anything nor a being absorbed, in its self-consciousness, into Substance, as if nothing in its distinction from it. If universality is the principle of personality, the converse also holds. The notion here parts itself from things, as it were violently, or deliberately, and yet necessarily, from nature as from substance, thus becoming its own substance as subject, "pure Ego", already referred to. Thus, viewed from the most basic metaphysical level, in the divine self-knowledge itself lies the necessity for existence, as being coming from the first being, freedom, *in that form*, viz. being now as existence. First, though, it is existence itself which subsists. This is the Anselmian moment. Existence is a perfection, a thought, like any other. It subsists, therefore, "on its own account". Hegel calls this or says that it is "the notion established in determinate form". Existence is the privilege, or doom, of individuals. Thus such coming-to-be, creation, "is the notion's own inherent movement". The notion then did not come to be. Its character as spirit gives rise to existence, inclusive of its own, however. Can this be so thought? It will mean, ultimately, that the divine nature is immediately known just through apprehending the things of sense even, or especially:

For Spirit that knows itself is, just for the reason that it grasps its own notion, immediate identity with itself; and this, in the distinction that it implies, is the certainty of what is immediate or is sense-consciousness – the beginning from which we started. (p. 806)

That is, the world of sense is not wholly other. It is a certain point to be found down the descending scale from actual to potential being, in older terms. It is touched, moulded, by spiritual necessity; it, sense, is *quaedam ratio* and/or *cognitio* (Aquinas). So it is also the point of immediate knowledge, on which everything depends inasmuch as this knowledge is to be revealed, even to itself though, Hegel means, as he elaborates on when speaking of incarnation as the divine's becoming "for the first time" concrete, a saying that is easily misunderstood, or not fully understood. There is no time for absolute self-consciousness, nor a time, therefore, when God was (or is, indifferently) not incarnate. There never was nor is time at all. "Before Abraham was, I am". We forget to realise that it is the incarnate Christ who speaks here, by the intention of the author, and not God or Yahweh as such. It applies, by Hegel's reasoning, to all self-consciousness, to this as such. Regarding Abraham as a Scriptural reference, we also find in *John* that he "rejoiced to see my day". Taken literally Christ is thus put as having begun to be, as if temporally, and yet without end, which, philosophy claims, is but a *picture* of true immortality, which attaches to the "divine idea" of individual persons in every case, *qua* idea, according to Aquinas, identical with the "divine essence" (*Summa theol.* Ia q.15, *passim*), while Hegel's version of this seems yet more uncompromising. The system then is explained by man, as man is best explained by the system. Where is God? Man is God. That is the point. Otherwise there is no incarnation. That alone is why just Christianity is "religion itself" or "the absolute religion", an assertion by Hegel in defiance of Hegel's whole system (religion as absolute would have to be philosophy, the perfect *Gottesdienst*) which yet, as system, depends upon it.

With absolute knowledge, then, spirit has wound up the process of its embodiment, so far as the assumption of those various shapes or modes is affected with the insurmountable distinction which consciousness implies [i.e. the distinction of consciousness from its object or content]. Spirit has attained the pure element of its existence, the notion.

Here we find confirmation of the Idea as true being, as stated at the end of Hegel's greater *Science of Logic* of 1816. He continues:

The content is, in view of the freedom of its own existence, the self that empties (externalises) itself; in other words that content is the *immediate* unity of self-knowledge.

That is, *precisely as* personal, freely self-emptying, it, such a self, is divine and, as Hegel says elsewhere, therefore, “the absolute person”. There is no abstractly “philosophical” in the sense of a non-personal God. Philosophy rather enriches this religious concept, of the divine personality and freedom, in its own perfect *Gottesdienst* or perfect freedom. The text is unambiguous, “immediate” as we might say, the term being here used positively:

The pure process of thus externalizing [in the immediacy of sense] itself constitutes - when we consider this process in its content - the *necessity* of this content.

Without it, that is to say, God would not be or would not have been God. Hence its prophecy was based on an at least intuited necessity, is not merely “miraculous” in the vulgar sense. This seems to follow from Hegel’s analysis. It does not mean, though, that God himself develops. That is the point of the relativizing of time we have noted above. The incarnation cannot be put, then, as essentially some kind of *post hoc* remedy for the in consequence *felix culpa*, however much it might thus accidentally appear to intuition. Or, we cannot speak precisely of a remedy to finitude itself, the very defining feature of which is its intra-Trinitarian destiny of being eternally absorbed into the infinite as, in turn, essentially resulting from it as, no less, from itself. The “diversity of content”, thus seen, Hegel says, seen, that is, as resulting from us or “due to relation”, is a perspectival illusion, since God has no “real relation” to the finite, from which, from the finite, God, just therefore, would result, as God, namely. Thus Hegel adds to Aquinas’s assertion of non-relation that this is the necessary condition for divinity, for the Absolute Idea. In this sense the Christians have not added to the original revelation, upon the face of things, neither to Jewish religiousness nor to “the science of logic”. Hegel speaks here of the content, which he has identified with self and necessity both in one, as “restless activity”, like this his writing, which “consists in cancelling and superseding itself, or is negativity”.

Thus the necessity or diversity, like its free existence, is the self too; and in this self-form, in which existence is immediately thought, the content is a notion.

So although just posited as “non-inherent”, the diversity too is interchangeable with, seeable as, necessity, the necessity, presumably, of

the contingent as such, or *as thought*, to which we have previously referred here. This necessity of the contingent is further developed in Hegel's posthumous *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God* (as considered in our chapter following). Diversity, that is, is a finite category of *our* thought, while, all the same, cancelled though absorbed in "the notion", the Concept or Idea too or especially.

Seeing, then, that Spirit has attained the notion, it unfolds its existence and develops its processes in this ether of its life and is (*Philosophical*) *Science*, "i.e. Absolute or completely coherent Knowledge" (p. 805, the last phrase being the translator's, J.B. Baillie's, explanatory footnote there).

Hegel has also called it "systematic" science and we may profitably, read these last quoted assertions while remaining mindful of the suggestion I noted that such science, as "absolute" knowledge, is properly divine and so not attainable at the finite level. The question whether or not it might be called "ours", at least potentially, is partially a different one.

Malebranche, for example, holds that ideas are only in the divine mind, and thus all perception and cognition of the external world is mediated by God. Thus thinking and perception are only occasions for participation in the ideas in God. (Hans Burkhardt: "Rationalists", from which I quote here, in *Handbook of Metaphysics and Ontology*, ed. B. Smith and H. Burkhardt, 2 vols., *Philosophia Verlag*, Munich, Philadelphia, Vienna, 1991, pp. 755-760).

Hegel, for his part, refers, uniquely, to "the noble Malebranche", upon whom fresh light is maybe here cast, as against the tendency, when teaching undergraduates, to present such early "rationalists" as "quaint" as, in our chronological snobbery, we might jokingly say, Aristotle, as antique as he is not quaint, being for the moment forgotten.

Here, though, Hegel introduces a new moment, bringing out the difference between consciousness and science, the science belonging to and held by the Idea as such. For "the moments of its (Spirit's) process are set forth therein", i.e. in science or knowledge as such, as one with the Idea, that is, "no longer as determinate modes or shapes of consciousness" specifically, a difference we have rather forgotten to note or keep in mind. Consciousness, ours at any rate, remains a moment only of the absolute and the divine to which it attains in union (as also in our phenomenal or finite life our knowing and what we know are distinguishable). On this depends the truth of the divine transcendence, founding all truth, which it itself finally is. They, these moments of process, are set forth, rather (i.e. have what reality they may have), "as determinate notions, and as the organic self-explaining and self-constituted process of these notions". That is, the

process is itself the Concept and the Idea. This latter does not “have” a process. Hence, however, each moment of this process is identical with the whole, which is thus restlessness itself or, in fact, purely “act”, in this purity or absoluteness freed from the inherent imperfection Aristotle finds attaching to finite movement or change (*motus*). So

While in the *Phenomenology of Mind* each moment is the distinction of knowledge and truth, and is the process in which that distinction is cancelled and transcended, Absolute Knowledge does not contain this distinction and supersession of distinction. Rather, since each moment has the form of the notion, it unites the objective form of truth and the knowing self in an immediate unity. (*The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 805)

This “knowing self”, it follows from the argument, is the Idea itself in the first instance, which thus is self and, as such, clearly personal or, as Hegel puts it in one place, to say it again, “the absolute person”, not for the moment bothering to square what he says with the traditional Trinitarian terminology and its “distinctions of love”, as he calls them, confident, doubtless, that he is not and so will not be found to be Sabellian.

Each individual moment does not appear as the process of passing back and forward from consciousness or figurative (imaginative) thought to self-consciousness and conversely; on the contrary, the pure shape, liberated from the condition of being an appearance in mere consciousness – the pure notion with its further development, - depends solely on its pure characteristic nature. Conversely, again, there corresponds in every abstract moment of Absolute Knowledge a mode in which mind as a whole makes its appearance. As the mind that actually exists is not richer than it (Absolute Knowledge), so too mind in its actual content is not poorer. (pp. 805-806)

This was precisely the assertion of the Ontologists deemed by Church authorities, c. 1860, as “not safe for teaching”, viz. that God himself is in the mind as constituting it. Hegel continues:

To know the pure notions of knowledge in the form in which they are modes or shapes of consciousness – this constitutes the aspect of their reality, according to which their essential element, the notion, appearing there in its simple mediating activity as thinking, breaks up and separates the moments of this mediation and exhibits them *to itself* in accordance with their immanent opposition. (p. 806, my stress)

This can also be applied to any thinking, on a grasp of which, in consequence, the genuine notion of God depends, that, namely, it is distinct from consciousness. Thus we find that, after all, Hegel’s account is in line

with the Aristotelian doctrine that there is no empirical nature, to be studied as consciousness by psychology, of the thought process as such, since it would then get in the way of it as “that which appears beside” (*paremphenomenon* in Aristotle’s book on the soul, the best one, as Hegel affirms). Thought, anyhow, that is, is only understood by thought alone, is only self-understood. “The spiritual man judges all things”.

At the same time, as Hegel immediately adds, it is contained within Absolute Knowledge itself that it “necessarily relinquishes itself from the form of the pure notion”. Such Absolute Knowledge, namely, itself “*necessarily involves* the transition of the notion into consciousness” (my stress). This is what I have been calling in effect the Scotist moment of the necessity of incarnation.

For Spirit that knows itself is, just for the reason that it grasps its own notion, immediate identity with itself; and this, in the distinction that it implies, is the certainty of what is immediate *or is sense-consciousness* – the beginning from which we started. This process of releasing itself from the form of its self is the highest freedom and security of its knowledge of itself (p. 806, stress added).

About this there is much to be said. But we will let Hegel speak:

All the same, this relinquishment (externalization) of self is still incomplete. This process expresses the relation of the certainty of itself to the object, an object which, just by being a relation has not yet attained its full freedom. Knowledge is aware not only of itself, but also of the negative of itself, or its limit. Knowing its limit means knowing how to sacrifice itself. This sacrifice is the self-abandonment, in which Spirit sets forth, in the form of free fortuitous happening, its process of becoming Spirit, intuitively apprehending outside it its pure self as Time, and likewise its existence as Space. This last form into which Spirit passes, *Nature*, is its living immediate process of development. Nature - Spirit divested of self (externalized) – is, in its actual existence, nothing but this eternal process of abandoning its (Nature’s) own independent subsistence, and the movement which reinstates Subject.

What “has not yet attained its full freedom” is Nature, “groaning and travailing” (St. Paul), of which, however, Hegel simultaneously says that when Nature is considered conceptually the Concept itself is of its own nature, and just thereby, immanent *in* Nature (*Enc.* 245). One might regard this as Hegel’s commentary upon the text that by the Word (*logos*) “all things were made”, as when, *a fortiori*, he says that “the percipient Idea is Nature”, referring us back to perception as considered at the beginning of the *Phenomenology*, to “sense-perception”, but now as activity (of the Idea).

As immediate, however, the Idea is negation, Spirit is “divested of self” or of personality *just as* externalized. This relation is the whole origin of the idea of Object as against Subject. It is “natural” therefore.

Note here that Hegel speaks of this relation as a relation to what is itself, viz. the object, a relation. In fact, though, the Idea has no relation to anything outside of itself and so this situation Hegel here describes is one expression of this same truth. In other terms, God in relating to us relates exclusively to himself, there being no other. The object is a passing chimaera. For the same reason, or closed set of reasons, Hegel, like Aristotle, passes effortlessly from considerations of our thinking and representations to thought absolutely considered, since in doing so he does not see-saw between two realities, or deceivably play one off against the other, but illustrates rather the identity of thought or of Spirit with itself.

While Spirit is thus certain, Hegel says, this object just as relation “has not attained its full freedom”, which must be, it is clear, the same as a knowing of, being “certain” of, its nothingness as just described, this in turn finding its counterpart or whole explanation, rather, in self-aware knowledge itself *meaning* “knowing how to sacrifice itself”. This is the knowing of limit by knowledge which just as known is surpassed (as we saw in the case of knowledge of evil, actually the *same* case). This freedom, as absolute and infinite, of knowledge is expressible, therefore, as knowledge as such “being aware not only of itself, but also of the negative of itself, or its limit”. This is precisely the divine, knowing good and evil, and it is expressed also and supremely, for Hegel, in incarnation, the very idea thereof. We should not add to this that therefore it had necessarily to occur or some similar phrase without recalling that for Hegelian logic the notion of an event as such is metaphysically transitory. All is as such realised, this being the meaning of “end”, or has resulted from itself alone. This last phrase, however, is not free of a picturing or oblique element as Hegel uses it, albeit brilliantly. What is meant is that the infinite’s necessarily absolute positing is firstly the positing of necessity itself as the correct logical category (to use in explanation of absolute freedom).

In this constitutive self-abandonment self, which is Spirit, sets forth “its process of becoming Spirit”, ever accomplished, apprehending itself, its “pure” self, externally, or outside itself, sacrificed, as Time and, which is really the same, its existence as Space. This is but to say that just in apprehending the spatial and the temporal, all things in effect, we apprehend Spirit, the Idea. Otherwise we “misperceive” them (McTaggart). Nature is thus the last form into which Spirit passes in its process of becoming the Idea. It is just therefore easily confounded with it, its alienation, its quantitateness as lying outside this Idea, the Concept, being then forgotten

or unanalysed. The Idea as *infinite* must thus be kept in the forefront of thought. Nature is precisely “Spirit divested of itself”, “poor stepdame” in the poet’s words, that “cannot slake my drouth” or thirst. Natural desire, for the infinite, is for the most part entirely implicit in Hegel. We may recall it, explicitly, all the same, powerful argument that it is. So, summing up, he says that “Nature ... is, in its actual existence (Spirit divested of itself), nothing but this eternal process of abandoning its (Nature’s) own independent subsistence, and the movement which reinstates Subject”. This may be regarded as Hegel’s distancing himself from the originally naïve apocalyptic view of this process as meta-historical. The movement reinstating subject, as “eternal process”, signifies that Subject is more secure in its absolute state than anything else, there being, once more, nothing else. Knowledge, as eternally of itself alone, as the genuine *pleroma* or fullness, “forbids” it. We turn, finally, to history, the “other aspect ... in which Spirit comes into being” (p. 807).

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Much turns here on the sense of “aspect”, in Hegel’s text simply *Seite*, controlling as it does the sense of “becoming”, *Werden*, as we have discussed it above as a clear *representation*, if taken literally, of spiritual process. My conditional phrase here, incidentally, illustrates that a representation is a form of thought, an idea, though finite maybe, never a word simply or a mere string of words in any particular language, though language as such is particularisation (of thought). Or, we might say, words themselves, auditory or visible or however, are Aristotelian *phantasmata* accompanying thought, on occasion, though for Aristotle there is always, in finite living, some or other such appearance or phantasm, such as we call “things of sense”. Hegel, it seems to me, takes this teaching for granted.

... *History*, is the process of becoming in terms of knowledge, a conscious self-mediating process – Spirit externalized and emptied into Time. But this form of abandonment is, similarly, the emptying of itself by itself; the negative is negative of itself.

The “similarly” here refers to Spirit’s self-emptying as nature rather than history, as discussed at length in Hegel’s (and my) immediately preceding pages. Self-emptying forms the over-arching theme. It takes form as Time. This is what Hegel *means* by “emptied into Time”, this that Spirit undertakes itself *constituting* Time, namely – *der an der Zeit entäußerte Geist*. This deep-lying metaphysical reality has implications, naturally, for what time in itself is, “this form of abandonment” namely. For McTaggart



the upshot of this conception is that time is not, after all, time as we habitually assume it to be, but rather or more like a kind of veil, the “veil of perception” itself (cp. Jonathan Bennett’s use of this phrase in his studies on Kant), substantially what Hegel is saying, in fact. Why the detour, so to say? Hegel argues it is necessary to the Idea in its being as a self-positing as “its own result”, this being in turn, *incidentally* or “consequently” (this includes here the sense of self-consistency, preserved in the Germanic, as in Swedish *konsekvent*), conceptually necessary to the infinite, as Being must in a sense start from as opposed to Non-Being. The sensible world expresses or is the form taken by this divine or absolute logic of “the Concept”. The Concept, we must finally conclude, is itself a representation of the Absolute, this being the only alternative to identifying it *without qualification* with the Absolute, which Hegel expressly rules out. Positing such a difference, anyhow, harmonises with the representation of a *flow* back and forth between concept and representation, misrepresented as a deliberately confusing see-sawing between philosophy and religion, we noted, simply because the two are at bottom one, though “one of its aspects overreaches (*übergreift*) the other, and demotes it to a mere condition of itself” (Findlay, *The Philosophy of Hegel*, Collier Books, New York 1966, p. 65). The same can be applied to time and eternity, or to finite and infinite, not forgetting though, again, that the *absorption*, as distinct from this “flow” of thought or of conditionality, is strictly one-way. “He was in the world and the world was made by him and the world knew him not” Self-consciousness, however, knows the world.

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For these reasons Hegel re-presents, i.e. presents again, History, precisely as this “way of becoming” (*diss Werden*), or says rather that this way itself, as such,

presents a slow procession and succession of spiritual shapes (*Geistern*), a gallery of pictures, each of which is endowed with the entire wealth of Spirit, and moves so slowly just for the reason that the self has to permeate and assimilate all this wealth of its substance.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Baillie, p. 807. Compare pp. 451-453 on “spiritual shapes” or “spiritual reality ... in the first place, for self-consciousness in the shape of a law implicitly existing”, “the pure and absolute will of all” and hence, I interpret, ultimately absolutely personal (Hegel’s “the absolute person”, viz. God, he says). So it is “the universal ego” and “not a command which merely *ought to be*”, i.e. it is *even more unquestionable than that*, for, namely, “it is the universal ego of the category, ego

The *Geister* as processing, then, form as much a “gallery of *pictures*” as they may be persons in their own right, so to say. We have again the question, what is or was the individual? Yet that he or she is other than the role played in his or her history, temporal or “here on earth”, as we also say, is little more than a truism of ethical thought, Hegel bringing out the underlying consequences thereof, that we “have that within which passeth seeming” (Hamlet in *Hamlet*). The suggestion is, it is asserted rather, that each shape fully or entirely expresses the Idea, just as earlier he had said that Absolute Knowledge transcends “distinction and supersession of distinction” (p.805). The identity works, again, in both directions, there being therefore no “see-sawing” or back and forth. One might ask, all the same, in comparison with what other movement is such becoming judged “slow”? Since the question seems unanswerable it might be more correct to take it that the contrasted state is that in which the process is viewed instantly or as a whole, as a gallery, Hegel’s own figure here, indeed might be so viewed. By comparison with this, then, it, history, now revealed as time itself, is movement itself, time again, which is as such “slow”, a “petty pace” (*Macbeth*), “parts outside parts”, like space in that, the accomplishing he mentions requiring patience, even though *actually* all, as itself the End, is “accomplished” or “realised” (cp. *Enc.* 212 and *Zus.*). Anyhow, as with space one never reaches the end, even the present rolling away as one comes up to it, as arriving at a supposed end of space would necessarily disclose a further, equally petty or monotonous vista.

Since its accomplishment consists in Spirit knowing what it is, in fully comprehending its substance, this knowledge means its concentrating itself on itself (*Insichgehen*), a state in which Spirit leaves its external existence behind and gives its embodiment over to Recollection (*Erinnerung*).

It “leaves its external existence behind”. History leaves itself behind, leads us on conceptually here too, that is to say. Or, in pursuing the trajectory of *The Phenomenology of Mind* as preparatory to or clearing the way for *The Science of Logic* this science has already to be employed in its fullness, nonetheless. Here, though, is recalled, implicitly, what was said above, namely that Nature and History are two “aspects” of Spirit’s coming into being (*Werden*) as “leaving its external existence behind” teleologically, the nexus being Life, which has thus been grasped as emerging from non-life,

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which is immediately reality, and the world is only this reality”. Could Hegel be more clear? There is clear kinship with Hobbes’s account of “natural law” here (*Leviathan* I, 15; cp. II, 31).

according to Hegel's *Logic*, so as to finally supersede "external existence" altogether. Thus it is that living creatures each and all consume their environment and would, Hegel says, eat up the whole world (and one another) if they got the chance. This, we may take it, is his rationale of eating as such. To such boundless appetite in *phenomena*, culminating though in that of the knowing *ego*, corresponds the identity, in "systematic science", of each moment with the Idea. Thus Spirit finally assimilates, in and as knowing it, its own substance as therein and thereby becoming it, a process in which evil ceases, *as known*, to be evil, having been "a sham-being" all along, "the absolute sham-existence of negativity in itself" (*Enc.* 35 add.), in the unreality of Time. This is why, as Aristotle said (*Metaph.* 1071b, as supplied by Baillie here), time, like nature's movement in general, "can neither come into being, nor cease to be", since it itself has no being, is not. Being, however, is the Idea: *das einfache Sein, zu dem sich die Idee bestimmt, ... ist der in seine Bestimmung bei sich selbst bleibende Begriff* (*Wissenschaft der Logik* II, Suhrkamp, *Werke* 6, p. 573), is Spirit as self-knowing.

Recollection, then, is the embodiment of the external *within us*. Recollecting the intuition, of Intelligent Perception, it "places the content of feeling in its own inwardness – in a space and time of its own" (*Enc.* 452), which clearly, however, are not space and time. The intuition is "received into the universality of the ego". Intelligence itself is "its when and where". "But intelligence is no longer consciousness and actual existence ... The image when thus kept in mind is no longer existent, but *stored up out of consciousness*" (emphasis added). So we have to "grasp intelligence as this night-like mine or pit in which is stored a world of infinitely many images and representations, yet without being in consciousness"<sup>23</sup>. A potentiality such as this "is the first form of universality offered in mental *representation*" (*Enc.* 453). Here one can observe, again, the flow, in Hegel between concepts and representations, what he calls elsewhere, echoing Aristotle on *phantasmata* to a large extent, "the necessity of the absolute picture-idea", as, of course, of picture-ideas, representations, ultimately analogies, though Hegel avoids this term in general, since these lie at the base of all language. However, it is the business of thought to separate itself from these, to "battle against the bewitchment of intelligence by language" (Wittgenstein, identifying the essence of philosophy).

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<sup>23</sup> For commentary on this passage from *Enc.* III cf. Jacques Derrida: "Speech and Writing according to Hegel", in *G.W.F. Hegel, Critical Assessments*, ed. Stern, Routledge 1993. This is a reprint, with altered title, of "The Pit and the Pyramid; Introduction to Hegel's Semiology" (transl. Bass), from *Margins of Philosophy*, 1972. It can also be read in *Philosophy Today*, the annual volume for 1985.

In thus concentrating itself on itself, Spirit is engulfed in the night of its own self-consciousness; its vanished existence, however, is conserved therein; and this superseded existence – the previous state, but born anew from the womb of knowledge – is the new stage of existence, a new world, and a new embodiment or mode of Spirit ... But re-collection (*Erinnerung*) has conserved that experience, and is the inner being, and, in fact, the higher form of the substance. (*Phenomenology of Mind*, pp. 807-808)

We might well want to say, for clarity, that the two uses of “existence” here are analogous, that Hegel is not here simply comparing one moment of phenomenal time with the next. Rather, one passes, in knowledge, where “Spirit comes into being”, to “the higher form of the substance”, substance, that is, of the Idea or of “everything”, as we would colloquially say.

We might seem to have forgotten history as the topic or theme here. Not so, however; history *is* this supersession of existence towards, not just its own next moment, but towards full self-knowledge, of itself as Spirit, its prime or final aspect, of, and it is indeed the same, Spirit’s own “engulfment”, once again, “in the night of its own self-consciousness”. Its vanishing though is one with its being born anew, not to soulless repetition, but to a new “mode” of Spirit, the true or absolute mode, say divine. “My night shall be my day”, as the Psalm says and as was ever the promise of Objectivity, born now as full Subjectivity and, what is more, born eternally as its own result, the process which history, its process, never did or does more than mirror. In the Latin such *processio*, the Trinitarian above all, is distinguished verbally from mere *processus*. Hegel’s thought has picked up this historic awareness, using another vocabulary, that of mind ever-fresh. Its natural destiny, therefore, was to be abused in the next generation by the second-raters, “all honourable men” (cf. *Julius Caesar*, Mark Antony’s speech) no doubt, surrounding him. It is now up to us third-raters to restore and perhaps even magnify the original harmony, an opportunity that Nietzsche in the end missed, his sufferings being the noblest and greatest thing about him. We though, who laugh as we write, are but the froth on history’s mighty waves, breaking upon the eternal shore where the children too, our angels, play. Yes, no wave but it breaks, killed and killing for the sport of gods and angels.

On this view of history, it will be noted, the good news has ever been proclaimed. Mind itself is incarnated in Plato as much, equally, as there or here, as is indeed the deepest teaching of the spiritual community. “O clouds unfold”, while we meanwhile get on with our “mental fight”.

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So Spirit “concentrates itself on itself”. The religious imagination has often imposed upon itself this picture as if of God “before the creation”, though Hegel himself has used this latter expression to characterise the limitation, if any, of his Logic. It is, however, an eternal concentration which, as infinite, *includes* creation and all possible creation, by necessity not of compulsion (the false criticism often made of Leibniz) but, as we might say, of “realised end”. On this distinction without the concept of necessity, as between that of compulsion and that of end, we might compare Aquinas distinguishing the necessity of moral obligation as that which obtains “when someone cannot obtain the end of virtue (sc. happiness, blessedness) unless he does this” (*Summa theol.* IIa-IIae 58, 3 *ad* 2). In Hegel the two senses converge or, rather, the sense of compulsion is subsumed (*aufgehoben*) into the teleological necessity of the end, the end namely as actually and eternally or in itself realised as its own result, creation as culminating in incarnation, pictured in religion as a second or “new” creation, consequent upon a “fall”, of man from some supposedly original intention. This picture makes God decidedly finite, which is impossible just as a conception, yet it serves as propaedeutic to a sound theology building upon it, the so-called development of doctrine.

In every generation, every moment *therefore*, Spirit begins afresh necessarily as in itself ever new, assimilating to itself, in one conceptual instant or moment, its own being and creation (inclusive of the so-called “redemption”) in eternally active self-knowledge, never resting, as Hegel in consequence emphasises. This is the alternative “picture”, thus far, of what is more usually called eternal rest, a picture long ago exposed, however, by the doctrine, not now as a picture, of the eternal proceeding “in act” of the Word or “Son”. Is not “word”, however, anything more than an alternative picture or representation, of, say, self as known (by self), the knowledge here necessarily becoming what we can only call practical or, hence, *generative*? This, as Trinitarian truth, begins to become visible even when philosophy, in the person of Aristotle as in earlier times called *the* philosopher, declared that that against which praxis is usually distinguished, *theoria* as meaning contemplation or study (*studium*, a term including, when not artificially distinguished therefrom, the meaning of “zeal”), is actually “the highest praxis” or what has recently been called, but with varying differentiation, “practical truth”<sup>24</sup>.

Thus, “son” or daughter? Taken thus, of course, this is certainly a picture. But need it be thus taken? Wisdom, indeed, as Spirit proceeding, becomes seen as the Trinitarian *third* person, by appropriation, of the Old Testament

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. the body of work by the late Fernando Inciarte on this topic.

texts, at least or, more exactly, by their application to the later as we now say “Pentecostal” manifestation of Spirit as “sent” by divine “mission”, the term used by Aquinas in contradistinction from the divine processions<sup>25</sup>. Such wisdom was generally represented, in the texts, as feminine, though this difference was not at first carried over to the Christian experience of “the Holy Spirit”. Femininity was rather applied to the Church, the spiritual community as *locus* of spirit and spirit’s activity, though under the new picture now of “bride”. As the “*new creation*” she might well be assimilated to the *processio externa* as the original creation is put as being, in Patristic discourse or by Thomas Aquinas and those succeeding. One of Hegel’s achievements has been, we have just noted, the dialectical overcoming of this contrast, of internal and external, after having seen that it was all the time implicit, the *exitus* being always *for* the *reditus*, to the extent of a coming down from heaven without leaving it. Simultaneously, though, on this iconology, these pictures are pictures of higher pictures which are pictures of nothing but themselves, as St. Paul spoke of the Father “from whom all fatherhood in heaven and earth is named”. That is, picturehood is taken from creation as such, taken *away* from it indeed (this is the significance of Art’s being a “form of Absolute Spirit”), since it is conceptually *prior* to it and is not a particular imperfection *within* creation. Thus *proof* itself, of God in particular, is regarded by Hegel as something of a picture in its notion (see our chapter following here on Hegel’s lectures on such proofs as in preparation before his death of this topic). The imperfection of the religious form, therefore, does not lie here precisely, in picturing just as such, or, we might rather say, it says these things itself *as it passes over* into philosophy (as creation passes over into the Idea, into God), the sole business of which is “religion and nothing but religion”, Hegel states, speaking also of “the necessary picture-idea”, in harmony again with Aristotle here. But whereas Aristotle refers this rather to our own constitution, to “the soul” and its dependence upon *phantasmata*, Hegel sees it rather, again, as a necessity in itself, although, it is important to see, these two “aspects”, of subject and object now, again, are more identical than simply mutually implicative, a reflection applicable to Aristotelian thought itself in relation to the Hegelian. The realm of pictures is in fact that of sense-cognition, which is seen metaphysically by both thinkers, along with the conceptual birth of space and time, as necessary even in their being

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<sup>25</sup> As such it, or “the divine missions”, forms the subject of the final *quaestio* of his treatise on the Trinity in the *Summa theologiae*, treating of external in separation from internal procession, a distinction later shown by Hegel to be abstract and hence purely “momentary” to the general process constituting absolute self-knowledge, called indeed divine.

called (by Hegel) nature's free going forth. Sense, that is, corresponds to immediate perception in all possible worlds, in logic or, rather, logically. This, though, explains the presence of the category of *life*, for Hegel, in the science of logic itself. Put differently, time is *the* image of eternity, as motion, finally, is that of rest. Picture and image, it should be clear, are one concept. This is the sense, often objected to by mathematically minded philosophers and, on the other hand, misunderstood by Lockean empiricists and friends of "representative perception" in general, of the originally Aristotelian phrase, *nihil in intellectu nisi prius in sensu*.

Such beginning again, anyhow, as constitutive return upon self, upon one's beginning, e.g. in sense-knowledge, *conversio ad phantasmata*, is the obverse of Recollection as we have discussed it above, conserving previous experience as being "the inner being" and "higher form of substance". The two taken together, however, so to say speculatively, give the rationale of the principle, as doctrine, of necessary progress, essential to Hegel's philosophy of Realised End as much as to any other aspect of it. Compare here *Enc.* 549, where Hegel replies to the charge of *a priori* history-writing by invoking "the plan of Providence", theologian as he is and remains. Universal history (his phrase) "is founded on an essential and actual aim, which actually *is and will be* realised in it" (stress added). For all this, along with the doctrine of (divine) Providence, is but to say that "there is reason in history", a conception not found in Aristotle as such, since, for one thing at least, he denied, it can at least seem, the logical possibility of a *particular* providence. Hegel appears to do this when discussing swarms of midges, than which, or than sparrows even, we "rational creatures" (Kant) are posited as each of "more value" (in the Gospel), i.e. the limitation should be seen, rather, as *pro parte objecti*, also in Aristotle's case most probably. Individuals are not as such worthy of absolute attention, it might be or have been thought, since not abstractly just individuals while certainly, for Hegel, such a particular providence, like that towards the individual nations as he says here, would not be an abstractly separate or separable attribute from providence in general, nor the latter from "absolute knowledge" itself. Thus each of the "national minds... is appointed to occupy only one grade, and accomplish one task in the whole deed". There is no grade apart from the whole "scale". More generally, the part is the whole as negating the part (*Enc.* 135). God provides for me *in* providing for all, it must be affirmed, even while, at the same time or *in the same thought*, we must affirm, if God is God, that he sacrifices himself wholly and entirely for each one individually, is, again, identical with each and all of his own (divine) ideas, of which I am one or one is of me. Which? Are they alternatives, even? The "for me" stands, in either case, confirmed and strengthened by logical

requirement spelled out, as has always been the motor of Christian or allied meditation in “recollection”.

Philosophy shows, will show, providence to be necessary. The judge’s partiality for justice is not a *subjective* partiality, Hegel adds here, but what a judge, here reason, *is*, after all. Even children expect a *motif* to their stories, he adds, as if indifferent to mockery here. The “sympathy with truth”, that is, is not a partiality. Reason is in history. This plausible “faith” is also “a cognition of philosophy”. “The only truth for the mind”, however, “is the substantial and underlying essence, and not the trivialities of external existence and contingency”. This is almost Hegel’s most constant and consistent theme.

It is perhaps not so easy to square these clear statements, from “The Philosophy of Spirit” (*Enc. III*), with the final page of Hegel’s earlier work, as we here attempt. That should not deter us, however, from what is more of a necessity than merely an attempt. As Findlay remarks, “These final paragraphs of *The Phenomenology* show us how clear was Hegel’s plan for his whole system at the time when the *Phenomenology* was written: they also show how clear was his notion of the relation of the *Phenomenology* to that system” (Findlay, *op. cit.* pp. 146-147).

I note in conclusion all the same, as it should be noted, that the long final paragraph to this work of Hegel’s develops quite naturally into an *angelology* as is figured in the final citation from Schiller as to how “this realm of spirits” is God’s “own infinitude” pouring forth, the phrase “realm of spirits” appearing already higher up on the page, not simply as quoted poetry but as explaining what develops in thought, no less. The spirits are thoughts, ideas, which is why, earlier, their multiplication was said to be indifferent, it being “matter of indifference to co-ordinate a multiplicity of other shapes and forms” (“The angelic hosts”, as Baillie notes, interprets rather, there) “with the simple thought of otherness in the Being of the Eternal, and transfer to them that condition of self-concentration” (pp.771-2). Compare also this passage:

The distinction, then, of self-consciousness from the essential nature (*Wesen*) is completely transparent. Because of this the distinctions found within that nature itself are not accidental characteristics. On the contrary, because of the unity of the essence with self-consciousness (from which alone discordance, incongruity, might have come), they are articulated groups (*Massen*) of the unity permeated by its own life, unsundered spirits transparent to themselves, stainless forms and shapes of heaven, that preserve amidst their differences the untarnished innocence and concord of their essential nature. (p. 452)



They are groups, but is that a good translation of “unsundered”, which recalls rather the Marxist *Massen*, obliterating folk-distinctions? The angels, that is, hosts of them, are not “sundered” but “of the unity”, “forms and shapes of heaven”. But what else are we, as seen by McTaggart, for example, not to mention Hegel? We might here recall Aquinas’s conclusion or doctrine that each angel is, must be, a species, viz. a universal, and what is that but a thought? The tradition, as constant, is the tradition of dialectic itself, that there is not “aught but a white celestial thought” to “fancy” as its thinking only itself. Such might be these “hosts”, even in Aquinas if they are each species, universals. *That*, if differently, yet the same in its difference, is Hegel’s discovery, while dialectic is superior to being in the same way as artistic beauty is superior in spirit, he claims, to that of nature, upon which, all the same, the being, again, of these things depends, upon being itself, namely, which, at the end of the logic he makes finally identical with the Absolute Idea and conversely. This is the absolute of what is at once negative and positive theology, at once affirmation and denial of “the creation”. “This also is thou”, it really is, “neither is this thou”. Materialist or spiritual, atheist or theist, *ce n’est pas le guerre*, since, precisely, the former alternative is in each case included in the latter. “This also is thou, neither is this thou”. Here, indeed, opinion is overthrown.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# HEGEL ON THE NATURE OF PROOF AND ON THE ALLEGED PROOFS OF GOD

FIRST LECTURE TO NINTH LECTURE. “The Nature of Proof”: this is the title of the first lecture of Hegel’s posthumous *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God*<sup>1</sup>, with which this section will be mainly occupied. On this his topic he declares that “what is logical ... occupies the very centre point of the content”, I stress. Logic’s role, that is, is not merely “formal”. On a level with this, as it seems, he speaks of, and says he will speak of, “the human Spirit ... as divine in itself”, this same Spirit, he stresses, that “had been poured out ... into all truth”. With this in mind he will not “reduce” such truths “to the minimum of their most primitive form”, a tendency he had long ago reprobated in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (chapter VII).

He here first refers to “the great theologian Anselm”, for whom “the teachings of positive religion are above but not against reason”, i.e. they could not be that. Although this view differs from “that first confidence of reason” to prove “the highest mysteries ... such as the Trinity and the incarnation of Christ” it is not “timid”, he says, as is the view of reason as ancillary to, as the *ancilla* (handmaid) literally, of faith, which is rather put as itself rational and the acme thereof. He refers or seems to refer here to a view of reason as in itself finite and hence as being itself not entirely rational, but without specifying who if any may have held this view. His own, we have found, is rather that the ancillary character of reason, to one educated in faith, rather falls away with reason’s developing insight, leaving undecided whether faith as a virtue reaches thus its maximum fulfilment or is transcended, this ambiguity remaining with the term *aufgehoben* itself, as it does, however, in the celebrated text of *I Corinthians* 13, of which Hegel might be thinking, where faith and hope belong to that childhood (this is St. Paul’s figure of comparison here) which is this life, whereas charity, love, “never fails”. The state of heaven or of eternity thus finally corresponds to

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<sup>1</sup> Hereafter referred to as “LPEG”.

Hegel's view of the perfection of a self-consciousness developing nonetheless with time, as we see it at least. For McTaggart, indeed, this implied being unknowingly in heaven (as what self-consciousness was a becoming conscious of, namely), something which, again, the Christian is required to believe with respect to the indwelling Christ, after baptism or reception of "communion", viz. that he must be in heaven, "sitting with Christ in the heavenly places", without knowing or, probably, feeling it. In this connection the Apostle, again, speaks of "the foolishness of God" as wiser than human wisdom, a foolishness inverting everything, a picture abstractly distorted, Hegel thinks, by those in his time speaking of "the reason being led captive", as more generally by terms such as reason and faith being "only too frequently subjected to an arbitrary use" (*Enc.* 63). This criticism forms part of his careful distinction of Jacobi's view as virtually counterfeiting his own, though Hegel nonetheless rejects this "philosophic faith" as "the sapless abstract of immediate knowledge" which "ought never to be confused or identified with the spiritual fulness of Christian faith, whether we look at that faith in the heart of the believer and the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit or in the system of theological doctrine". Here he refers also to "the authority of the Church" as "comprised" in "Christian faith" as "a copious body of objective truth, a system of knowledge and doctrine", whether, as he does not say here, understood in its first *representation*, as the "milk" given to "babies in Christ" or finally interpreted in the fulness of its spiritual "meat", to cite St. Paul's figure, again.

Faith and thought, that is, as Hegel goes on here in this first Lecture, contain one another necessarily, with Spirit as "the concrete element". Nowadays, he claims, there is an assumption of "an actually existent union of faith and thought ... thought has escaped from its absorption in faith". This process took fifteen hundred years or more, he says, while seeming to reserve his own judgment, in some measure at least. Our reference to *Enc.* 63, above, is relevant here.

All is not well, however, for "faith too, now anyhow, adopts an independence, free from thought". Yet, or hence, "the knowledge of God is made dependent on the question as to the nature of knowledge in general", as raised principally by Kant. Yet this "desire to know knowledge", as it were first, "is inherently absurd", proceeding from "an unjustifiable assumption of the Understanding merely" - he leaves it to us for the moment to formulate this assumption. Real knowledge, anyhow, "must be immanent in the object, the proper movement of its nature, *only* expressed in the form of thought", which thus, as to form, *becomes* the object, the classic view, whereby the form of thought is finally the "form of forms", while thought,

ultimately the Idea, is “the true being”. This, he seems to say, and not Kant’s way, is how to approach epistemology, distinguishing “real knowledge”, “immanent in the object”, from its expression. It is, in later terms, a matter of whether *logic* is concerned with notions or words (expressions). Note the profundity of this, right or wrong: knowledge is “the proper movement of the object’s nature”, proper there as only expressed here in this “form of thought”, thought-forms again being distinguished, as along with words, from thought as such, the notion or Concept, which, as he finally says, again (*Science of Logic*, end-page), is “the true being”.

Now, anyhow, “*the proofs* ... ought to comprise the elevation of the human spirit to God”, while “the elevation itself (i.e. generally, he seems to mean) is ... of thought and into the kingdom of thought”. Hegel adds here, relating thought to idea, that “what is felt, the content - feeling, sensation ... is also in the form of an idea” (cf. *Enc* 159). To think God, it is already implied, is to think that thought is “the true Being”, is to reverse consciousness towards what he calls “self-consciousness”. If this is the outcome of all we have written above here in this book it is also, and more fundamentally of course, the final outcome of Hegel’s mind as embodied in these in part unedited since posthumous *Lectures* here.

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“This elevation”, as necessary to mind, is “what we call proof” – “it proves itself in itself”. Implied here is a coincidence of proof and prayer as thus defined, an indication of what is to come in this text. Proof as such is not usually declared allied to elevation, still less perhaps to God, as term of elevation, however. It might seem a noble thought. Or, the elevation, as proving itself to itself - this certainly can seem true of elevation - is but a species of proof, which is already a substantial claim. What elevates us is, must be, true, namely. We might seem to require rather a further species of elevation as candidate for proof, rather than saying that elevation, blankly, is itself but a species of proof, not what Hegel says after all. Proof, he here repeats, is “only the consciousness of the proper movement of the object”, i.e. it is not much. For this movement, he had said above, is “only expressed in the form of thought”. That is, again, it is only as such that it is an object at all. Absolute Idealism is not so much just taken for granted here as hammered home at every opportunity. So here it is not even asserted; it simply follows immediately from the intentionality of objects of thought, that, namely, they are thought about and do not otherwise exist. Berkeley had claimed no less, but wrongly, Hegel thinks, placing limits on God’s intentions, such that they stop where ours begin. In Hegel one absorbs the

other and this not indifferently, God rather being “all in all”, awareness of his living in the soul being the way in which the soul lives in God. (cf. J.-P. de Caussade SJ, *Self-Abandonment to Divine Providence*).

Such proof though, Hegel now adds, “is not a passive and external object, but really a subjective movement, the elevation of the Spirit to God ... has in it that necessary procedure which constitutes proof”. If I knowingly raise my mind to God in prayer I thereby prove God’s reality, the thought seems to be, since it is “necessary procedure”, something not further clarified here. In several places, one recalls, Hegel attacks explanation as a bogus procedure, i.e. it explains and can explain nothing. But what is the alternative? It is that movement of necessity, namely, that constitutes logical process and which takes place of itself or rather posits itself in priority to movement.

Here he mentions, but as if in passing merely, the “rules of inference”. They “have a kind of foundation which is of the nature of mathematical calculation”, not generally a plus point with Hegel. Thus he refers to syllogisms of greater and smaller, as of all and some and similar, though one may be fairly sure he would not have accepted the Venn diagrams as in any way conceptual.

Hegel further mentions “The essential element in every idea of God, that He is himself the mediation of Himself with Himself”, not “merely as the Creator”. This, that is to say, is not essential. Why not? Hegel’s answer is that it is itself contained in as actually enacting this mediation, “of Himself with Himself”. It is not even, as it were, something additional. If God creates, namely, he does it necessarily or as what He is. This is in fact basic Thomism, though Thomas might seem to backtrack a little from it, as discussed in his “Treatise on the Trinity”<sup>2</sup>, when he comes to Question 44 of the *Summa*’s First Part, where he introduces the human property of a capacity for laughter which is *proprium* but not *necessarium*. This is in fact a “natural” or phenomenal observation which can have no analogue in God, as if, say, God naturally always creates but without necessarily always doing so. The divine necessity, which is necessity as such, necessarily, is not on all fours with those natural necessities, as St. Thomas interprets them, once posited, of angels, human souls or prime matter. That is, the distinction would always be on the part of the object merely, as when we might say, it would be proper to God, but not necessary, to have the sun shine all day today here. Hegel defends, rather, that whatever happens is eternally decreed, not as decreed “already” however, this being a temporal term, as in the idea of *predestination*. Directly in God, indeed, there is no

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<sup>2</sup> In *Summa theologiae*, Ia.

“destination”, no destiny, at all, since the End is as such realised<sup>3</sup>. This can be affirmed without falling in with the Calvinist denial, if I understand rightly, that Christ died for every human being, even for those, if any, whom he knew and indeed decreed would reject him, as he knew he would “harden Pharaoh’s heart”. I do not know if an argument for universalism can be made out of this, or out of the authoritative statement that “God wills that all men shall be saved”. If it can the Lady Julian of Norwich had not heard of it and did not consider it her business, declaring merely, as interpreting faith, that “all shall be well and”, even or especially, “all manner of thing”. Thus Judas, declared St. Peter, “went to the place appointed for him”, wherever that was, just as was ever the case with the unbaptised infants, in the now officially discarded Limbo (not just *a* limbo, as we speak), or wherever. Nonetheless, as I am told, for the Ethiopian Church Judas is a declared saint. It is thus absurd to let these things be constraints upon thought, the spirit searching out all things, rather. Christ’s death, anyhow, can be for everyone but, emphatically, without forcing anyone, since, anyhow, the appointing of a place forces the will of its object no more than does the general “pre-motion” of the created free will insisted on whether in Augustinianism or in Thomism. Hegel’s fusing of freedom with necessity or conversely in his system is in full accord with this view, demonstrating its rationality indeed.

“He, even as he is in and for himself, relates himself, as it were, to the Other of Himself, called the Son”, and Hegel refers here to “immediacy in knowledge, which is faith”, as mentioned above here, as that “its nerve ... lies in certainty” of spirit, namely, as distinguished from a kind of certainty “against the spirit” which Hegel mentions elsewhere<sup>4</sup> as a dogmatic resistance against spiritual or mystical interpretation. So he also, as in explanation, states that “the form of feeling” is “closely related to faith”, is “the forcing back of consciousness into itself” and by, through or of itself, I take him as meaning. It is just thereby that it is “developing” the content (by adjustment of the form). In general, “Religion must be felt” in inwardness.

There is an identification here (*LPEG*, p. 21) of faith as inwardness, namely, with all that Hegel writes about idealist philosophy as issuing from and in consciousness become “self-consciousness”, which he yet identifies with “the standpoint of science”, as he identifies the Idea, active, with “method”. Here the reason, as religious, is not “made captive” but itself captures science and method in the name of faith as “overcoming the

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<sup>3</sup> Hegel, *Enc.* 212, *Zus.*

<sup>4</sup> The third Preface to the *Encyclopaedia* of 1830. Cf. Wood & Coyle, “Must Catholics Hate Hegel”, cited above. at <http://churchlife.nd.edu/2018/06/08/must-catholics-hate-hegel/>

world”, precisely the standpoint of Thomas Aquinas, as of the (intellectual) virtue of wisdom, with which here Hegel *identifies* love and “feeling” (*Enc.* 159). So “if music be the food of love, play on”! “The notion is pure play!” *Homo ludens*. Or what image is more playful and relaxed than that of Christ, object of faith, in the Gospels, in the midst of the most heroic of actions. “Call for me tomorrow and you will find me a grave man”, echoes Shakespeare’s himself almost archetypal funny man, though plausibly in just that line of descent.

If I have religion only as idea, faith takes the form of certainty about these ideas; its content is before me, it is still an object over against me, it is not yet identical with me as simple self, I am not so penetrated through and through with it that it constitutes my qualitative, determinative character. The very inmost unity of the content of faith with me is requisite in order that I may have quality or substance, its substance. It thus becomes my feeling. As against religion Man must hold nothing in reserve for himself, for it is the innermost region of truth. Religion must therefore possess not only this as yet abstract “I”, which even as faith is yet knowledge, but the concrete “I” in its simple personality, comprehending the whole of it in himself. Feeling is this inwardness which is not separated in itself. (*LPEG*. p.21)

Religion is “the Thing or true fact which develops itself to a kingdom of truths and laws, as well as to a kingdom of their knowledge and their final ground, God.” All this is the answer to “the beautiful soul”. “A one-sided relation, however, is not a relation at all” (30), in the sense that we who are thus related, taken in ourselves only, or abstractly, are nothing, are not God. Or God “would be something posited” only, as by us. But Hegel rejects this, that “God exists in religion only”. Yet “God is for us”. “The Spirit of God in man is what (alone) knows God” (31), to use “the speculative expression”. For this notion (God) “has no real truth apart from ‘Being’ (if it must thus be necessarily thought)”. That is, the notion should not “be regarded as true in itself” (39), i.e. without regard to Being. This is “opposed to the idea that the notion should be regarded as true in itself, and as something the existence of which must be assumed, to begin with, and then established”. One has the feeling that Hegel is, awkwardly, breaking new ground here. We encounter here again, anyhow, the idea of the truth of concepts, and not only, or at all, of judgments. Behind it lies the thought that if God is “that which is” (he who is) then the enquiry as to God’s being seems misdirected. What he says here parallels in some ways what he said in passing about moral laws in particular in *The Phenomenology of Mind* (Baillie, pp. 446-453): reason as “testing” them is “thereby already on an immoral track”, i.e. a senseless one, as here with proving God thus defined,

actually Anselm's idea, rightly understood by Aquinas also, but yet rejecting it, as a claim that no argument is needed or applicable.

"God's absolute independence does not permit him to come out of himself." We "have no right", therefore, to suppose the world as separate prior to undertaking an "unnecessary and roundabout road from the world to God" (40). This might, but need not, read as a criticism of Thomistic method here.

The elevation of the spirit to God is found in one thing, in the determination of his notion, of his attributes and of his Being; or God as notion or idea is the absolutely indeterminate ... the Metaphysic referred to begins with possibility, ... although meant to be that of the notion of God, comes to be the mere possibility of the Understanding, which is devoid of all content, simple identity ... we are dealing more with the final abstraction of thought in general and Being,

with their opposition and their inseparableness. So we give up both the differences and the process, finding thought and Being opposed but inseparable. This is formally affirmative for the notion, which "has reference to the speculative basis" as "the leading aspect" of the question.

So what was called God "is now to be called thought simply, and indeed abstract thought". Thus, if we distinguish between the notion of and possible existence of God then this is not "the Notion" but a particular notion, here that of God's possible existence merely in "very abstract characterless identity" not applicable to the Notion, which "requires to get into relation" (41). We have "a unity of determinations", rather, but not "as a subject to which they are attached". For McTaggart this was an atheism. It is not a unity of several predicates having their bond of unity "in it as a third thing" or subject. Rather, "the unity ... is their soul and substance", as in McTaggart. Here is pointed out, as if reluctantly, "what the speculative notion or conception of the Notion itself is" (42). The truth of this, accordingly, "is shown in the logical part of philosophy", though we might make a comparison, in Nature, with the representation there of the soul and its organs. But still, "we shall call it the notion of God", affirms Hegel here, where all notions are "moments of one and the same notion", mutually mediating one another. "It is with a view to their appearing in different forms that they are implicitly the same notion", though we have yet to consider "the difference between the Notion in this form and the Notion as such" (42). In its "more determinate form", more determinate than its bearing divinity or this name "God", the Notion is the Idea.

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These concrete aspects or sides “are or rather seem to be ... a complete whole existing for itself”. Considered “as differentiated in them this multiplicity ... of determinations ... of definite forms ... *are accordingly purely ideal* (my stress) ... posited and contained in the one Notion ... subject... intensive unity the greater the difference. All further determinations are a going into itself of the subject, absorption of itself in itself”. This is Spirit (43).

Consider Nature and Spirit in illustration of this unity. Nature “has an ideal existence in Spirit – we advance from Nature to Spirit.”. Nature is “simply a moment of Spirit.” It is not “a substantial two” that we have here, “in this infinite intensity of ideality”. Here the Idea, which is the substance of Nature, has taken on the deeper form of Spirit, i.e. the determination “of this ideality” is “taken on”.

Regarding Nature, it does indeed appear in this shape as the totality of external existence, but at the same time as one of these characteristics above “to which we are to raise ourselves”, i.e. “one of the characteristics of God” as a “subordinate moment”: from Life to Spirit (freedom), “worthy of Him and also of us”. Thus, without some acquaintance “with the notion of the Notion”, theology stops, “as representing Spirit in general”, while Nature is indeed found to be representation only, *Vorstellung*, like all moments of thought in their pure ideality, of Spirit as other than itself. In this way ideality can be put, in this given context at least, as a species, the “highest”, of representation or *Vorstellung*, rather than the converse of this, viz. *Vorstellung* as the lowest species of ideality. Spirit itself, after all, does not run through the logical categories as *means* of arriving at itself, as we do and validly. It is, rather, *its own* result, in Hegel’s phrase, of which the above gives precisely the force. Spirit has, that is to say, already possessed those finite categories from which, for us, it *appears* to result. Only thus is its being its own result a precise or “scientific” notion.

So “one single example is held to be sufficient” proof in mathematics. Precisely hence is it more normally called proof and not an example, as in history or law, where “the object” is “contingent” as these are found as ideal categories of Hegel’s logic as means to the particularity of our knowledge in these latter cases. It is this plurality that we call inductive, where only “its connection with other facts ... gives the object its necessary character” in reality. Hence in Aristotle *epagoge* can be found at times corresponding to our “induction”, at other times, where we work from just one “example”, to our “abstraction”, although if we take “example” literally or univocally we get led into bad *analogies*, e.g. other heavenly bodies are inhabited because the earth is. With God, anyhow, who “exists only for the inner element in

Man's nature in general, we directly meet ... with the contingency of thought, conception and imagination ... and ... sensations", all taken together without difference. Yet there are "an infinite number of starting-points" for arriving at God or the Idea, as also McTaggart cites as all roads leading to Rome when criticising what he takes as Hegel's belief that just his selection of the moments is always the only correct one.

This though, meaning here God rather than mathematics, is different from the usual "scientific" proofs from "the sphere of thought". Here it is not many or all times but *once*, "the one thought-determination ... which comprises all those special forms of the empirical life ... existence". But these differ only in form, "the matter is the same". So he remarks that "the necessary course of thought", called "a syllogistic argument" (pp. 49-50), involves a "breaking up into parts" of *das geistige Band*, in Goethe's phrase. But Spirit, rather, is "this particular finite existence"! – albeit "external to itself" in comparison with the One that is *intimior me mihi* (Augustine). "But it is God only who is this particular One, and only as he is this One is He God." This "subjective reality is inseparable from the Idea, and consequently cannot be separated from itself". Where two are one and hence not two neither can the two references be kept apart, Hegel's discourse here seems designed to urge. A false clarity, necessarily based upon the finitude of the Understanding, would be of no rational help, darkening counsel merely. The highest form of Absolute Spirit, philosophy, must stand upon its lowest form, art, instantiated also, as "natural" language, in every attempt, e.g. the Carnapian, to deny this.

It is not possible that this unity of knowing, feeling and choice which you call your own should have sprung into being from nothingness at a given moment not so long ago; rather, this knowledge, feeling and choice are essentially eternal and unchangeable and numerically one in all men, nay in all sensitive beings. But not in this sense – that you are a part, a piece, of an eternal, infinite being, an aspect or modification of it, as in Spinoza's pantheism. For we should have the same baffling question: which part, which aspect, are you? What, objectively, differentiates it from the others? No, but inconceivable as it seems to ordinary reason, you – and all other conscious beings as such – are all in all. Hence this life of yours which you are living is not merely a piece of the entire existence, but is in a certain sense the whole; only this whole is not so constituted that it can be surveyed in a single glance. (Erwin Schrödinger, cited in Daniel Kolak: *I am You*, Pomona, New York, 2002, p. xv)

Predication as such is being called in question here, by means of course of its own use. How else call it in question? The likeness to the Kantian project, which Hegel successfully reduces to absurdity, may strike one. But where

there is likeness there is difference, crucially here, though the true ever takes inspiration from the false, God from the Devil and contrariwise, as in poetic thought of Milton or Blake, *Job* or the *Psalms of David*, while Hegel avails himself of the prophecy, here Jeremiah's, that he elsewhere decries, but now in fulfilment of rather than departure from Logic, that all shall or hence do, as he claims, "know God". There lies the difference, but difference, again, by his own thought, in identity. Or, to question predication, even judgment, as does Hegel, is not to question reason itself, as does Kant.

Predicates "are something untrue". "They show this." Multiplying them infinitely therefore, as in oriental religious discourse or thought, to cover up the lack (of truth), does not help, is "an unsuitable category". "The idea of God means simply that God is unity" - a broken-backed or self-referential statement, since only such can serve here. Unity, that is, is meant as something having Being, it "would follow", yet not *only* "as against many". The Being of God is not thus abstract, not "the empty Essence of (i.e. as found in) the Understanding". We want "the concrete Idea", namely. which is the Notion. As regards this, "by its very nature concrete", any multiplicity of which "only appears outwardly", "the development of the moments remains within itself". It is not a mere "accidental multiplicity" but has its own necessary process whereby, in fact, it is One supremely.

Thus then, by contrast, is Proof as such conceived, that the characterisations "remain outside of each other ... mediate with each other merely as independent". But "mediation *with self* is the true and finite relation in any such process" (emphasis added). Why? How? Identity as being in truth *the* logical relation entails the *formal defect* in such "proofs" as proceed by means of characteristics external to one another. Hegel consciously inverts the usual scheme.<sup>5</sup>

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Coming now to the existing or known "proofs" of this kind, we have those (a) "from Being to the thought of God", i.e. "from determinate Being to true Being as representing the Being of God", (b) from the thought of God, from truth in itself, to the Being of this truth. As regards this division (a) is either *ex contingentia mundi* (Aquinas's *via tertia*) or the "teleological" proof (*via*

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<sup>5</sup> On this topic, in support of the general drift of Hegel's remarks here, see our articles, "Reality the Measure of Logic and not *vice versa*", *International Philosophical Quarterly*, XXVIII, No. 2, June 1988, pp. 185-192 and "The Interdependence of Semantics, Logic and Metaphysics as Exemplified in the Aristotelian Tradition", *International Philosophical Quarterly*, XLII, No. 1, March 2002, pp. 63-91.

*quinta*) from the relational order in the world. Regarding (b), arguments from the notion or conception of God to his Being, we have the Ontological Proof. So here Aquinas's first, second and fourth ways are apparently ignored, the alternatives of (a) forming a "set", while even (b), which was put in form as one and unique, is also spoken of here as a "set of proofs", meaning that there are several related proofs or what are intended as proofs of this "ontological" or *a priori* (not a phrase or concept used by Hegel here) *type*.

This distinction, between (a) and (b) is itself contingent, but "based on a necessary principle". Thus we have "two characteristics", the thought of God and the Being of God, while the "course of reasoning", if we would consider, is "supposed to result in their union". If which we start from is arbitrary, "mere possible choice", then which to choose appears indifferent. Also, if one "leads to" the other or, rather, to "their being brought into connection" then "the other appears superfluous".<sup>6</sup> But they are "connected in the Notion", hence "they are neither indifferent to one another" nor is their difference "merely external", nor is one superfluous. This necessity, mentioned above, is logical (i.e. the nature of the Notion is *logical*, something in itself showing that Mind is God, infinite). This necessity "is not an accessory circumstance". *Both* paths are thus notionally "one-sided", referring either to "the subjective elevation of the spirit to God" or to "the nature of God himself" in mutual exclusivity. Hegel will now "exhibit this" one-sidedness while setting about dismantling it.

We have two abstract categories, Being and the Notion, their mutual relation determining "what is most concrete". He here refers to "*three* fundamental modes" of the connection of these *two*:

1. The passing over of the one into its other.
2. Their relativity, each being "implicitly or actually in the Being of the Other".
3. That of the Notion, or Idea: that each "preserves itself in its other such that *this unity*, implicitly the original *essence* of the two", is ... "their subjective unity". This still "is one-sided" since both taken together is the substance of proof of God as such, necessarily a unity, whether of the order of several "ways" or closer than that.

Thus, in characterising the one side (Being) the other (the Notion) appears, "and conversely". "*Each determines* itself to its other" (as in

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<sup>6</sup> Cp. Here Lawrence Dewan OP, "The Number and Order of St. Thomas's Five Ways", *The Downside Review* 92, 1974.

Hegel's Logic), "in and out of itself". He applies this to God (Notion) and Nature (Being), refers to "the self-determination of God in the form of Nature", whereby "God becomes Nature" (first connection). But (second connection) Nature (as something in course of transition) "merely manifests God", thus "representing the unity inherent in this ... only for a third thing", viz. "us". This would not be "the true unity ... determined beforehand".

In (1) the "simple passing over into Nature ... the Idea is lost". Rather, (2) "the advance from the Idea to Nature" is not "simply we" referring a semblance back to its essence – yet this is not just the conventional transcendence, as if "God had merely created Nature, not a finite spirit which returns from Nature back to him; that he had an unfruitful love of the world as of something ... the mere show or semblance of Himself", remaining an Other not reflecting Him and "through which he did not shine as through Himself". But what is the third thing or mode supposed to be, with us as *the means* whereby the Essence first manifested itself? Answer: We would represent a knowledge whereof the existence was presupposed in an absolute way, in fact an independent act of a formal universality which embraced everything in itself, and in which the necessarily existing unity in-and-for-itself "would be included as a mere phenomenon or semblance without objectivity". This is just what Hegel now sets out to confute.

Here, then, comes the refutation. First, Hegel, referring to "the determination" just mentioned, seemingly concedes here our knowledge to be "an independent act of a formal universality", etc. Thus:

If we form a more definite conception of the relation which is set forth in this determination then it will be seen that the elevation to God of determinate Being, of Nature, and of natural Being in general, and, along with this, of our consciousness, the active form of this devotion itself, is simply religion or piety which rises to God in a subjective way only, either simply in the shape of an act of transition whereby we disappear in God, or by setting ourselves over against Him as a semblance or illusion ... If the finite were thus to disappear in Him (i.e. he in effect equates Spinozism and Kantism – for him, in this way, affirmation of the infinite depends upon that of the finite – and vice versa, however: his philosophy is that of the poets, as first form of Absolute Spirit), then God would be merely the absolute substance from which nothing proceeds and into which nothing returns to itself ... even to form ideas of this would be already too much ... or to think of the absolute substance ... something which would itself have to disappear.

That is, there would be indifference as between thought or thing. Also Aristotle, however, refused to distinguish Mind and the thought of Mind, in what became Hegel's Absolute Knowledge. So, by reflection, "if still preserved", "if the pious mind continues to represent thus independent

Being then this, elevation to which constitutes religion, is something produced by religion ... an appearance or semblance merely, not *anything truly independent which starts from itself*. ... It is *substance as an idea* merely (Hegel himself treats substance as a moment, but *of the idea*) which does not decide for itself”, hence “is not the activity”, since *this*, “if found only in the subjective elevation as such” then it would not be true “that God is the Spirit who himself arouses in men that desire to rise to Him, that religious feeling in which the elevation begins.”

If from this one-sidedness there results a broader idea and a further development of what does not, to begin with, get beyond something which has the character of a reflex semblance, and if we thus reach its emancipation, in with it (the broader idea, further development), as being independent and active, as would in its turn be *defined* as non-semblance, then we would attribute to this existence merely a relative, and consequently a half connection with its other side, which contained in itself a non-communicating and incommunicable kernel which had nothing to do with the Other (*Ding an sich*: i.e. this is not merely *not enough* but *false*). We would be dealing merely with *the superficial form* in which the two sides (Being and the Idea?) were only apparently related ... would not imply a relation springing from their essence, rather than a mere paralleling of logic, and *established by* their essence. Both sides consequently would be wanting in the true, total return of Spirit into itself, and Spirit would thus not search into the deep things of the Godhead. But this return into itself and this searching into the Other are essentially coincident, for merely immediate, substantial Being does not imply anything deep. It is the real return into self which alone makes the depths of God, and it is just the act of searching into the Essence which is return into self.

So we have

Preliminary reference to the more concrete sense of the difference indicated (being and Idea?) ... discovered by ... reflection ... the difference is not a superfluous multiplicity ... the difference springing from it ... contains two characteristics ... Nature and the progress of consciousness to God and ... back to Being ... necessarily ... one conception ... as much in the course of knowledge (subjective) as when they have an absolutely objective concrete sense (Nature and God? God and Being?) ...

Each presents an “important” one-sidedness. Here the Notion represents (their) totality ... “its unity as a unity of the two moments”, their “absolute basis and result”. “The one movement by its own dialectic nature ... passes over into this complete integration.” The Notion, that is, is what is concluded to by the Ontological Argument. Or is it already the premise?

This, anyhow, “does away with ... the inadequate finite form of that proof” (what proof? from contingency?), “its finitude ... its indifference and its separation from the content”. This one-sidedness, once “absorbed”, “comes to have the content ... in its true form”. This *is* the elevation to God, *viz.* “the abolition of the one-sidedness of subjectivity in general, and above all of knowledge” (56).

To the distinction which, regarded from the formal side, appears as a difference in the kinds of the proofs of the existence of God, there has yet to be added the fact that while, if we look at the proof from the one side (1) according to which we pass from the Being of God to the conception of God, it presents itself under two forms, (a) *ex contingentia mundi* and (b) the Teleological yet (2) ... the other side, according to which the notion or conception of God is made the starting-point and from which we reason to its Being – the Ontological Proof ... there are thus three proofs

and their criticisms. We pass now to Hegel’s Tenth Lecture (p. 57). What seems most of note in what we have just been reading, is Hegel’s observation, which once uttered holds the mind, that the truth of God must depend upon one so-called proof, which just thereby is not a proof in any ordinary sense. Hence we get these disparaging remarks about proof as such, again riveting once uttered.

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#### TENTH LECTURE:

Note first: “The Whole is certainly superior to its parts”, which it sublates, ... “the Whole of a house, and still more in the case of that Whole which is a self-existent unity as the soul is in reference to the living body”. St. Thomas need not be taken as denying Hegel’s assertion here in saying *anima mea non est ego*, but rather as denying *ego*, if we consider all he says about the soul, that it is *capax Dei*, for a start (and finish). This makes of him, though, an Absolute Idealist and not a “moderate realist” at all, except inasmuch as the latter description falls under the former, is thus not an alternative option within philosophy. Nothing would better explain, however, the legacy he shares with many of thinking of two stages of, nonetheless, perfect beatitude, *viz.* the soul before and the soul after a general resurrection of “the body”, such that one even finds two fourteenth century Popes in dispute over this question, whether or not the “separated soul” enjoys perfect beatitude in enjoying the *visio beatifica*, as Aquinas had affirmed. It can appear as a straw in the wind that Cajetan, the main

champion of Aquinas late in the following century, doubted the possibility of demonstrating survival of any separable soul at all, while holding to faith in general resurrection. By this the account must then require the dropping of “soul talk” (but is that all it is or was?) in favour of consciousness as set to develop, as *its* destined beatitude, leaving behind as indistinct representation all question of “whose” consciousness, into self-consciousness, in, theologically speaking, its union with Christ in God, a “new creature” indeed.. The “flesh” would be totally absorbed in this as in the “true being” of the Absolute Idea, whether or not, as is implicit to *Aufhebung* as such, it is simultaneously to be spoken of as “cancelled”. “It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body” (St. Paul, apostle). God, after all, has no body, but is not incomplete for that, nor regarded as such by the incarnate Christ, it seems clear. One may point this out without meaning to argue merely *ad hominem*.

Time and temporal change, it needs then to be added, following not merely from faith in this God, in the Absolute Idea, but as resting upon rational demonstration, would simply not operate beyond death, as if there were some “after” merely and not a genuine “entry into spirit” (Hegel’s characterisation or “definition” of death, to which corresponds the dying St. Thérèse Martin’s, in 1897, “Death is the separation of the soul from the body and that is all it is”), the “kingdom of the Spirit”, in Hegel’s phrase, being indeed nothing other than the “kingdom” of thought, *Geist* here being the operatively unitive notion. We may recall St. Paul’s declaration, “whether in the body or out of it I know not”, of being “caught up” into “the third heaven”, where, he tells us, he “heard words it is not lawful to utter”, whatever we can make of that. Embodiment, either way, is no addition, is simply, along with time and sense generally, the condition of immediacy, Hegel judges, of itself as negative calling out for a transcendent mediation in which “the individual is ruined”, ourselves being after all “members one of another”, life revealed as “no life at all”, though it is *viventibus esse*, simple being for the living. “But you are dead”, St. Paul assures his baptised listeners or readers, your life “hidden”. One is bound to recall, to call in even, the Buddhist “No life, no death”. Yet who enters into that, without sweating blood, so to say, in proto-martyrdom, shrunk from as much as from the “reality”. Hence Christ’s “hating one’s life in this world as condition for discipleship. One hates being cast under this necessity of conscious death, of self or a loved one. Hence the hostility, the raging rejection.

Here too would apply that general principle of “incarnation”, ultimately Athanasian, as itself true to evangelical proclamation as such, that it is realised “not by conversion of the godhead into flesh but by the taking of the manhood into God”. Incarnation is thus itself revealed as the total



meaning of the created world or of time itself, is accordingly “revelation itself”, of the Idea and not of this or that, the Idea which is itself perfectly revealed, Hegel says, in its being accessible to the immediacy of sense. It is due to the phenomenon of time, furthermore, that there has to be an entry into Spirit, namely death, of finite consciousness as of “the flesh”. This, we saw, was the way that Good and Evil came into the equation as ordered pair essential to Infinity as Idea, as the Concept or Notion.

*World*, however, by contrast, as here “the starting-point”, is “the aggregate of material things ... merely”, each of which (that “infinite number”) is conceived of as existing for itself. “*It is not conceived of as Nature*”. It, world, “embraces men equally with natural things”. For by Nature we understand “a systematic whole”, of laws particularly.

These material things “determine themselves ... as limited being, finitude” etc. The Spirit “judges limited, finite or contingent Being to be untrue Being, above and beyond which (the stars) true Being exists.” This “represents the Essence”, the “true form of Existence” as “Infinite, Eternal and unchangeable” ... anyhow “limitless Being”. Spirit “rises at least to those divine predicates” which “though abstract, are yet universal ... or to that universal region, to the pure aether in which God dwells.”

The elevation to God (basis of *all* religion: philosophy’s business being “religion and nothing but religion”) “is directly of the nature of mediation, beginning in finite things, advancing to something else”. Hence *the* mediator has *this* form (e.g. of poetry, music). It is an elevation to “what is infinite and necessary” - only the aggregate is “immediate” (though thereby becoming merely relative): *in* the mediation this standpoint is “abandoned” (for “the standpoint of science?”). Identity is not compromised, e.g. if I should identify theism and atheism, requiring thereby the abandonment of *both* standpoints. Compare, “I and my father are one”. Thus atheism might proceed from *and within* theism, as its chief expression even, and die for it too. “I am come not to destroy but to fulfil”. So the elevation is not just mediation but “in itself mediated knowledge”.

The content “from which this elevation starts” is “not sensuous” or “empirical”, nor “concrete ... imagination”. The truth rather is that “the abstract thought-determinations implied in the ideas of the finitude and contingency of the world ... form the starting-point”, *are* the elevation as what comes through the music, nature, falling in love. By this such a response to music is not itself Art. It is the knowing “the world” as “dust and ashes”, or “thought thinking, knowing itself”, “self-consciousness”. The contingency of the world is thus the starting-point and not what is proved, “the infinitude and absolute necessity of God”, still, however, “wholly within the limits of these general categories”. Thus this long paragraph, pp.

58-59 (of the old translation of LPEG), ends: “The one fact in this ... elevation of Man to God (thus he now characterises it) is that it is a mediation”, while ultimately, Hegel elsewhere stresses. Christ is *the* necessary mediator, corresponding to mediation’s necessity as such: *hence* the *cultural* development he here *affirms* in its only seeming phenomenality (or seeming seeming?): “With regard to ... a mediation”.

Hegel now, p. 60, presents, up to p. 63, “logic as metaphysical theology”, which is, however, “not the object of these lectures”. In this proof “from contingency”, anyhow, finitude and contingency *elicit* “the infinitude or absolute necessity of God”. Back on page 58 he stated that “The universality of ... this elevation ... is false so far as its form is concerned” while “among the Greeks ... only the philosophers” had “the thought of infinity, of inherently existing necessity” as “ultimate principle of all”. Thus material things were not seen, as in a contrast, *as* contingent and finite, but just as *the given*.

Contingency, necessity, these abstract conceptions “do not require to get a fixed place *in consciousness* as independent in their own right”. “It is to the culture of our time that these categories of thought first become familiar ... they are now universal”, diffused. “People have essentially *learned* to think.” “The culture which is capable of abstract conception is something which has been reached through mediation of an infinitely manifold character ... the elevation of Man to God ... is a mediation.” This fact, that the elevation “has mediation in itself” invites to proof, analysis etc., to “the explication of the separate moments of this process of the spirit, to their explication in the form of thought.” Yet spirit as thought “produces the elevation”. The intention of this “process of proof” is “to bring the activity into consciousness”. Faith’s “witness to the truth” is connected with Spirit “as a right”.

Spirit is, exists, “in the form of many spirits”, good and evil. This is “a fact of Spirit as such”, i.e. not of a contingent “fall” merely. To get this right one must “conceive of its (Spirit’s) necessary character”, alone vouching for the truth “in this contingent and arbitrary sphere”, the sphere of abstraction essentially. But what *is* abstraction? It has only to appear, one eats of the Tree. We return now to the long paragraph mentioned (p. 60):

If things were defined in a general way as existing ... it might be shown that the truth of existence as determinate being was Being itself, indeterminate, limitless Being. God would thus be defined as being.

This is in fact precisely the conclusion to Hegel’s “Greater Logic”, while McTaggart’s *The Nature of Existence* might also be consulted. Recall, anyhow, the distinction above “between thought in its inner and implicit

form and the bringing forward of thought into consciousness". The Eleatics "gave Being a fixed meaning in itself", as the ultimate or "Absolute, along with God at least, or apart from any God at all" (in some respects at least this is the main theme of Hegel's Preface to *The Phenomenology of Mind*). "Further", he goes on, "when things are defined as finite Spirit has risen from them to what is infinite". "Spirit rises from this pure immediacy, *which is a mere semblance of Being*, to the Essence" (stress added) or to "God as representing the Whole" or "from them as effects to their cause", as in the "cosmological proof", "first form historically of the elevation". All the categories of Being, evoking therefore here the form(s) of Hegel's system of logic, "are used to describe God", he here states.

It is implied though that the categories (of Being, Ground, etc.) "do not exhaust His nature". The advance herefrom to the Infinite "deserves the name Proof". The multiple starting-points (and proofs) are "nothing but the series of the continuous determinations which belong to the Notion ... till it reaches externalisation (we might compare here the going forth as Nature of *Enc.* 244) ... the condition in which its demands are mutually exclusive, though it has really gone deeper into itself."

"It is logic which unfolds in its necessity this advance in the determination of the Notion. ... Each stage ... the elevation of a category of finitude into its infinitude". It (logic) "involves from its starting-point onwards a metaphysical conception of God and" as in its necessity "a proof of His Being." Hence each transition is necessary and not random, is "the equating or identification of these its manifestations with itself", with the method (p.63, cp. 66).

Logic "treats of the evolution of the Idea of God ... thus concerns itself peculiarly with the Idea, which is perfectly independent in-and-for-itself". This "detailed treatment", of logic's method, that is, is "not the object of these lectures", however. That object, rather, is *the meaning of the Logic* as such, or of science. Here, then, we "wish to confine ourselves ... to the historical discussion of those characteristics of the Notion which are its truth, and which may be held to be the characteristics of the Notion of God". Note he does not say "of God" simply. Might he have done, on his own principles? One might wish to consider this. Meanwhile, his statement as to the "object of these lectures" "is the point to be considered".

I ask though, is not this the very essence or *raison d'être* of the above-mentioned "detailed treatment" of the method? Is not that to which he confines himself *linguistic* history, seen as a gradual self-purification of notions leading in turn to *the* Notion, a method of the method? What other discussion could "historical" mean here? Thus this in a sense *completes* Hegel's work in or on logic. It is a rising from "ordinary language" and

nothing else, in so far as language, word of man (and God), refers, i.e. is not without or divorced (abstracted) from ideas<sup>7</sup>, to the Idea in-and-for-itself.

Previously, he means and seeks to explain, there has been a kind of “general incompleteness” marking *that method* of taking up the Notion, i.e. the historical development. This “can only be found in the defective ideas prevalent” re the Notion itself (*of course* embodied in *verba exteriora* as implied by the very speaking of it as *interior*), and of the mutual connection (finite systems), as well as the nature of the act (finite) of rising to the infinite (main concern or end of these lectures as against the means or proofs – God as *constituting mind*).

The Proof from Contingency he now discusses is part of that history and just therefore will be defective as regards linguistic form at least. What other form is there? The self-corrective method of logical speculation itself as *caught* in the act of escaping from finitude or, rather, from language (escaping from language was a key notion for Fr. Herbert McCabe OP, wherever he got it from, also of Wittgenstein, who spoke of the “bewitchment of mind by language” *against which* the philosophical urge is defined).

*Against* this, as giving the rationality of the argument, “*all* the relations of the finitude and the infinitude of Being are resumed and comprised” in “the category of the relation between contingency and necessity” (what *category* is that, though?). Contingency is “the most concrete determination of the finitude of Being”. Yet it is named in and by a historical word, thereby phenomenal and subject to critical investigation. Also the infinitude of Being is best called Necessity, a term Hegel himself investigates critically in the Logic already before doing so here specifically. The paragraph ends with a discussion of terms that in today’s usage would be put in citation marks, although this convention may itself possess a certain metaphysical destructiveness from which Hegel was free. Compare here discussions, medieval or modern, of “supposition” theory (from Latin *suppositio*, literally not so much “standing for” or in place of as positioned under or, indeed, *in stead* of what we cannot give place to “in” our heads, the things themselves namely, as Aristotle has it in *Topics*). The theory is not reducible to being an early account of “reference” merely, which rather abstracts from it in a “generality” renouncing the quest for understanding this origin of language as giving birth to abstraction in a natural fusion of likeness with identity, one rabbit being not simply “like” another, as it is like a hare, whatever one says about trees and bushes. Distinction, Hegel finds, is ever viable, ultimately from itself even, discerning here a foundation, in strict

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. John Deely, “How Language Refers”, in *Studi internazionale di filosofia*, 1972.

mutuality however, in the Trinitarian conception (of God, our subject here). Thus Hegel put “foundationalism” out of court well before today’s critique of it but without the all too facile dismissal of the “baby” there aimed at.

“Necessity however has its truth in freedom” (p.63). That means, surely, that the *word* or term, to support my thesis above, has a generous measure of untruth. Thus Aquinas speaks, rather, of the actively determinative character of absolute knowledge, knowledge, knowing, being itself the final freedom as will is firstly the (natural) inclination of intellect itself (*Summa theol.* Ia, 19, 1). Thus there is no “pure will”, as Hegel may have found in Boehme or elsewhere, no “liberty of indifference”, as Hegel well understood, placing Volition as itself a species of Cognition.

Here then, with necessity and freedom in their mutual relation, “we enter into a new sphere, into the region of the Notion itself”. The Teleological Proof gets *nearer* to the Notion, to the truth “of the elevation to God” we began with considering here. So, he writes (p.66), “Now I myself at least exist, and therefore an absolutely rational essence exists.” This conclusion, i.e. its inbuilt premise, is specific, i.e. it takes account of the Cartesian *cogito* as starting-point, “merely one aspect of the total true mediation”.

Hegel refers here to “a style of argument” (not, for example, to an “argument form”) and seems to imply *assumption* of singularity, i.e. in speaking of Essence. This conception forms, more properly, he says, “the subject of the Ontological Proof”. Thus Kant criticises “necessary Essence” as “a mere refinement of reasoning”. Hegel, though, marks “a want of intellectual training” in “these expressions”, aimed at proving God as “a thing”. One moves from absolutely necessary Essence to “most real” Essence, deducible even from its infinity, however, and perhaps contrariwise as when he refers, above, to himself. The move, that is, can be inverted, as in Hegel’s logic generally. That is, any (most) real essence would be necessary. This, he says, is “just the principal method of the Ontological Proof, however, as passing from conception to existence.”

“When it is shown that a predicate belongs to an object we must go further if we are to show that such a predicate belongs to it exclusively.” The “all-embracing unlimited reality”, he says, “has no reference to Being as such.” Here he seems to treat Being as on a par with the more specific notion of Existence, as referred at least to “reality”. In the Cosmological Proof, accordingly, “Being has already a definite existence of its own”. Kant’s objection to Anselm, he notes, is his conceiving of Being as predicable reality. But in the Cosmological Proof “we have already this Being elsewhere ... it does not at all require that Being should be *characterised* as reality”.

We must therefore hold (p.71) that Kant is in error in asserting that the Cosmological Proof rests on the Ontological, and we must regard it as a mistake even to maintain that it requires this latter to complete it, that is, in regard to what it has in general to accomplish. That more, however, has to be accomplished than it accomplishes, is a matter for further consideration, and this further step is undoubtedly taken in the moment contained in the Ontological Proof.

On the previous page (70) he had said that “the characteristic of absolutely necessary Essence involves the necessity partly of its Being, partly of the characteristics of its content”. “If”, though (p.72), “thought cannot pass beyond the world of sense (Kant’s main principle), would it not be necessary, on the other hand, to show first of all how it is conceivable that thought can enter into the world of sense?” Here we might consult the late Eugene Gendlin’s excellent “line by line” and most profound commentary on Aristotle’s *De Anima*<sup>8</sup>, yet moving in a so to say opposite direction from “German Idealism”.

Hegel, however, states that it is

by means of this intellectual category of contingency that the temporal world as present to perception is conceived of, and by employing that very category ... thought has already passed beyond the world of sense and transferred itself to another sphere, without ... using first of all the category of causality.

One can hardly fault the reasoning. In fact (p.72), “the finite passes through itself to its Other, to the Infinite itself”, the basis, according to Kant, of a synthetic proposition, as Hegel interprets here.

The following page 73 is crucial. Hegel reasons, claims, to begin with, that “if we posit contingency we posit substantiality as well”, as its defining contrast, this being the former’s “purely intellectual characteristic”. Yet this ex-pression of a category or intellectual relation does not belong, is not employable in, a supposed (abstract) “world of sense”, but, by its nature, “in the intellectual world”. Being critical we might suggest that this view simply parallels that of Kant’s absolute dictate of law to reason in, in either case, destroying the unity of man. This was the complaint of the papal *Veritatis splendor* of two or three decades ago now (Karol Wojtyla: cf. our *Natural Law Reconsidered*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt 2002, chapter 14: “Natural Inclinations Broadcast”). Well, but it parallels it with a difference. Hegel takes seriously the natural desire of spiritual persons to transcend nature, even their own, in and by true philosophy, conditioned by and as the gift(s)

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<sup>8</sup> Eugene Gendlin, *Line by Line Commentary on Aristotle’s ‘De Anima’*, The Focusing Institute, Spring Valley, New York State, 2012.

of the Spirit (i.e. in fact it is unconditioned or free), there being traditionally, in theology as following a Pauline Scriptural text, seven of these (in philosophy one cannot do this: “the letter kills, the Spirit gives life”). This in one way or another is faithful to the central role of the Cross in Christian religion, ultimately for all as baptised into it, whereby one is “dead to all the world”, one’s subjectivity either absolutised or annihilated in *absolute* subjectivity. This vision may well harmonise with the papal teaching as far as the latter goes there, whether it be itself “safe for teaching” specifically or not.

The second impossibility Kant finds, in, say, “proving God”, is that of arguing from an infinite number of secondary causes to a first cause. In the world, namely, there are only “conditioned causes” or caused causes. Hegel claims though that just *this* fact forces reason’s “passing into the intelligible sphere” as its *sole* home. It is already independent of the sense-world and so does not (falsely) derive a first cause *from it* specifically or abstractly, as Hegel might put it.

The contingent, conditioned and finite if it *is* at all, must naturally rise to the unconditioned and infinite, Hegel claims, thus absolutising development or becoming, as we have all learned to do. What conditions is done away with, what mediates is rejected. But Kant “did not conceive this infinite negativity” of freedom. God, thinks Kant, must ask himself: “Whence am I?”, as if this made sense “in the mouth of the absolutely necessary and unconditioned”, Hegel comments. In fact every consciousness must arrive at its own necessity, which is yet that of another, “closer than self”, stopping this question. Kant, though, believed with Jacobi that “where the rational begins, reason ends”.

Fourthly we have Kant’s objection to the Ontological Proof and the “logical possibility of the conception of all reality”. Kant adds here his “discovery” of “dialectical illusion” of all transcendental proofs – “nothing new” says Hegel, in curt dismissal. “We cannot think the thing-in-itself” is constantly repeated (by Kant). So the Cosmological Proof is “transcendental” as “independent of empirical principles”. Kant means this as dismissal, Hegel disagrees. “I can never complete the act of going back to the conditions of existence without assuming the existence of something necessary while I can at the same time never start from this” (Kant).”

This “contains the essential moment on which the whole question turns” (p.75). Here Hegel passes to discussion of the judgment (pp. 77-85). “The subject” of this, he says, “represents the hypothetical element which exists in idea”, i.e. it has *thus far* being, *ens rationis* so to say, inasmuch as no existence or actuality is yet posited, as it were “before” the judgment of which it is to form part is made. It specifically “represents the hypothetical

element”, existing “in idea” only and that, of course, finitely. Even if I said “God” that would be the mode “before” judgment. Thus I might predicate of it “does not exist”, “is an illusion”, etc. Yet “Being, defined, to begin with, as finite, is infinite, and the infinite is.” So “Being ... must have the predicate of the Infinite attached to it.” We might ask if this means that it is attached, necessarily, or that it has to have it attached. Hegel answers that it, the term Being, *represents* “what is common to both”, i.e. to Being and the Infinite. So *there is not* “a transition from Being to the Infinite” as if they were different. Being “remains unaltered”, that is, in this merely apparent “passing”. So finitude, of the “permanent subject”, i.e. whatever it *is* or may be, “is translated into infinitude”. The omission of the routine German article before “finitude” seems to be a translator’s decision one can only applaud. Hegel means any and all finitude as such is thus translated in predication, always of Being, namely. So, finally, “Being as such and not empirical Being” is subject of judgment as such or proto-judgment. This is how Hegel conceives the Ontological Proof to which Kant is objecting. Our concern here, therefore, is “not the moral finite world” to which he finds Kant to be all too routinely reducing thought when he talks of God. He concludes: “The judgment consequently itself signifies that what has Being is not a something having Being, but is a thought”

#### ELEVENTH LECTURE:

Hegel returns here (p. 86) to “the act of elevation first mentioned”, the proper speculative form of knowing, he adds. Is it then “proof”? From this standpoint, anyhow, he looks at “the formal syllogism” now, though this has here more the form, as more general or universal, of *modus ponens*. Thus any syllogism of the old formal kind can always be transposed to this, the converse however not being so evident.

It constitutes things’ nature, he now affirms, to “drop away”. Their “course does nothing but lead up to their end”, whether or not by “external cause”. Time, that is, is the primal “cancer” that “creeps over” things; in his view, however, thus declaring them ever to have been in themselves null. Time is thus the final discomfiting *conscience*, whereby we are “as flies to the gods”, whereby, in Scriptural phrase, “dying we live”. *Media vitae in morte sumus*. The tradition, ultimately thought’s “absolute idealism”, is constant.

“They”, things, “are in fact finite” or “essentially devoid of independence” (the equivalence is strict). “They are in a real sense”, no doubt, “but their reality has the value of something which is merely a possibility”. They are not actual, that is. Rather, “they are, and can therefore (!) equally well either



be or not be.” Consider though, he says, the presence of causal connections as *laws*. This raises precisely contingent things “above the category of contingency into the region of necessity”, which is thus “found within that sphere”. We might call it God’s action in the world, thus naming the paradox verily constituting Hegel’s “Philosophy of Nature” as an integral part of his tripartite encyclopaedic system of philosophy, as against the objections of a Gentile (explicit) or a McTaggart (implicit rather).

As isolated what we are calling things are contingent, while as law-bound they are qualified and related to one another, without exception, that is to say, which makes this condition, at least in that respect, the *opposite* of contingent. Thus these laws are “the independent element” (of science, namely), whereby we have our essential character and stability not in ourselves but “in this connection”, inasmuch, that is to say, as we are able here to attribute more than appearance to, say, birth and death by Hegel’s account or as viewed generally. Thus it can well seem that his final position is *not* of this composition by mutual inter-relation of parts but rather of an identity of all with all, this “all” transcending the dilemma of singular or plural, “neither one nor many” as we find Plato saying (*Republic* VI) or as, even, not therefore apparently purely “grammatically” (can grammar be thus “pure”?), the ancient Greek neuter plural took, *as a rule*, a singular verb-form.. Thus he adds that even the laws themselves are “contingent in relation to one another”, as it were only or, rather, properly. We call them necessary as *making* them rather abstractions. One is reminded of Aquinas’s statement that *lex*, taken generally, is *aliqualis ratio iuris* merely<sup>9</sup>, i.e. something like a falsification or “rationalisation” of and by the understanding, in Hegelian terms, while noting that *lex*, plural *leges*, is countable or quantifiable, as *ius*, right, is not, chatter about human or animal *rights*, plural, notwithstanding.

So these causes, causal connection in general, are and is finite. Is not this the same as contingent, we might want to ask, is it not an appearance, phenomenal, as of nature herself? Well, this was one wing of the paradox we noted above without making it one horn of a supposed *dilemma*, however. As laws they “are rather abstractions”, we have noted. Thus what ought to give stability to the series (of causes), the Infinite namely,

is not only something above and beyond this world, but is a mere negative, the very meaning of which is relative merely, and is conditioned by what is to be negated by it, and is consequently for this very reason not negated.

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<sup>9</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.* IIa-IIae 57, 1 ad 2um, Cf. our *Natural Law Reconsidered*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt, 2002, esp. p. 187f.

But Spirit raises itself “above the Infinite, which is a mere negative”, to

a necessity which does not any longer go beyond itself, but is in-and-for-itself, included within itself, and is determined as complete in itself, while all other determinations are posited by it, are dependent upon it. (88)

Spirit raises itself, the upward spring, to what posits “all other determinations” as posited by it and dependent upon it (this is Hegel’s account of creation in otherness). He sees, himself posits, these others, therefore, as “in the form of ideas”, whether “accidental” or “more concentrated”, e.g. religious conceptions, that are

the essential moments of thought belonging to the inner life of the human spirit, to the reason that does not fully attain in a methodical and formal way the consciousness of its inner process (not to be confused with empirical “psychologism”) and still less gets so far as to be able to investigate these thought-determinations through which it passes, or the connections they involve. We have now got to see ... if thought ... rightly conceives and expresses the course followed in the elevation of the soul to God (i.e. in these traditional “arguments”, re-christened by Aquinas as “ways”, *viae*), which we have, so far, assumed to be a fact. (parentheses added)

The clear implication here is that insofar as mind becomes identified with Spirit, the aim and essence of knowing, it as it were “sees through” the creation as in itself nothing, the invariable assertion, after all, of mystical thought and theology.

Conversely, we have to find out whether these thoughts can be shown to be justified and have their reality proved ... in themselves.

Only thus can the elevation to God “cease to be a supposition”, become more stable. But we don’t do this here since it has been done thoroughly in Hegel’s Logic, in either version, which

I identify with metaphysics ... nothing but an attempt to deal with ... God, the world, the soul (his own chosen three examples in EL) ... in such a way that these objects have to be conceived of as *noumena*, i.e. we have to deal with the element of thought in them.

This means, of course, that they have *other* elements than that of thought in them, these three objects, and that predominantly. Hence we have his apparent passing conclusion when discussing them, in reference to Spinoza,

that there would be no world rather than that there were no God, admittedly also one of the three, however, i.e. no noumenal world.<sup>10</sup>

So he will “take up the logical results merely, rather than the formal development” (i.e. his logic, rather than the traditional “proofs”). In fact, “an investigation of the proofs ... of God cannot be undertaken independently at all”, so as to be complete. “Science is the developed connection of the Idea in its totality”, i.e. that is what is. Where any individual object is taken out of that totality, the Idea’s scientific goal, limits are set to its investigation. This would entail also the necessity of Art, on a supra-cosmic scale indeed, as content for Absolute Spirit or, it is the same, true knowledge.

No one, anyhow, seems to have shown more consciousness of this necessary totality of science, i.e. of necessity simply, and therefore of this as precisely Hegel’s doctrine, than McTaggart. It was the direct cause of his atheism just inasmuch as he misconceived, misread even, the God of believers as *necessarily* posited outside of and yet as it were on all fours with the system as one Being with another, instead of the Infinite as *absorbing* the finite, to use Hegel’s word. That is to say, he did not see Hegel’s God in terms of Christian theology, just as he saw Hegel’s account of infinity as alteration (of the word’s meaning) rather than as interpretation (of the idea thereof). Such atheism has proved and is proving (in the Islamic world chiefly) to be in general the nemesis of anti-rational religious fanaticism. The Church, however, as also the other great religious communities, believing communities, Christian, Jewish, also Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist etc., following Hegel’s division in his philosophy of religion, would be understood, understands itself, as “the home of reason”, and that from the first, as is surely the case with religious communities generally. The fanatic, in his *extasis*, by contrast, can know no other authority than himself. It would seem then, fanaticism, to be a case of the Hegelian wickedness of conscience, also of the Thomistic *erring* conscience that nonetheless obliges the man or woman thus become *perplexus*. In that, though, the fanatic, like “rationalism” in general, is the philosopher’s or rationality’s inverted image. We might think of Robespierre. McTaggart, due to upbringing and experience, quite missed this distinction. Or, more sympathetically, his example shows the close relation *within* Christian culture of atheism, when in the service of Spirit and not of “the street”, to theism as itself a development thereof as a moment of apophatic “negative theology” prior to more profound theological unveiling in a correspondingly elicited cataphatic moment.

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<sup>10</sup> See *Enc.* 50.

There can be only an appearance of independence here as due to a “circumscribed horizon of thoughts”, such as all ages have, “themselves in harmony with consciousness” and so “no further analysed”. “In fact”, he says, “it would be prejudicial to what is called popular comprehension to attempt to express this horizon beyond the limits of ordinary ideas by analysing these, and so to make it include speculative or philosophical conceptions”. This has been precisely the dilemma of a large group of would-be orthodox theologians, even though the dilemma had in a measure been met and resolved in the Christian consciousness and/or conscience as such from Apostolic through sub-Apostolic into earlier (the Apologists, the Alexandrines) and later Patristic times, the solution merely hidden through the modern post-Reformation diffidence and later anti-modern (now called modernist) alarms, as Hegel clearly saw and faced, even while or in the midst of ending his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* with a seemingly pessimistic note of his own, though still contemning and citing “the gates of Hell” (they “shall not prevail” against the Spirit’s battering-ram: such is the image, i.e. they are not themselves seen there as active), as it were beyond hope. This moment, however, which as such must be taken up or “sublated”, as he says there, in effect, is nothing but the final utter transcendence of the divine, quite transcending in particular the dualisms of “ordinary ... popular comprehension”. “My thoughts are not your thoughts”. What else, though, is the motor of Hegel’s whole philosophico-sapiential effort?

After Hegel’s time *ideology* was invented, but not yet exposed and understood as perversion of spirit, as giving a (false) appearance of overcoming this populist residue in theology as compared to “elitist” philosophy. Yet only by progressively self-transcendent religion can all that is low be raised highest and the prematurely exalted brought low. Only thus can “the masses” become “a people” (as they have done here and there), the “people of God”, with “each to count for all and none for less than all”, where, at the common meal, “where one receives a thousand receive” (*sumit unus sumunt mille*: Aquinas), also the only communism that can work or be desired to work. So let’s have no meat for babes, upsetting digestions, but true milk to help us eat that flesh one day. Down with vegetarianism (of the spirit, anyhow)! Like the animals we are to consume one another, so to say constructively, however, each thus becoming all. “He that eats me, the same shall live because of me” (*John VI*). “Speaking generally, to deal with anything in a speculative or philosophical way simply means to bring into connection the thoughts which we already have” (Hegel). That is, to begin to seek is to have found, receiving as already having, as pre-condition for this.

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After this he goes on to explicate further the contingent and the necessary in their relation (p. 90). It, this, is a central point in the philosophy of Hegel. Here he has just dismissed the proofs of a God as or if in any way independent of something else, like an independent finite, as impossible. For God, just like the world and the soul, or self, conceived as *noumenal*, or just one *noumenon*, are in fact *noumenon*, a kind of absolute singular as such, strictly uncountable as beyond all counting, the true unity in concrete simplicity, the Whole or All. "I am He and there is none other". I wrote "just like", though it seems that God, world, soul and self are thought of as in some respects fusing, or, generally, that likeness and mere variety do not ultimately go together, that under every likeness lies an analogical unity, much like that of cause and effect in Hegel's system. In this case it is the **Idea** as "systematic whole, in which each of its constituent functions is the very total which the **Notion** is, and is put as indissolubly one with it" (*Enc.* 160). Such a vision includes though seeing the world, and hence God or self too, "in a grain of sand" (Blake). For God to be at all each must be all, all each. So we have not God minus the world since a zero is not subtracted, still less though the world as all-sufficient to the exclusion of God. Zero remains zero.

Hence it is, he continues, that the thoughts discursively occupying us, as here, "a thing, a law, etc.", these or any one of them "is contingent in virtue of its isolation". It is as isolated that the rabbit, tree or neighbour is not God, not the Idea, being more properly a moment thereof. This harmonises well with the story of Moses and the burning bush. One may speculate that Moses had some vision of beauty, approximating to glory, beauty's "terror", that recalled to him the God of his fathers and its universalist claim of the "I am", empowering him for his future mission. Otherwise the divine self-concealment in just this way finds no explanation, is seemingly absurd. Hegel is delivering to us the central doctrine of the poets, of art as first or ground-form (for us or in itself indifferently. Compare St. Paul: "If God is for us, what can be against us?" Hegel supplies his "ground" for saying that, were it needed) of Absolute Spirit, the connecting link, the self-sublating mediation and/or Mediator (or Word) as actual noumenal incarnation, (Jesus) Christ, Christianity or mediation as such, of which the former is revealed essence, whether religious or philosophical (or artistic?) indifferently, being in person *solutio omnium quaestionum* (Hugh or Richard of St. Victor), this last twelfth century Latin term meaning as much "seekings" as "questionings". That this is Hegel's view can be gleaned as well from these later writings as from *The Phenomenology of Mind*, chapter

VII C in particular. That he does not “go out of his way” to make a separate and hence for him abstract affirmation, such as we permit ourselves here, testifies precisely to his “way”, still in process of being understood as it may be.

The revelation, further, is *eros* as such or the final mystery of sex, of passion *qua* passion (we speak without equivocation of Christ’s passion, Latin *passio*), as it were writ large, Christ and his bride, the community or Church, *ecclesia*, called out (*ek-kaleo*), as the *qahal* of Israel was “called out” from among the nations. “Come ye out from them”, only thus shall they be blessed “in thy seed”. So it is and has been, like it or not. I wouldn’t have done it that way, we tend to say. But of course not – it is our transcendence, yet planted deep, deepest, within us.

This is why religious passion, and passion *is* finally religious, confirmed as much by McTaggart as by Dante, noumenal passion then, cannot be regularised by laws of identity and difference. Thus the regulative achievement of St. Benedict cannot be more than phenomenal merely, a historical moment. Just as such was it beneficent, a good way of teaching monks and others as philosophy properly is not, is “not safe for teaching”, to use the pertinent phrase of the Roman “Holy Office” or Inquisition, mild though it may have become. The whole project of perfecting religion, which is philosophy, as equally Christianity from Day One, is inherently “not safe”, a talent not to be merely buried. Paul the Apostle remains the shining example of this and all credit to the chosen apostles for receiving him as undermining just in broadening their previous positions, ever the style of spirit. So Hegel is properly dismissive of ascetic-legal procedures as more than a passing moment, *just in* his cleaving to the Idea as font of all dynamism.

This, one might imagine, is the contemplatively speculative background to the making of a saint out of Judas Iscariot by the historic Ethiopian Church, him who “had the greater sin” (than Pilate’s). We may compare Hegel’s treatment of Satan. These words indeed can seem to contain an element of purely human shock, in the one knowing all contingencies. The Gospels, it may be, were written or composed themselves in representation of a finite attempt to fuse the noumenal and the phenomenal or historical, the necessary and the contingent (as developed in Hegel’s later lectures here), in a way quite transcending customary historical record. As Hegel put it, the end is realised, freed indeed from the contingent which yet absorbs the necessary to its own transfiguration while remaining itself, not merely as on Mount Tabor. This then, a God stripped of splendour, “defiled and put to scorn” in his sacredness, is the ever to be honoured and worshipped mediation. Again, this is implicit in all of Hegel, explicit in some of it, which

has then tended to get discounted. I refer to these lectures and those on the Philosophy of Religion, though one can argue that the earlier *Phenomenology of Mind* was clear witness to those able to endure it.

Thus it is that if we would ask if Hegelian absolute knowledge, in abolishing the virtue of hope, does not sin by presumption (opposite excess to despair) the answer would be that virtues and vices, these too, if considered separately, are not *noumenal*, are fleeting appearances. This standpoint is at the least foreshadowed by the doctrine (Thomistic) of “the unity of the virtues”, once attacked by Peter Geach as “monstrous”, as if, Geach says, a man with one vice cannot have other virtues, not seeing that he is staying with his reasoning on a still phenomenal platform. Thus we can equally or rather see the man’s one vice as in consequence not a vice, than be prepared to deny all his manifest virtue, i.e. if the other conclusion seems monstrous, while really there is no need to judge at all, our reasoning so far being not more than conceptual. It is anyhow a metaphysical commonplace that there cannot be an absolute evil and surely nothing or no one finite is absolutely good, just God alone, whether or not God “exists”, so to say. So it is anyhow not so monstrous to deny creaturely virtue, at least where the requisite unity is lacking, as may anyhow be universally the case. Thus “I have no virtues”, declared St. Therese Martin of Lisieux (d. 1897). Did she have all the vices then? Yes and no, “made sin for us” as is said of the saint of saints. We might compare J.-P. Sartre’s study *Saint Genet* (Genet was an oft convicted criminal, and playwright, with a quirky sexuality) or Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (both of these works were recommended to me by Fr. Nicholas Folan OP when he was teaching metaphysics, ethics and history of philosophy to Dominican students in England during the 1960s; I recall with gratitude our stimulating and informative conversations).

Religion along with metaphysics, in which it is perfected, the distinction between *theoria* and *praxis* being itself abrogated, as Aristotle had already indicated, declaring the former highest instance of the latter, both transcend and absorb moralism, fulfilling it rather. Love “exalts not itself” there; the system, one might say, is “beyond hope”. Faith and hope, as temporal, are not noumenal. Yet, in the world, as temporal victory and victory over time even, they “overcome the world”. The mediator, who declares this, also declares, of himself, “I have overcome the world”. The Concept or Word is necessarily personal as ultimate self-consciousness, “I in you and you in me”. Faith and hope, meanwhile, transform themselves and the world into the ether of charity or love or, same difference it is now seen, eternity. “Before Abraham was, I am”, while to say that “I am” is my name is to say I have no name, the Concept absorbing all concepts. God, declared St.

Francis, is all things or everything (in classical Greek, again, the neuter plural takes a singular verb): *Deus meus et omnia*. He is thus no (nameable) “thing” or person, however we may rate or name the Trinitarian relations. Personality supervenes, though with absolute and, as we say (insufficiently, however), logical necessity, upon the divine nature, which is spirit and not substance, as the persons (*hypostases*) are reckoned to be. There is here matter for some further consideration. We noted that where human nature is itself reckoned phenomenal, as against mind, the Docetist heresy can no longer apply, since it denies this phenomenal or material quality we call humanity to Jesus alone, while if the phenomenal is the universal truth of man, as against thought, so to say, then that is just what he assumes. So here, if personality is itself phenomenal then applying that to the Trinitarian relations does not land one in Sabellianism as a denial of the relationality common to all reality *otherwise*. Relation in absolute idealism, along with every other attributable finite category, is quite simply a finite category (the categories are as such finite) in itself. Or, concrete identity is *the* logical relation, i.e. the relation solely applicable in logic which is, here, the form of the world and of all forms. Whatever truth lay hidden in the errors of Docetism or Sabellianism is only revealed in viewing the whole.

So much for all that is *not* the Whole. “A thing or law, etc., is contingent in virtue of its isolation.” The same might seem to apply to the God of the proofs, only as that is supposed as the non-contingent as such its “isolation” guarantees the contingency of all else:

The fact of its existence or non-existence does not bring about any derangement or alteration so far as other things are concerned. Then the fact that it is quite as little kept in existence by them, and that any stability it gets owing to them is wholly insufficient (God as projection of man), gives them that very insufficient semblance of independence which is just what constitutes their contingency.

The idea of necessity, “on the other hand, requires connection ... complete determination by other existing things, ... conditions, ... causes” – “it cannot be separated from them or come into being of itself.” Thus we place the contingency of a thing, again, “in its isolation. This is the first point.” But thus a transcendent God would become contingent, it seems. Or this is to be seen as the scientific abolition of contingency as anything but phenomenal, i.e. nothing actually existent. The contingent is and has to be contingent. We dismiss it in recognising it, not least in our consciousness of our “unregenerate” self, as religion has it. This is a false self. This applies to any idea even, apart from “the absolute Idea”. To reach this therefore implies the cessation of all thinking in a departure of self from self, of *sophia*



from *philosophia*, precisely the doctrine of the Carmelite John of the Cross in Spain two or three centuries previously. It means that the divine ideas of each or any “thing” etc. partake of, are included in the necessity of the one or absolute Idea, of God, forms of himself, there being thereafter, or consequently rather, simply nothing to transcend. The “things” are not that which they seem, their idea declares.

Only necessity remains, but that, we are seeing, has to be purified of its two-way association with contingency, must completely absorb it. This corresponds again to Thomas Aquinas; “closer to self than self” (*intimior me mihi* was Augustine’s famous phrase, again). Hegel’s words, I would argue, taken as a whole from throughout his works, make exactly the same point, here put as two, the second or “other” point (the two-ness is itself not contingent) being required to the Being, “rationate”<sup>11</sup> or ideal, of the first, which means, however, that in truth the ideality is on the side of our own starting-point, viz. ourselves and our world as finite. To be realised we have “to become what we are not”, i.e. what we truly are, by thought or by whatever means. Such means, however, cannot be abstractly separable or “existent” apart from this Idea itself as drawing us, so to say. We can only die in and/or into it, as religion variously represents, as philosophy discloses, as art promises. Thus it is thought, of whatever quality, that has supplied its own constancy to the mystical tradition, constituting therefore what the latter is.

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We might here claim that philosophy, religion, aesthetics, theology, the philosophy and history of religion, Christology and “Biblical Studies” even, all meet here in one *sophia*, for the maintenance of which it naturally embarrasses secularised universities to grant full and comfortable salaries, though the Prussian state of Hegel’s day had not yet, it seems, succumbed to such bashfulness, knowing perhaps that its higher institutes of learning and spirituality had to fill, by hook or by crook, the gap left by the absented monks of old. Awareness of this remained in the requirement of celibacy for Oxford dons up into the eighteenth century and later. This could of course in principle be applied to women equally, just as there exist religious orders for both sexes, even together, e.g. the original Brigittines. It would be a step in this direction if the distinction between salary or still more “wages” and *honorarium* were recalled, based on the view, going back at least to the Simon Magus controversy of old, that spiritual services cannot

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<sup>11</sup> See Robert W. Schmidt, *opus cit.*, for explanation of this term in a “realist” context.

be paid for in material exchange without “corruption” of them. People holding a spiritual office, or engaged in works of the spirit, such as teaching, have to be maintained. The Queen of England and her family is not “paid” for her “noble” services, even by the state, which nonetheless obliges her. This does not, however, apply to socialised doctors, even psychiatrists, as it might and should to “academic” psychologists.

This though is precisely the view that the prevailing Marxist socialism upsets, with its doctrine of the dignity of labour precisely, i.e. of what we have otherwise called *servile* labour, teaching thus that the *servus* or labourer, workman, is not a thrall but a king, having all things in having nothing. Thus far it is a truly messianic doctrine, which is what accounts for the so often manifest sectarianism of the main socialist political parties in the world, claiming supreme authority, with a kind of vile smugness, as, once succeeding at the polls, having overthrown it. I am confident, however, that synthesis between these two views is not only possible but precisely what is needed in today’s ever more self-unifying world, from whatever quarter the initiatives needed are best engendered. This synthesis would be marked by a surrender of sectarian, *hopelessly* “materialist” socialism (i.e. they offer no hope) to the universal need for increased, ever growing even, socialisation<sup>12</sup>. Nor am I calling for re-enforcement of such things as celibacy anywhere. Lord, no! People can take their own decisions here and those enabling this presence of spirit in society, in academies and similar, must have freedom to judge whom and what to promote, what not. Hegel, for example, our main example here, positively championed openness to marriage for all in whatever calling, himself first. The Latin-rite Catholic bishops, required surely to be contemplative, at present take a different view of their own case, having long imposed it on all the priests, as their Eastern Orthodox brothers have not. Let both, all, continue to grow together.

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Hegel continues, remarkably:

Conversely, again, since an existing thing thus stands in a relation of perfect connection, it is in all its aspects conditioned and dependent, is in fact perfectly wanting in independence. It is, on the other hand, in necessity alone

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<sup>12</sup> This distinction precisely was made by and in a remarkable papal letter on social questions, *Mater et magistra*, confirming the need for watchful socialisation while upholding the rejection, condemnation rather, of socialist ideology and *praxis* by his predecessors, during the reign of John XXIII (Roncalli) immediately prior to his summoning the Second Vatican Council (1962-1964). It is none the worse for that.

that we find the independence of a thing. What is necessary must be. This fact that it must be, expresses its independence by suggesting that what is necessary is, because it is.

That is, only God is and conversely, being is God (and not, for instance, the abstract *esse commune*) or divine and so we must adjust our vision of it, of being as thus mediated, accordingly, to the point where it requires denial of *our* vision, as making of being an object, and thus denial too of ourselves, even though God is “for us” (St. Paul) and “No doubt God is the Object and, indeed, the Object out and out” (Hegel).

As absolute object, however, God does not therefore take up the position of a dark and hostile power over against subjectivity. He rather involves it as a vital element in Himself. ... ceases to be for them mere object ... All which is only another way of saying that the antithesis of subjective and objective is implicitly overcome, and it is our affair to participate in this redemption by ... learning to know God as our true and essential self. (*Enc.* 194, *Zus.*)

Contingency is thus abolished (or itself rendered contingent, a moment). Rather, Lecture XI continues:

We thus see that the necessity of anything (or of everything now, indifferently) requires two sorts of opposed characteristics – on the one hand its independence in which, however, it is isolated and which makes its existence or non-existence a matter of indifference, and on the other, its being based upon and contained in a complete relation to everything else whereby it is surrounded and by the connection involved in which it is kept in existence; this means that it is not independent.

It is not hard to see the identity with the position cited of Aquinas. This “complete” relation, namely, is one of Being to Nothing, while if God is closer than self to what is then (its) self as other than itself, then God and his creative act (of the other), are *necessarily* one, and that supremely by divine or absolute *election*. Thus also Eckhart: “If I were not then God would not be”, *just because* “If God were not then I would not be” and thus I am “universal of universals”.

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Henry Veatch once charged me with “theologism”. I accept the charge, while maintaining that the theo-divinity of *nous* is philosophy’s constitutive secret, systematic demonstration of which was reserved for Hegel. What he says here and now, however, is that to “express” necessity both necessity

and contingency are required, while nothing is needed for Being to be grasped finally as the Idea. Or, what is thus needed is

... independence, so that the necessary may not be mediated by an Other; and also the mediation of this independence in connection with the Other. They thus contradict each other, but since they both belong to the one necessity they must not contradict each other in the unity in which they are joined together in it. ... Our view of the matter renders it necessary that the thoughts which are united in this necessity should be brought into connection in our minds. In this unity the mediation with an Other will thus itself partake of independence (i.e. will be intra-divine) and this, as a reference to self, will have the mediation with an Other within itself. In this determination, however, both can be united only in such a way that the mediation with an Other is at the same time a mediation with self, that is, their union must imply that the mediation with an Other abolishes itself, and becomes a mediation with self. Thus the unity with self is not a unity which is abstract identity, such as we saw in the form of the isolation in which the Thing is related only to itself. And in which its contingency lies. The one-sidedness on account of which alone it is in contradiction with the equally one-sided mediation by an Other, is done away with, and these untruths have thus disappeared. The unity thus characterised is the true unity, and when truly known is the speculative or philosophical unity. Necessity as thus defined is seen to be something more than a simple idea or simple determinateness; and further, the disappearance of the opposite characteristics in something higher is not merely our act ... but expresses the very nature and action of these characteristics themselves, since they are united in one characteristic. So too ... these two moments of necessity ... that its mediation with an Other is in itself, and that it does away with this mediation and posits itself by its own act because of this very unity, are not separate acts. In the mediation with an Other it relates itself to itself, that is, the Other through which it mediates itself with itself is itself. ... Thus as an Other it is negated, it (viz. Necessity is negated) is itself the Other, but only momentarily – momentarily, however, without introducing the quality of time into the notion, a quality which first appears when the notion comes to have a definite existence.

Is there a down-grading of existence here?

This Other-Being or otherness is essentially something which disappears in something higher, and it is in determinate existence also that it appears as a real Other (Christ). But the absolute necessity is the necessity which is adequate to its notion or conception.

Who does not see that this is simple, even classical Trinitarianism? It is just this that Hegel has declared adequate to, as indeed shaping, philosophical conception. I will conclude this by remarking that the depths of this Self in

Other matrix he uses so extensively are all too often passed over or not noticed. The finding of self in other could well be regarded as the supreme human happiness, however, often spoken of as being “in love”. This helps us to see how the hard-headed McTaggart could speak of this state as the only state in which we begin to perceive reality (apart, I suppose, from philosophical analysis), this being that fundamentally we are in heaven, needing only to accept or consent to this. He is careful to stress, however, that this in its proper or heavenly state is no matter of “going from flower to flower”, in company with Yul Brinner as King of Siam. There is rather identity in difference all round and without change, though McTaggart somewhat dilutes the traditional Christian image here in his desire to preserve the specialness of the “nearest and dearest”. The Christian idea, based on this Hegelian absorption of finitude, as this in turn is based on the former, is that the furthest removed become the nearest and dearest. There is no place for reserve in eternity, the love-state is all-conquering and that without effort. One has internalised effort too, namely. So love here, if sovereign, can only correspond to genuinely Absolute Knowledge, where, since it is unlimited, no facet of it is closer to any limit or boundary, there being none such, nor, therefore, to love either.

Thus is every particular love perfected, just as it is with the prime or “unmoved mover” of the all which, again, is himself, i.e. is Self. Anything less is impossible as, it means the same, not finally conceivable. This is the Absolute, also called the Absolute Idea as intrinsic to this notion. Logic, in the system, thinks itself into Spirit, each of the three having “personally” the same absolute nature. As mediating this we have the incarnate Son or Word redeeming or “buying back” along with, and yet one with, alienated Nature groaning and travailing as looking for its redemption again, as the Apostle writes. This is surely one redemption, redemption as such, namely, or it would not belong here. The resultant all-in-all corresponds to what we say above about eternal love in its total and “othering” mutuality. This indeed “is a consummation devoutly to be wished”, the disclosure, simply, that “reality is friendly”.<sup>13</sup>

#### TWELFTH LECTURE:

In the previous lecture the notion or conception of absolute necessity was explained, of absolute necessity, I repeat. ... Absolute necessity is abstract,

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<sup>13</sup> I owe this arresting phrase, as already mentioned, to Professor Leo Elders, SVD, of Rolduc Seminary, Netherlands, author of *The Metaphysics of Being of Saint Thomas Aquinas* as of *Autour de saint Thomas d'Aquin I&II* and similar works.

the abstract pure and simple, inasmuch as it depends on itself and does not subsist in or from or through an Other.

The next sentence is essential:

But we have seen that it is not only adequate to its notion or conception (viz. this absolute necessity), whatever that notion be, so that we were able to compare this notion and its external existence, but that it represents this very adequacy itself. (parenthesis added)

What is Hegel's meaning here? He tells us:

Thus what might be taken as the external aspect *is contained in itself* so that this very fact that it depends on itself, this identity or reference to self which constitutes the isolation of things *in virtue of which they are contingent* is a form of independence which again is really a want of independence, ... (stresses added)

That is, it has this want in itself or independently and so will satisfy it in and from itself (in perfect act, as one might say).

“Possibility is an abstraction of the same kind” as absolute necessity since, he now explains, “A thing is possible if it does not contradict itself, that is, it is what is merely identical with itself, ... while, on the other hand, it has not its Other within itself”, as does absolute necessity. So

Contingency and possibility differ only in this, that the contingent has in addition a definite existence. The possible has only the possibility of existence. But the contingent itself has an existence *which has absolutely no value beyond being a possibility*; it is, but quite as much it is not. (stress added)

We have in germ here the solution to the classical problem of God's knowledge of future contingents, in addition, and yet it is the same, to their not being future for absolute or divine knowledge. The knowledge of it, namely, *remains* knowledge of possibility, as it is for us, and the apparent outcome adds nothing. What has happened is not different from what could happen, i.e. *there are no events*, while as having happened it is no longer an event but a simple (non-temporal) moment of absolute self-knowing, which can have no truck with the merely possible, being omni-determinative. Hence possibility is indeed a mere “modality” as necessity and actuality, contrary to Kant's view, are not. Possibility “belongs only to subjective thought. It is otherwise with Actuality and Necessity” (*Enc.* 143).

So determinate, contingent Being “is virtually a nullity, and consequently the transition to its Other, to the Necessary, is already expressed in that existence itself”, exactly as we have been outlining (from Hegel) above. What God knows (logically) becomes *ipso facto* necessary, his ideas, his “moments”, being each identical with his essence (cp. Aquinas, *Summa theol.* Ia 15 for how this must be so, whether or not we still wish to call this knowledge). This, anyhow, is the knowledge implied in the spiritual counsel, e.g. of St. Francis de Sales<sup>14</sup>, viz. “Accept everything”.

Contingency then, thus separately viewed,

is an instance of the same thing as we have in abstract identity, which is a simple reference to self; it is known as a possibility, and being a possibility it is recognised that it is not yet anything. The fact that something is possible does not really imply anything. Identity is characterised as sterility, and that is what it really is. (*LPEG*, Speirs, p.93)

This judgment, we should not forget, was applied first to the notion of an exclusively transcendent God, in abstraction from the knowing or loving the other as self and conversely, whether on the part of God or of man or of Spirit generally and as such in final philosophical truth. So

Necessity is not abstract, but truly absolute, solely in virtue of the fact that it contains the connection with an Other in itself, that it is self-differentiation but a differentiation which has disappeared in something higher and is ideal.

Ultimately, we might say here, “I and my Father are one”. The ideality in question is of virtually indefinite extent - here we rejoin the true force of the posit of divine transcendence, viz. the nothingness of anything not itself, of anything less close to itself than divinity to it. Mind has ever known this truth, since it constitutes it. Thus even before Augustine, before, for that matter, the “Christ-event” (only known by us as “event” or in time), the Psalmist had declared: “In thy light we shall see light”, an insight Aquinas did not destroy in modifying Augustine’s account of it. Or, in a further identification, “The natural law is the eternal law”. “In my beginning is my end”, first and last, alpha and omega. “This also is thou, neither is this thou.” “I will put my law within their hearts”, the prophet had declared, but only because it is there already, constituting mind in what must become Hegel-pinnpointed self-consciousness (which is not thereby “Hegelian”, this denial

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<sup>14</sup> Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God*. 1616, Transl. Rt. Rev. John K. Ryan (2 vols.), Tan Books, Rockford, Illinois, 1974 (originally 1963, Image Books, Doubleday and co.).

being Hegel's main insistence, echoing that aboriginal "I do nothing of myself").

Unfree or finite necessity is also (along with its infinite and opposite, absolute necessity) thus called "inasmuch as mediation in general is essential to necessity" (94). "Absolute necessity ... transforms any such relation to an Other into a relation to itself", in "inner harmony", to cite what was perhaps McTaggart's favourite concept, in all his, apparently at least, ignorant disregard of Trinitarianism. "Spirit rises above contingency and external necessity, just because these thoughts are in themselves insufficient and unsatisfying".

Hegel now speaks here, eloquently, of "that power of abstraction from everything, whereby the heart can make itself the grave of the heart" (95). He concludes here by outlining the traditional religious attitude only to go on to recommend an apparent going beyond it. We must see, turning to Lecture XIII following, where he was going, in considering "that process in the theoretical form, which is the point we have specially to deal with". For "we have now to compare the explanation given of the act whereby Spirit raises itself to God with that to be found in the formal expression which is called a proof" (98-101) of God.

#### THIRTEENTH LECTURE:

"The difference between them seems slight", i.e. between "spirit's act of raising itself to God" and proof, Hegel notes, in harmony perhaps with his reference to "what is called a proof" only. As he will show it seems to be so formally unless interpreted speculatively, this again recalling the tie-up of speculative thought with contemplation or "what used to be called Mysticism" (*Enc.* 82, *Zus.*) and indeed still is, as McTaggart for one witnessed.

"Because what is material is contingent therefore there exists an absolutely necessary Essence". So run the connected ideas. Hegel calls it a hypostatisation of Absolute Necessity as (an) Essence. One may do this, but "the Essence is still indeterminate, and ... not a subject or anything living, and still less is it Spirit". Important is that two forms of Being are connected, thus ruling out concluding to an absolute Essence in advance, as is often, if differently, remarked of the First Cause argument, viz. that everything has a cause and therefore there is a thing that does not have a cause.

The same if differently! That is the hallmark and kicking-off point of speculative thinking, thought's natural and universal form, as Hegel regularly remarks. It is only "external necessity" that can survive this, where one thing is conceptually dependent on another, as in Disraeli's reply to



Dean Inge's liberal theology: "No doctrine, no Dean", hovering between the theoretical and the practical, as also in the saying, or threat, of the same form and yet unambiguously practical, the distinction now seen to be purely one of emphasis or degree, "No pay-rise, no work". There is, that is to say, no separable "practical truth", the theoretical being also itself practical. This insight underlies the doctrine, emphasised by Hegel, of the certainty of faith as such, which itself, however, can be taken as removing the hovering, the ambiguity, even of truth and certainty themselves as antecedent pair. What is true, once granted at least, is certain; what is certain is true. Truth, anyhow, becomes something that is done, "act" in Aristotelian terms. This is important, again, for the theology of the Word (of God), as Karl Rahner has noted (compare also the article on Hegel's use of Plato's *Philebus* cited above). The Yorkshire "Where there's muck there's brass" would be another example, as at once judgment and directive. Consider in this regard the term "verdict". Another example might be "Any God will be eternal" (i.e. and not merely "would"), where, however, we start to see that necessity, where absolute and not external merely, will finally demand identity of what is doubled in immediate thought or ideality, as in or by Hegel's defining phrase "the ideality of the finite".

External necessity anyhow, and for the same reason, falls short of logical rigour. What is proposed as different to start with can never end up as the same, not unless you say first, with Hegel and the Idea generally, that two differents are the same in that very relation of difference as logical, as what is possible merely is equally not at all, as not actual. In other words, the argument we are criticising proceeds from the false to the true as if dependent upon the false, as if the infinite might depend for its being upon the finite. It is only our own reasoning, our knowing, that thus depends, he will go on to say, just as my knowing *anything* depends upon the seeming contingency of my having been born, of such and such parents, in such a place and time, etc. Again, it is only we who look back to a beginning, which is why the first sentence of *Genesis*, "In the beginning God created ...", has to be interpreted speculatively, as Augustine had seen. Creation is outside time as including it. It does not change God. It is thus the prime analogy with the Trinitarian divine Word, the Other, within God. Thus "all things were made by him", viz. the Word, this being the (prime) exemplar for the causal aspect of analogy or why there is, in Cajetan's phrase, an "analogy of names" particularly only if analogy is not itself purely and simply an analogy of names, is more general. This exemplar of the word, rather, thus makes our own finite univocities themselves analogical with that from which they are all named, from which all that is other than God comes to be

(the “causal” aspect). Hegel’s thought thus resolves this classic problematic without himself needing to mention analogy, or not here at least.

This Word then is the Other within God by and with and in whom (not less than “whom” but maybe more) all that is other comes to be, again, as including, as a possibility, angels, a point I would defend as reconcilable with Hegel’s account of the origin of Good and Evil, say, as at *Phenomenology of Mind*, VII C.<sup>15</sup> As for reconciliation, this is the prime, universal or ecumenico-political and hence ethical task governing all thinking or other action. Thus Hegel is absorbedly Trinitarian while Trinitarianism must be Hegelian as absorbing this account.

Absolutely Necessary Being cannot be mediated by the Other, by contingent Being. This must thus be equated with Nothing, therefore, in the measure in which the former Being is conceived at all, this being the overthrow of the Possible as an abiding or logical category. The possible might just as well not be, while, in consequence, observation or dreams indifferently, thus far, are neither here nor there, are not. Thus the absolutely necessary is the unconditioned. It is in this sense that God is termed “incomprehensible”, as Hegel acknowledges, viz. as an effect of our thinking only and not in himself (as self-comprehended).

The whole difficulty can be seen to depend upon a failure to distinguish “because” and “since”, the latter being the conjunction regularly “taking” a subjunctive or counter-factual tense of the verb in the classical grammar, as referring to ideality merely. “Conditionateness”, possibility, dependence, these or this (they are one as contingency) “relation is present only in an absolutely subjective sense”. “The entire development of the connection”, that is, “is seen only in the act of proof. It is only our knowledge of the absolutely necessary which is conditioned by that starting-point”. But God “cannot be something mediated by another”. So “It is the content of the proof itself which corrects the defect which is visible only in its form”. Yet “this content is not itself devoid of form ... Its own form as being the form of the True is itself true, and the form which differs from it is for that reason the Untrue” (99).

Hegel will now show that “as existing in this form of the process of reasoning ... the elevation of Spirit to God has not been correctly explained in that proof of the existence of God which it constitutes” (p. 102, stress added, cf. p.99). Thus knowledge is in general “a finite act”, is not “absolute knowing”, even though some would insist that “I know that *p*” implies *p*, i.e. someone’s, anyone’s, knowing that *p* would imply (the truth of) *p*.

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<sup>15</sup> Consider the evangelical remark on children, that “their angels behold the face of my Father in heaven”. They seem to be more the children than the children themselves. Otherwise why not stay with the latter?

Recourse to the conditional here, though, betrays the doubt as to whether anyone, short of absolute knowledge itself, ever does know that *p* in this after all absolute sense or even a doubt as to whether God himself is alone and uniquely *p*, i.e. the unique object of knowledge, all else being known, if at all, *in* (hence as) him, not, we have seen, as abstract possibility ever but as multi-faceted actuality, each facet or “moment” being nothing but a door, an opening into the whole which is all, including in the first place the one entering, the would-be knower. Thus Hegel here does not rationalise but gives the *ratio* of the *lumen gloriae* of traditional theology. Viewed properly, that is, it is not an awakening to find ourselves “on the cold hillside” or in disenchantment, but rather the opposite, abstraction from which, Hegel would be arguing, is ignorance rather than disenchantment. So if, in general, we cannot know God without sharing God’s own self-constitutive absolute self-knowledge then what, in the abstraction of our finitude, can we know at all? It is in this sense that Hegel insists that it is God and only God who is the revealed, who is revelation itself, the sole but blessed vocation of thought. The debate, that is, the doubt, is shifted to *p*. What *p*? Is *p*, in its finitude, an object for Absolute Knowledge, since it is manifestly the contingent, the merely possible as such, that we have been talking about here? It is not such an object, since such knowledge, the Idea, erases both possibility and objectivity as finite categories merely. God knows only himself in self-begetting, to use what is not so much metaphor as the prime or generative instance, of generation, of begetting, Hegel here too giving the rationale of faith as itself knowledge. We truly know “by faith”, called in Scripture the overcoming of the world, by a victory, nothing other than self-abnegation in “resurrection”, as it has to be. Hegel’s thought simply lays this bare, returning us to the situation of the first apologists, of Justin Martyr, claiming faith as the constitutive principle of, again, *sophia*, claiming, that is, that the *philia* it replaces has not been and cannot be fruitless, this in turn revealing the necessity of a divine or absolute death or of the absorption of the finite, its cancelling, in the infinite, this cancelling and/or sublation being, in absolute religion, which is what it now comes down to, Hegel claims, “the wondrous Cross on which the King of Glory died”. Such is philosophy’s “grey on grey” as Hegel himself calls it, the death to representational thinking which is also, it itself, implied, called for even, in this religious account, i.e. in representation itself already, self-denial in a word. We are where the seeing of God is God’s seeing us, as knowing that we otherwise “know nothing”, the ultimate sense of knowing nothing “of God”.

This, however, Hegel would show, is just what the “proofs”, taken as such, simply have to miss. God knows only himself, in and as whom,

therefore, we must “live and move and have our being”, i.e. it is so. Thus Aquinas insists that God has no real relation with us or anything finite, though we are really related to him, as men, or in this case Aquinas, speak. Regrettably? Should he not already have developed explicit absolute idealism, developing the changes required in previous theology and proclamation, or at least the former? This question is impertinent, strictly, as demanding that Aquinas place himself in the future temporal and cultural situation of his, as it happens, Protestant successor. No one can do this, Hegel himself insists, thus requiring us to develop also his thought, not confusing the Notion with the “primitive”, as he puts it. Besides which, the question of what Aquinas “really thought” is strictly unanswerable. Only thinking knows, posits, itself, in *autoctisis* as Gentile called it. God has identity with his own ideas only, which are therefore, it seems necessary to conclude, not strictly “of us” if God has no real relation with us. This implies, in turn, however, *pro parte objecti*, that we as seemingly concrete but just therefore, in our plain separateness, abstract individuals, are not. This, one cannot help noting, is the plain admission imposed by the evangelical precept of *self-denial*, seen now to include denial *that* I am, necessarily, more radically than our indeed grey “unselfishness” as an ideal merely. It is a call to action, of worship or some other kind, not more in fact than an extension of the former rather than “other”. It is by this that philosophy is rated by Hegel as *höchste Gottesdienst* specifically.

Each divine idea, meanwhile, is identical, has to be, with God himself, Aquinas reasons<sup>16</sup>, in what is a kind of extension of the ordinary Aristotelian account of knowledge as such. Each idea is one with himself, in a different, more “intentional” way, so to say, than are the “natural” or spiritual objects thus thought with us, though each of these, or of us, is nothing considered apart (from its idea in God, just the merely apparent paradox disclosed in Hegel’s discussion of contingency as set forth above). “Turn but a stone and you touch a wing”. That is, all bushes are burning, all humans thus thought are ideated, loved (and not merely loveable). The misapprehended “part” (as apart), any, is the whole, as is logical, Hegel claims.

This finitude, this “element of inadequacy” (100), cannot involve the comprehension (*com-prehensio*) of the absolutely necessary, of the infinite.

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<sup>16</sup> *Summa theol.* Ia Q 15. Compare our remark on “angelism” above, the status of our or children’s “angels”. Newman’s Gerontius, perhaps himself, in the poem of his “dream”, is accompanied by his angel (towards “purgatory”). The relation thus represented, i.e. in art, must in reality be closer, a genuine take-over in fact, we are implying. Maritain saw this clearly, thus condemning in the first place Cartesianism on just this head, i.e. as “angelism” specifically, not seeing “the unity of philosophical experience” behind the difference of times and places.

This truth coexists with Hegel's emphasis on God as revelation (of himself). Revelation is not separable from absorption of the finite other, otherness as such being one with (identical with) identity in the Absolute Idea, itself properly the infinite, contrary to McTaggart's objection that Hegel here, as it were arbitrarily, gives this term "infinite" a quasi-private sense. This, in fact, is the properly Trinitarian "moment", with which McTaggart never systematically comes to grips. This absorption, anyhow, is the divine self-knowing of it all, of itself as all. Here belongs the saying, "He that (i.e. whoever) has seen me has seen the Father", i.e. it belongs with such absorption rather than with reduction, as in Feuerbach, though the latter's thought, too, may surely be granted its moment. "What is man? What is God?" The philosopher Pope (Wojtyla), in throwing out that two-in-one query for public meditation, would not have been ignorant of the Sartrean variant, "Either God exists or man does". Man, as abstractly conceived, Hegel's view is plain, does not exist, is not, is, we shall find, the necessarily contingent, as Nature herself, a necessary moment, nonetheless, of Hegel's system, the point denied by Gentile. It is this subtle or, rather, profound point, the necessity of the contingent, with which Hegel is chiefly concerned in these posthumous Lectures. We are concerned here with the liberation "which thinking means" and to which, with this term "liberation", Hegel does not deny application there in identification, clearly, he indeed affirms, of the terms "I", "free Spirit", "love" and, indeed, "blessedness" (*Enc.* 159). In fact he is restating the classic doctrine of the *visio beatifica* just mentioned, only de-sacralised in or because of a more general consecration, the absorption of art and religion, by identity of content, into "free Spirit", the Idea as final *sophia*, that is to say. "Consider the lilies of the field" and what is there said of them: that, I do not doubt, is what the Hegelian system is set, finds itself set and/or sets itself, to approach. Any system indeed must thus set itself and this necessarily more than the included setting of it by its discoverer or deviser. This theorem is a kind of *Leitmotif* in Hegel's systematic "science of logic". It is in a similar way that the Ontologist principle that God is revealed to Mind *as being it*, is as such not contradicted by the limitations of individual subjective consciousness as we experience them. "Just as we see sensible things without seeing the essence of the sun, so we can see things intellectually without seeing the essence of God" (Aquinas, *Summa theol.* Ia 12, 11 *ad* 3). No two situations are quite the same, however, and the "just as" here is of finite application. Seeing "intellectually", in the final application of this term, by Hegel's system, excludes any proper intellection of any one aspect in abstraction from its place in the whole, which alone is the true or genuine and absolute Idea. Logic rules, itself properly whole and entire. In this sense indeed, and

“without analogy”, all things do indeed “coalesce”, analogous though that term itself, “coalesce” must be. They do not coalesce “in one” (Aquinas’s objection) while yet, in their common difference from one another, they do. Does this mean that analogy is “our affair” only (as Ralph McInerny more or less claimed)? Not at all: it is rather the very backbone of the omnipresent identity in difference of Hegel’s system, but as fused with the explicit univocity of only God knowing himself, the very *raison d’être* of the *lumen gloriae* or principle of “beatific vision” where man, any man, “shall know as I am known” and only so or, indeed, thereby.

In general, “The knowledge which has an absolutely necessary, infinite content, must itself be absolutely necessary and infinite”. Hegel here reaches the ground axiom of ascetical or mystical theology, once captured, or left free, in Cardinal Journet’s title, *The Dark Knowledge of God*, though why dark, we might, with Hegel, wonder, unless it is a case of “night shall be my light ... more lovely than the dawn”, but here we are plainly at the finite level of poetic representation merely, necessary and salutary for our lives as this may be. “In God is light and in him there is no darkness at all”, writes another authority. So it is a case, not wishing to be irreverent at all, of “Night and day you are the one”, in the unity of love everywhere. “What do I love when I love my God?” This is the question of Augustine’s, or perhaps, rather, his asking it, that so fascinated the much maligned Jacques Derrida.

Thus we wrestle once more with this infinite Content given by “immediate knowledge, faith, feeling, and such like” as leaving “the Form in this shape alone” though, nonetheless aiming “to deal with the Form in the more definite shape in which it appears in the proof which forms the subject of discussion” here, he reminds us. The two are not to be abstractly separated as, from superficially opposed sides, in Jacobi or the rationalists.

Turning to the proof, its defect lies in its affirming “a contingent world as existing”, we find that

The contingent, the finite, is expressed in terms of what has Being; but it is on the contrary characteristic of the finite that it should have an end and drop away, that it should be a kind of Being which has the value of what is merely a possibility and which may either be or not be.

“The fundamental error is found in the form of an ordinary syllogism” and its “connections”, where the content of the premises permanently remains. Otherwise, it is assumed, the Other cannot be “some kind of consequence”. This is the mathematical taint also of syllogistic which many, however, have identified with logic as such, as is exemplified in the misrepresentation of syllogisms by the Venn diagrams, where syllogistic gets misread as the

merest fraction of true logical theory while the fundamental truth that the premises *cause* rather than *contain* the conclusion is not understood. By this, however, logic is rendered entirely useless, as exploring relations that are “entirely finite”.

In fact, however, the syllogism (as distinct from a mere *modus ponens* argument) “has a substantial existence of its own outside of the relation” between the two sides, between finite and infinite. Taken together they “constitute the Absolutely-necessary” or, as Hegel elsewhere asserts, “everything is a syllogism”. It, everything, is not a *modus ponens* argument (p. 101).<sup>17</sup>

The characteristic which the two different elements taken together constitute, and which is itself simply one, is the Absolutely-necessary. Its name at once declares it to be the Only-one, what truly is, the only reality ... the mediation which returns into itself ...

That is, its notion is Trinitarian (as a two- and eventually three-in-one). There is suggestion and more in Hegel that this self-mediation is more central to the doctrine than is any number, however. Thus a Canadian philosopher, again, declared that McTaggart, as Hegelian, really proposes a “trinity” of countless persons. Similarly, in the Gospel, the originally one devil declares that “we are many” (his very name is “legion”), before possessing that unfortunate herd of pigs. In “one” word, *numeri non ponuntur in divinis* (Aquinas), or “It is useless to count” (Hegel).

Hegel calls this Trinitarianism “the Absolutely-necessary’s notion”, evidently specifically, underlining this necessary Trinitarianism as the epitome of the speculative or of the same as being different and conversely, really so and not just as some “self-conflicted” outcome of language, though some would interpret Hegel so, as what *must be* his “hidden agenda”, thus ending up not discussing or reading Hegel at all. They certainly do not read this text we are presently discussing, not well if at all known in the first century after his death, as it happens. Alternatively, idiomatic notion has to be, so to say naturally, absorbed into any notion of the notion as such. This was Wittgenstein’s insight after all, viz. that “the limits of my language are the limits of my world”, compatible, however, with its having no limits, the Russellian point about “existential import” or its lack, a point or “situation” really having no place in logical reasoning in the sense of reasoning about logic as such, however, as being one of the categories

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. our “The Interdependence of Semantic, Logic and Metaphysics as Exemplified in the Aristotelian Tradition”, *International Philosophical Quarterly* 42, No. 1, March 2002, pp. 63-91.

reasoned about, those objects of logic found to be, as finite moments of thought, not the logical object, the Concept transcending existence. Hegel, though, might set a zero mark to both “insights” inasmuch as my world is the only world, that of thought, independent and self-abiding but certainly not limited. Neither did Wittgenstein assert this directly, if one would consider. His dictum, that is, is compatible with “my” language, its potentialities, having no limits, not even that of the subject-predicate relation language must yet employ in dismantling the same, as Hegel unabashedly shows.

Yet the Other, Hegel says, is taken up and preserved merely as something ideal. There is some ambiguity in the Speirs English text, whatever be the case in the German. The Absolutely Necessary or One, however, has already been posited as constituting two as one. So we may infer a probable switch from Word to world, which is quite legitimate, since world is thought in and by this one Word. This is what lies behind Hegel’s or Wittgenstein’s stress that “the world (nature) is in order as it is”, without contrast of rind and inner essence. In general, here and throughout Hegel’s mature writings, “The Word ... is the world’s ‘ideal truth’; the world is the ‘phenomenon of the Word’, evil included”.<sup>18</sup>

Still, or likewise, it is maintained as a premise that “the contingent is”, which, Hegel has shown, is inherently contradictory, while from a false premise, as we know, anything might follow, even, as in this case, its contradiction (note, though, that to state or affirm this inherent contradiction as what nonetheless is, this is just what is affirmed as true and not false). Also Plato had affirmed that the contingent things, the “things which are seen” (St. Paul) “both are and are not” and/or, in the Apostolic variant, “are passing away”, the role of *time* for the contingent being here paramount, as it is in Hegel. The argument being criticised, namely, ultimately “proves”, from the being of the contingent, that the contingent is not. Nor is it, Hegel claims, having remarked this previously, referring only in the first instance exclusively to Spinoza’s philosophy:

But as things stand the Imagination of ordinary men feels a vehement reluctance to surrender its dearest conviction that this aggregate of finitude, which it calls a world, has actual reality; and to hold that there is no world is a way of thinking they are fain to believe impossible, or at least much less possible than to entertain the idea that there is no God. Human nature, not much to its credit, is more ready to believe that a system denies God than that

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. Georges van Riet, “The Problem of God in Hegel”; Parts II & III, in *Philosophy Today*, Summer 1968 (Part I in the Spring issue), pp. 75-107, p. 89.



it denies the world. A denial of God seems so much more intelligible than a denial of the world. (*Enc.* 50)

The prime example of this for English readers is surely the incredulous reaction of H.G. Wells to whatever he glimpsed of the Hegelian system as outlined and defended by McTaggart, for whom our world is “misperceived”. Absolute necessity, however, “is the whole of Being” (Speirs, *LPEG*, 101).

Not because the contingent is, but, on the contrary, because it is non-Being, merely phenomenal, because its Being is not true reality, the absolute necessity is. This latter is its (the contingent’s) Being and truth. (101, parenthesis added)

But

This moment of the Negative is not found in the form taken by the syllogism of the Understanding. And this is why it is defective when it appears in this region which is that of the living reason of Spirit, in the region, that is, in which absolute necessity itself is considered as the true result, as something which indeed does mediate itself through an Other, but mediates itself with itself by absorbing the Other.

Stated thus we seem to have “The Analogy of God and the world”<sup>19</sup>. The Other in question, however, indeed all and any otherness, itself proceeds from Spirit *ad extra*, to use the term of Aquinas without implying denial of Hegelian absorption (recall the Scholastic tag, *plura entia sed non plus entis*), at least, as a proceeding (*processio*) in its very difference one with the Trinitarian *processiones ad intra*. Which is metaphor for which here, we might ask, absorption for contingent nothingness or contrariwise?

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Behind this lies the necessity of “incarnation”, of the personalisation, so to say, of mediation, as Hegel explains. Nor was this necessity an invention of Duns Scotus, seeming to contradict the *felix culpa* (as solely occasioning it) stressed by Aquinas and Augustine (or St. Paul, arguably), since, as Hegel shows and insists, sin, put figuratively as a “fall” (figuratively, since there

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<sup>19</sup> Title of Hampus Lyttkens’ doctoral thesis for Uppsala University in the 1950s, a copy of which was lent to me by Peter Geach at Leeds in the 1970s for consultation while working on my own thesis for him.

can be no fall or escape from Absolute-necessity), is itself included therefore in the same Absolute-necessity, whether we finite beings, such as we are, do good or evil, this duo also being of the character of a “moment”. Everyone and everything, Hegel reasons, inclusive of created freedom as such, has its “appointed place” in and as the Idea. The *culpa*, indeed, is only thus *felix*, included indeed in omni-determinative divine knowledge, thus creative in its essence and subject to no other reality. By this our freedom is most free when it knows itself thus determined and hence free of all contingent factors, necessity and freedom being thus *one* in the Absolute, in the Spirit. Accept everything, submit to death, everything including here however the inward (and yet imposed) need for continuous effort. *Wer strebt, den können wir retten*, say the angels in the Prologue to Goethe’s *Faust*. By Hegel’s logic, indeed, atheism is not atheism, one-sidedly, as its occasional proclamation from the divine or absolute citadel of the poetic art confirms. “The devils believe and tremble” thus becomes a figure of this omni-comprehensive truth, something the Devil kept rather quiet about when Dostoyevsky put him as appearing to Ivan Karamazov. Hence, anyhow, he or they (the devils) begged trustingly to be allowed to enter the swine, their perverted wills notwithstanding. Religious people tend to joke about this and there is indeed a case, in logic, for making out the speculative intellect to be the fount of humour. God is thus necessarily humorous, playful, as some less than philosophical preachers have felt it profound to deny, while “he that dwelleth on high will laugh them to scorn”.

“Thus the course followed by that knowledge of necessity is different from the process that necessity is”. This is Hegel’s main point here. “Such a course is therefore not to be considered as simply necessary true movement, but rather as finite activity” and the same applies to what I am writing here. “It is not infinite knowledge” nor, of course, could anyone think it was. Thus the critic is the norm, there being nothing high that cannot or shall not be brought low, we hating our lives in this world, as it was put. Thus, too, humour is our consolation as we tread the road to Zion, fleet, supple, never growing old, everlasting joy upon our faces (cf. *Isaiah*), while yet we ask, with the novelist, “How can the gods see us face to face until we have faces?”<sup>20</sup>. We may know what we are, but we “know not what we shall be” (*I John*, 3:2, a text much admired by McTaggart).

In general, our knowledge “has not the Infinite for its content and for the basis of its activity” (101); rather, *ens mobile*, changeable being, is its proper object (Aquinas), and yet it is called, it summons itself, to be improper. This impropriety, again, is divine laughter, well-known to followers of Buddha

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<sup>20</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Till We Have Faces: a Myth Retold*, 1956.

but most of all at home with the Jews. Thus the venerable old Jew already mentioned, urged by enthusiastic threats of damnation to convert and be forgiven, mildly exclaimed: "Well why shouldn't God forgive me? After all, I have forgiven him." And that is indeed where it starts, in openness to the actual, as appears also in Hegel's account of dramatic Comedy. It *is* dramatic. "Call for me tomorrow and you will find me a grave man". "The Son of Man goeth, as it is written of him." That's the nothingness of the contingent Hegel so soberly sets forth, though it cannot but awake the fear of God, the "holy fear of the Lord", ground-form of spiritual gifts (seven, traditionally) in us. "The infinite appears only as this mediation with self through the negation of the negative" (p.102, top, q.v.), it being only itself that knows it in itself beyond appearance as also beyond "objecthood". So, "in thy light shall we see light" (Psalm "of David", systematised theologically in the doctrine of the *visio beatifica*), necessarily, in virtue of its infinity, actively granted only. This, surely, is the unavoidable fearsomeness of infinity, of reality, infinitely "friendly" though it must also be, we are finding.

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The defect which has been pointed out as existing in this form of the process of reasoning means, as has been indicated, that the elevation of the Spirit to God has not been correctly explained in that proof of the existence of God which it constitutes.

How does the elevation constitute the proof? One might have preferred to say "elicits" or similar. More correctly, then, we have not here a double world, whether simply or in conception. Rather, the one world is illusion, the other truth. Abandoning the former we do not even pass over to the latter but simply, in freeing ourselves of the former, find ourselves there, at home, in the midst of the "dark night more lovely than the dawn" as the mystic poet and philosopher, by training at least, had it. But in which one is the proof? Or has the *notion* of proof, rather, been transposed? "The world" here, anyhow, was then "nothing more than the point of departure", Hegel sums up. It is not "permanently fixed as a ground or basis to which Being ... could be attributed". This is his considered interpretation, assessment rather, of "made out of nothing" or creation and it is the exact opposite of "pantheism", there being no *panta* to be *theos* in a point, of departure or anything else. "We will hear thee again on this matter", laughed the men of Athens at Paul's proclamation of resurrection: we do not know, however, if he was willing or able to step out of his democratically phenomenalist or "religious" account into theological *sophia* as Absolute Spirit's own form

of itself, according to Hegel's interpretation of things as, especially, he presents them here. That is his view of "the perfect (or absolute) religion" able to cater for both groups at once, though proclaimed "in parables" or likenesses to the larger, scientifically to the more select, i.e. to the appointed proclaimers in its name. The evangelical selection of the twelve, disciples and witnesses in one, has no other basis. For Hegel two centuries ago this remained the situation as contrasting with the undefined one of the Greeks or wherever philosophy took its rise. If it has not changed then the theologians, those whose theology is, as with Aristotle, consequence of their metaphysics, are those now living and communicating divine *sophia* as concerning the Idea as "revelation itself", a formula open, however, to endless specification, it seems. What we call the medieval period, between before and after, was thus the first defective format of the "new" situation as found in one area and time, mirroring art as first but hence ground form of the three phases of Absolute Spirit, philosophy rather now fumbling, but by necessary paths, towards *sophia*. By a more fundamental schema, however, the first and ground form of Spirit, the Concept, is rather the death of God, scorning all writing except the INRI of Pilate, on a Roman cross made "tree of light". This is succeeded by the life of the faith-community it generates as consciously moving to the goal or Idea as Perfect Act, to recall Aristotle. Not one jot (or tittle) of all law or truth or being anywhere is to be lost without finding fulfilment in this, the "seed of Abraham forever", as the latter figure of all that is chosen is recalled not only in art, music, liturgy, but in all future religion, his being chosen as "father of them that believe", as is rational if faith is rational as obviating the need to see, eternal life being to *know* God rather. In that way one begins with faith in reason itself and it is an error to separate them, as Hegel in particular, Augustinian (faith as "thinking with assent") in this, affirms<sup>21</sup>. This moment of faith in reason must be included in any future development of the theology of "beatific vision", annulling as in vision fulfilling faith, the initiating "victory over the world".

What we have here, in Hegel's critique of proof as such, is philosophy in its own freedom, not tied to the demands of a finite institution, demands even Hegel had discreetly to recognise in his own situation, not after all different in that from the situation of the Popes themselves, none the less "in charge" for that.

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<sup>21</sup> See our "Faith as Thinking with Assent", *New Blackfriars*, January 2005, pp. 101-114.

The world, in these proofs then, is “nothing more than the *point* of departure”, I stress, the ladder to be kicked away. It is *not* “permanently fixed as a ground or basis to which Being ... could be attributed”, as it were independently. All satisfaction, even of a first principle, is “found to exist in the eternal world”, as “independent in-and-for itself”. Hegel’s diagnosis here reaches its term, is freed from its relative obscurity, as in the opening statement of the following.

#### FOURTEENTH LECTURE:

When we thus regard finite Being as standing in relation to itself only, it is merely for itself, and is not Being for an Other. It is consequently taken out of the region of change, is unchangeable and absolute. This is how the matter stands with these so-called conceptions. (p. 107)

That is, they are not the Concept; as abstractions they are false to the final reality as itself positing the unreality of all that is finite and contingent, not least therefore life itself, Spirit’s primary *figure* merely, as wind figures freedom and hence, necessarily, final Absolute-necessity in both cases, life or wind, the “breath of life” as we say. However, *viventibus esse est vivere*. It is just therefore, since being is not simply life. that we must forsake life, even while living it, “use the world as though we used it not” (St. Paul), even “hate our life in this world” (Gospel), nonetheless affectionately mediated by Brother Ass, the “body” in Franciscan tradition, so as to attain true life in the Spirit. I would maintain though that the heights of cultural life as a whole are no stranger to this, that culture passes *through* the estrangement from spirit it first represents, Hegel himself (and his contemporaries?) being perhaps the main instance of this, if we abstract at least from the Jewish variant.

Yet, Hegel at first strangely adds, we may think:

Those, however, who assert the impossibility of any such transition will not admit that the finite is absolute, unchangeable, imperishable and eternal.

They *cannot* do so in the nature of the case, that is to say, though logically, he means, they should, since for them finite Being stands as absolute, for itself only. So what, then? It seems he is referring to a specific error of the contemporary *Aufklärung*. Yet he is at least equally asking if the “medieval error of the Schools ... really mattered much since we might certainly regard these abstractions as of no account compared with the fulness of spiritual

life found in religion". That is, he is asking (this is the background) if the difference between Catholic and Protestant really matters or, more nearly, whether the virtually canonised "moderate realism", in the former case, prohibits Christian and even general "religious" unity.

His first or immediate answer is to belittle or dismiss, it seems, "the fulness of spiritual life found in religion", but especially its contemporary variant, as constituting, it is claimed, "the great and really living interest of Spirit", for among these "so-called" interests, as he reflexively calls them, "it is *exclusively the finite* which constitutes the true interest". This is "only too evident from the attention paid to religion in itself"! This intention, the "amount of study" involved, is confined to (scholarly) "history of the finite materials of the subject", as was not the case at all in the medieval Schools, they having little sense of or interest in history when abstracted from that found in the Bible at least, although there too the "mystical" interpretation of recorded events, as even the idea of an event as such (here Hegel follows them), was taken as superior, after the example of Jesus himself, who surely hardly cared whether Moses lifting up the serpent or Jonah swallowed by a whale were historical fact or not. They figured *Him*, as would soon appear in "the Bible" itself as it came to be received by Christians.

In his day, Hegel states, therefore, again, "the infinite element ... has been confessedly reduced to a minimum." Here the philosopher appears to set his face against "religion" as did Plato and Socrates in their day and as also, if differently, did Jesus in his, saying that "they that worship the Father shall worship Him in spirit and in truth", acknowledging, it will emerge, in the same document, that "I and my father are one", that in seeing me you see that one, unity itself, all in each, we may therefore go on to add, affirming rather than surrendering the uniqueness of the mediator. I here deny Daniel Jamros's interpretation of Hegel. One could perhaps see it as on all fours with interpreting this last statement of Jesus as atheistic, for better or worse. He was indeed taken in this way by many.

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So: "It is by the employment of thoughts and of these abstract categories of Finite and Infinite that the renunciation of the knowledge of truth is supposed to be justified." There, again, we have it – the categories of finite and infinite are finally "abstract", due to his proclaimed, as however logically deduced, nothingness of the finite. This final nothingness of all the categories, as finally therefore of categorisation itself, is what distinguishes Hegel's thought *in toto caeli* from that of Kant, quite as much as Aquinas is distinguished from Aristotle and perhaps more so. Yet he simultaneously

justifies the “free play” of all such thoughts as these as “interests of Spirit” *since* it occurs “in the region of pure thought”, “in order that they may *there* have their real nature decided” (stress added), adding that “thoughts constitute the really inner substantiality of the concrete reality of Spirit”, this thought being itself a massive and concrete claim. All that he thus criticises is “conception of the Understanding”, asserting that “the Being of the finite is only its own Being” and not the Being of an Other, not transition itself (all talk of pantheism here would be a mere red herring). He will rather “take up the further idea which emphasises the element of knowledge”.

He begins *ad hominem*: “If it is agreed that Spirit does actually make this transition. then the fact of this transition is not a fact of knowledge, but of Spirit in general, and in a definite sense of faith”, rather. This might seem, astonishingly, directly to recall Hume in his *Dialogues on Natural Religion*. All will depend on Hegel’s “definite sense of faith” or on what is the sense of just that, as of “spirit in general”, the speculative as the property of every man, woman and child, though this may seem property reflexively known only to the speculative philosopher! There follows here a disquisition upon Thought as such, as (as such again) “elevation to God”, in direct line with the position outlined in the Logic at *Enc.* 159. The thought, thereby, of his atheist commentator McTaggart, for example, would be, for Hegel, an elevation to God of very high quality.

A difficulty might be that of knowing throughout to what extent if any he may be simply deferring to Jacobi. Here *Enc.* 61-78, the whole discussion, should be kept in mind. He rather picks out, though, it seems, what he himself finds true there:

*It has been sufficiently proved* that this act of elevation (cp. *Enc.* 24) to God, whether seen in feeling or in faith, or however you *choose* to define the mode of its spiritual existence, takes place in the inmost part of Spirit, in the region of thought. Religion as representing what concerns the innermost part of Man’s nature has its centre and the root of its movement in thought. God in His essence is thought, the act of thought itself (here we have Hegel’s Aristotelian core), *just as* the ordinary representation of Him and the shape given to Him in the mind, as well as the thought and mode in which religion appears, are *defined as* feeling, intuition, faith and so on. (108, parentheses added)

Consider, again, his contemporary Beethoven’s *dictum*, “Music is a greater revelation than the whole of religion and philosophy”, i.e. either just music or Art as Absolute Spirit and its “first form” at that. See also, again, *Enc.* 159: “For thinking means that, in the other, one meets with one’s self” – this is a constantly Trinitarian philosophy – “It means a liberation which is not the flight of abstraction, but consists in that which is actual having itself not

as something else, but as its own being and creation, in the other actuality with which it is bound up by the force of necessity”, i.e. as what “thinking means” in its infinite freedom, i.e. freedom as such. I need hardly add, as having mentioned it already, that meeting with self in the other, put here as the meaning of thinking, is the essence of *eros* as meaning love, fulfilled as agapetic or “in the will”, as especially Christians make explicit. We will, that is, want one another, i.e. want (as having it in *delectatio*) their joy. For self to be in the other it must be consumed, as is only begun in the marital union’s constitutive expression. The consequent membership *in* one another, itself a speculative expression, can only be expressly effected in what might otherwise be mistaken for a mutually cannibalistic meal. “He that eateth me shall live because of me”.

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So as distinct from thought, therefore, knowledge, knowing, really adds nothing, “does nothing beyond bringing this inward element into consciousness on its own account, beyond forming a conception of that pulsation of thought in terms of thought”. It seems as if he might add that inasmuch as knowing implies truth, so do the other forms of consciousness, “feeling, intuition, faith and so on”. Surely, though, they do this only when *recta*, as in *recta ratio*. But is there a criterion for this? Or is it not *ratio* itself that is *recta*, disdaining contradiction, while mere *freedom from* contradiction he has exploded as no more than empty possibility or non-being. Any criterion then would have to be some other form of conceptual “pulsation”, which might *appear* at first difficult to identify but could not be in essence difficult or hidden. This would be the problem of certainty *vis a vis* knowing. Certainty, as *appears* at least, can be erroneous, the fanatical state of “believing too lightly” (Aquinas on Mohammed’s followers) or Hegel’s “certainty against the Spirit” (cf. the *third* Introduction to the *Encyclopaedia* for this phrase).

This means, however, that “knowledge may appear one-sided” or as if “feeling, intuition and faith” were more essential to religion, closer to God “than his thinking notion ... as expressed in thought”. Yet “this inner element is present here too”, i.e. in thought. Hegel here echoes the mystical doctors’ teaching that spirit or mind transcends feeling and the rest, has no empirical content. Thought, he says, *consists* “in getting a knowledge” of this “inner element”, exemplifying, but as its *exemplar* virtually, general rationality as that “we know a thing in its general determinateness”, the *quod quid est*, merely misinterpreted as implying universal scientific



omnicompetence, quite obviously. Thought knows what it knows merely, e.g. that a man is approaching me but not, at first, that it is Pierre, say.

All these conceptual counters, though, he now reminds, “have the authority of a pre-conceived idea” culturally. They are final, as far as we can go and so, *ipso facto*, this finitude just is an “inability of reason to comprehend and know the True and the Infinite”. Our words are thus far “like magical formulas”, where we can’t go behind them at least, as in a measure he tries to do here, a linguistic philosopher indeed. Indeed, he finds, the term “knowledge”, if not the thing, “merely expresses the fact of the transition which Spirit itself makes.” Even “true” knowledge is but “a consciousness of the necessity which is contained in the transition itself”. It is “nothing save the act of forming a conception of this characteristic (necessity?) which is immanent and present in it” (*viz.* in the transition). The idea of scientific knowledge seems here to be discounted in the name of true science, as “of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”, we might say (cf. 109).

One might think that what is here translated as “knowledge” might better be served by “knowing”, the act, e.g. if the original were, say, *das Wissen* rather than *Wissenschaft* (I am unable right now to check this). Here Hegel repeats that this “immediate” knowledge of God “does not consist of an essential connection between the two sides, but is made in the form of a leap from one to the other”, such as music, for example, can communicate, or some words of a poem. One then sees the previous music as essentially leading up to this leap (the idea it suggests) and having no other role. It is instantaneous and bears some kinship with dramatic effect, as when Hamlet, with sudden authority, commands “Let the doors be shut”, loud and clear, having learned to rely on his dream, avenger pouncing after four “Acts” of circling round the prey.

#### FIFTEENTH LECTURE:

This then is the speculative determination. It remains true to the content of ordinary thought or conception, while, on the contrary, this content escapes abstract thought which asserts the independency of the two moments (*viz.* the contingent world and the Absolutely-necessary). It has resolved into its parts (i.e. the speculative determination has done so) the contingent which is the object of the Understanding. (117)

Thus,

The popular idea of contingency, limitation, finitude, phenomenon, involves the idea of definite Being, of definite existence, but at the same time it

substantially involves negation. Ordinary thought is more concrete and true than the Understanding which abstracts and when it hears of a negative too easily makes Nothing out of its pure Nothing, Nothing as such, and gives up all thought of its being in any way connected with existence in so far as existence is defined as contingent, phenomenal and so on ... Thought if it is to form a conception of the contingent, cannot allow these moments to be separated into a Nothing for itself and a Being for itself. For they do not exist in this form in the contingent; on the contrary, it comprises both in itself. They are therefore not to be taken as existing each by itself in connection with one another, nor is the contingent to be taken just as it is, as representing the connection between them. This then is the speculative determination ...

Again:

The peculiarly speculative aspect of the connection, however, still remains to be considered and we have here to indicate, without entering upon *this logical examination* in detail, what characteristic of this connection has reference to this speculative aspect. The moment to which attention has mainly to be directed ... is the fact that it is a transition (“a leap”, as at *Enc.* 50), that is to say, the point of departure has here the characteristic quality of something negative, has the character of contingent Being, of what is a phenomenon or an appearance only, which has its truth in the Absolutely necessary, in the truly affirmative element in this latter. (116)<sup>22</sup>

“The contingent, accordingly, as thus defined, represents what is a contradiction in itself” (117), as in the saying we noted, “This also is thou; neither is this thou”. This speculative resolution preserves the contingent object in its disappearance, thus annihilating, by transition, the connection as of two. When I take the train from Leeds to London I am no longer in Leeds. I might as well no longer, i.e. never, have been there. That is the speculative story-account of my quite ordinary life, of which death will be, is, rather, the final speculative resolution. “I will not remember their sins any more”. “I never knew you”. One needs courage to confront these life-giving, and yet life-denying, texts. Do I have it? Where will I get it if not for that and from that to which, as a philosopher, i.e. as “rational creature”, I am needing to transit? I have, answer, to be “already there”, self-consciously. But then I never left Leeds, say, or other abandoned places, dream-country one and all, as on awaking the child forgets the night to which sleep and its refreshment naturally corresponds. The mature man or woman returns to this at a more mediated, speculative level, as Hegel points out, he/she “leaves the path of mere natural being”, *differs* from “the natural

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<sup>22</sup> For “the logical examination” in detail see, for example, the relevant passages in my *Hegel’s System of Logic*, CSP, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 2019.

world” (*Enc. 24. Zus.* In this “second harmony” we *become*, in this, *as* little children, “very far” from having merely remained childish).

The dream is thus preserved, “defined as a contradiction”, dissolving itself, Nothing as “nothinging” itself. *Das Nichts nichtet*, also in this sense precisely. The following thirty lines or so summarise the very essence of Hegel’s thought. “Nothing does not contradict itself”. We are living this Nothing. That is to say, to give, again, the verdict of another:

It is not possible that this unity of knowledge, feeling and choice which you call your own should have sprung into being from nothingness at a given moment not so long ago; rather this knowledge, feeling and choice are essentially eternal and unchangeable and numerically one in all men, nay in all sensitive beings. But not in this sense – that you are a part, a piece, of an eternal, infinite being, an aspect or modification of it, as in Spinoza’s pantheism. For we should have the same baffling question which part, which aspect are you? What, objectively, differentiates it from the others? No, but inconceivable as it seems to ordinary reason, you – and all other conscious beings as such – are all in all. Hence this life of yours which you are living is not merely a piece of the entire existence, but is in a certain sense the whole, only this whole is not so constituted that it can be surveyed in one single glance.<sup>23</sup>

The truth of the contingent itself “is the Absolutely-necessary”. This “is posited as already resolved in the contradiction, is seen to be the affirmative which is contained in it” (118). It is speculative philosophy that puts these thoughts “in a completely connected form”, as “unfolded”. Hegel continues here:

The transition is rendered intelligible by the fact that it is not only implicitly contained in the starting-point, but that this latter directly suggests the transition, that is, this characteristic is also posited and is therefore in it (i.e. in the starting-point) ... In this way its determinate existence (or the transition’s) is *something given for consciousness*, which *makes use* of ordinary ideas just in so far as it has to do with immediate existence, which is here a determination or quality of thought (and nothing else, that is to say) ... Equally intelligible is the result, the Absolutely-necessary. (parentheses added)

This “can bring back into itself the going out of itself”, breaking off that finite connection of one with the Other, “and secure the final result”. It is

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<sup>23</sup> Erwin Schrödinger, cited in Daniel Kolak’s *I am You*, Pomona, New York, 2002, p. xv: See also our own *Hegel’s Philosophy of Universal Reconciliation*, CSP Newcastle-on-Tyne, 2013, p. 396, where this same passage is cited.

secured, then. “The Absolutely-necessary is because it is.” Thus the Other is set aside, in the transition, “and by this unconscious inconsequence satisfaction is secured.”

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This is all admittedly very hard to understand. In the earlier Dominican-Jesuit controversy of 1607 the Thomists stressed what was called “physical pre-motion”, namely that God was first mover of every free but created act as such, *making* the act free. This corresponds to theological pre-destination theory, but modified inasmuch as the “pre-” is denied to be temporal (but this might be so denied in Calvinist thought too?). To this also corresponds the wonder of that village schoolmaster Hegel cites as having a “simpler grade of culture” or similar. On seeing a cloud of gnats one summer evening the school-teacher, out walking with companions, expresses wonder at his thought that God must have knowledge, and that eternally, of every movement of wing or leg made by each of these insects. Hegel praises and yet dissents from this view, without saying quite why. One understands, however, that he is focussing on a deficiency *pro parte objecti* and not from the side of God, of the Subject. These mosquitoes, namely, are simply not actual at all. They are a pure possibility merely and whether they fly here or there, today or tomorrow (these times and places are themselves equally pure possibilities and hence actually nothing) is just not germane to anything. For the same reasons one can assert the non-actuality of temporal *events* in Hegel’s thought. Along these lines Hegel would just dismiss all the positions put forward in the controversy over contingency Aristotle poses concerning the sentence, “There will be a sea-battle tomorrow” outside Athens, and whether God knows this today. It is in this sense that Hegel can say at times, with Spinoza and, differently, Leibniz, it is a constant undertow, that there is no world, that life is a representation, so to say imaginary and so on. It is the primary evidence of the alienation of Nature in its present state.

So the contingent is ultimately a contradiction and, what’s more, this is the heart of Hegel’s philosophy, as McTaggart and others clearly saw. Yet it is “real”, as he stresses above, and this is what underlies the positive place he gives contradiction in his logical scheme, as motor of spiritual development of mind, namely. If this were not so he would not be able to say that the End is as such realised, and this is a further making precise of the position. The End is realised, namely, whatever happens or is done. Similarly, “The living being dies, because it is a contradiction” (*Enc.* 221, *Zus.*). This is precisely that “other-being” discussed above, with which the Infinite as such would reconcile itself. It is not a separate, free-standing

alternative, a duality, any more than is evil to good. Or, it is in fact evil, sham-being, the finite, the contingent. The goodness of creation resides in its being *in God* or “ideal”. For this reason it is a kind of double error when Scholastic realists try to say, they do say, that God *only* knows us in his idea of us (and not in ourselves). This idea is *the only reality*, the other-being actually other-*than*-being or Nothing, simply. So, given God, there is, in a true sense, no world (cp. *Enc.* 50). All this is thoroughly dealt with in the first sections of *The Phenomenology of Mind*, only people have difficulty in believing this.

For many years I took satisfaction in the Thomist account of our free will under God. It puzzled me therefore when my one-time teacher, Peter Geach, spoke of the divine *intentions*, infallibly to be realised, employing the figure of a chess super-grandmaster who determined before the start of any game precisely on which square and when he was going to mate the opponent, any opponent. He seemed to me to be relapsing into picture-thinking and perhaps he was, Hegel not being his strong point. I did not see underlying this a profound realisation of all contingency, all that is not God or of divine necessity, as “nothing walking”, so to say, though Hegel in fact says that contingency is as such necessary in the order of things. It is necessary that being and non-being should thus, and that initially, coincide. For that is part of the problematic here, that truth begins in error, in untruth, “for truth can only be where it makes itself its own result” (*Enc.* 212, *Zus.*), “only out of this error does the truth arise. In this fact lies the reconciliation with error and with finitude. Error or other-being (*that* is the point, again), when superseded, is still a necessary dynamic element of truth.”<sup>24</sup> What this new dimension of thought does, among other things, is bring out the incompleteness of the Thomistic account, based as it is upon moderate realism, that the created world is a second realm albeit awaiting judgment by and from the first realm as one with God himself. It was awareness of this fault that led Hegel to say of the in some ways *interim* philosophy of Leibniz that the latter had achieved a philosophy of “perfect contradiction”, qualified praise indeed.

What has this to do, though, with proving God, with the proofs of God’s existence? We may hope to find some answer to this in the final or sixteenth lecture immediately following.

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<sup>24</sup> *Eodem loco* (parenthesis and stress added).

## SIXTEENTH LECTURE:

Besides this One there is, however, the actual contingent world, Being with the quality of the Negative, the realm of limitations and things finite, and in this connection it makes no difference whether this realm is conceived of as a realm of external existence, of semblance or illusion, or, according to the definition of superficial idealism, as a merely subjective world, a world of consciousness.

Hegel equates freedom here with action according to an end, denying that it is a power merely. Even, it *is* an or the end. Thus “freedom is self-determination and what is active has self-determination implicitly as its end ... in so far as it spontaneously determines itself within itself”. Mere power, in its connection with potentiality, implies “an unreconciled element”, is “simply the act of self-projection”. This recalls his criticism of Herder’s account of God as power or “force”.

“Is this separation between form and matter”, implied in this notion of power (over matter as “pure potency”, namely; Hegel accepts this Aristotelian view of what matter would have to be, as at *Enc.* 129, but in order to deny, consistently and, in fact, with Aristotle, its actuality), “admissible?” The argument, here or in the earlier text, “shows that formless matter is a nonentity, a pure abstraction of the Understanding ... simply a product of reflection”; or “the identity of formlessness, this continuous unity of matter, is itself one of the specific qualities of form.” Matter “belongs to form ... God and matter are both the same” (Speirs, p.137 here, cf. *Enc.* 129: “Both are at bottom the same”)! They are “not yet absolute wisdom” (138). So “we take refuge in the Ontological Proof”, according to Kant. But God has no basis, is “not conditioned”, does not “have to be” from the outside, as just *any* argument applied to him would have it.

All this, though, is “merely the course followed by subjective knowledge”, while in truth “the ground from which we start disappears”, for speculative thought, “this defective side is itself removed by means of the result”. “That other Being is not true Being”, which is “found only in reason, the activity of eternal reason”. It is “not true Being, but only an appearance or semblance” (139):

If we consider form pure and simple we have Being in accordance with an end that is finite and, so far as form is concerned, its finitude consists in the fact that the end and means, or material in which the end is realised, are different. This is finitude.

In fact this is itself “the finitude of form”. What we actually have, rather, is “a teleological activity which accomplishes its end through itself. This is what is meant by the infinite activity of the end”. Reasoning here discovers this, rendering McTaggart’s objection that Hegel is changing the meaning

of a word, sc. “infinite”, ineffectual or less than philosophical. The same applies to the presentation by Anscombe or Geach of an ambiguity in *our* use of “end”, the word, as some kind of philosophical discovery correcting the less perceptive Aristotle, Aquinas and, we see, Hegel, in their account of the end, as if there “discovery” were not a mere irrelevant triviality.. The deeper but concealed philosophical truth is that when something is finished, when time has run its course, end is to that extent necessarily achieved. Compare the evangelical “word” from the Cross, “It is finished”, simply translating the Greek “present perfect” *tetelestai*, it has been (now) accomplished.

So “the end accomplishes itself ... comes into harmony with itself in the process of realising itself”, in one actual act here. That is, equivalently, it *is* this accomplishment, as Hegel affirms in the *Encyclopaedia* Logic, that end is as such realised, so that we only qualify it as “realised end” as a concession to immediate speech. This again renders ineffective McTaggart’s objection just mentioned to Hegel’s changing the meaning of a word, viz. “infinite”. Hegel rather discovers its essence in genuine philosophical development. So he says, by way of defining contrast, that *the finite* consists in *separableness*, “of means and material”. This is precisely his account of Nature in its immediate or, so to say, “unredeemed” state, causing Gentile and to a certain extent perhaps McTaggart to believe it did not logically conform with Hegel’s system, a view however which, if held to, would simply dismantle it. But this two-sidedness of the finite, as both abstract and “real”, is exactly the account Hegel has been developing throughout these Lectures on the contingent, concerning contingent or immediate “reality”, its necessity, in a word, which is yet not what he calls the Absolutely-necessary.

The end, then, “possesses (all) reality in itself” while “the teleological relation seen in the finite represents ... something untrue”. The organised body’s “activity”, he now says, “*constitutes an end, a soul*, which is present in every point of the organism. ... But the living subject is also something thoroughly finite ... something ... not complete”: i.e. it is in time, *that’s what the phrase means*, as is also corroborated by his finding Life to be a finite categorial moment of Logic, not yet the Idea. Another word for time, therefore, is just “nature” as we have it. So a variant of the triad Logic, Nature, Spirit might as well be, on specific occasions, Logic, Time (or the Contingent), Spirit, if we prescind from debates as to the relation of time to space, while for “the contingent” we might substitute “world”, the meaning in general being the Other, as referred to often enough here.

In relation to this organised body, ourselves for example at least, “inorganic existence ... appears as independent” matter, in a word, as if

“Nature ... creates blindly”. Referring to Aristotle he says that “the point is whether or not these (individualised entities on the spatio-temporal continuum) will be able to exist”, subsist he might rather have said. This is “a pure matter of accident”, depending on climate change etc. We seem close to “survival of the fittest” talk, and he indeed refers now to “monstrosities” that could not continue, the “remains of monsters” even, such as he had once appeared to deny had in fact ever existed. One may regard that observation as properly belonging to his more comprehensive denial of the reality of the past as such, it being rather what appeared, or what appears to have been, recalling us to the unreality of time as, for example, McTaggart interpreted him. As Hegel himself put it, however, time is real for Spirit “for as long as Spirit needs it”, which fits exactly in, again, with his account here of the contingent and of the “proof” from it, i.e. it is not after all entirely a joke, as might otherwise appear.

The monsters disappear, i.e. that is what *makes* them monsters, hence, though, the harmony of what remains is equally “accidental”. But from this point of view design itself appears to be accidental. Compare his critique of “the teleological relation” as “something untrue”, just mentioned above here. End, in fact, is no relation to anything unless itself, precisely the doctrine of Aquinas, that God has no relation with either us or his creation generally, i.e. we and it as separate being(s) are “ideal”, as is plainly stated in the Logic. Here, I find, Hegel plainly anticipated current biological doctrine of the survival of the fittest quite divorced from Teilhardian notions of progress in the phenomenal world as if, namely, it were not contingent but somehow progressing to meet God on his own level (the “omega point”). Hegel’s doctrine, as that of all philosophy according to him, is rather that thought should leave the world as a ladder to be kicked away, as the necessary error from which we ascend to truth. If one would reflect one would see that this has to be so, as part of the theorem that “all judgments are false” such as is reached in speculative logic, or, more in general, that “the same is the different” and conversely. One cannot pick and choose here.

It follows that the organic exists by chance (i.e. or hence, it does not exist, is phenomenal: it is the same). Nature then, inorganic or not, is “first what is immediate”, thus far also the Mosaic conception. But, he asks, “Do living things and Man represent what is dependent?” “Represent”, *vorstellen*, is a keyword here. We, as opposed to Spirit, are phenomenal, representative of some concept. His answer:

Philosophy, on the other hand, explains the truth involved in the definition of the notion, and apart from this, Man is certain that he is related to the rest of Nature as an end, and that Nature is meant to be a means. The organic ... in its *formal* aspect ... is means and end, and therefore something infinite in itself



... truly first in comparison with Nature ... the *immediacy* of Nature ... merely one-sided determination, and ought to be brought down to the level of something merely posited ... This is the true relation. Man is not an accident – added on ... The organic is first ... The inorganic has in it merely the semblance of Being ... logically developed in Science itself (i.e. philosophy?).

But “Nature ... is so posited as existing in the organic itself (144) ... reciprocal ... the third element ... God ... in a general sense ... short of the notion of God”. But “living activity ... is not yet Spirit, rational action”. Here “simply the fact of life” is posited. The soul is “not something apart from the body” though it is not as material, life-force rather. So, or yet, God is an immortal *zoon*, says Plato. He “did not get beyond the category of life”, Hegel comments, not yet to Spirit. The necessity of animal life, he says, positing it, is “*an absolutely insignificant conception*”, i.e. from the philosophical standpoint (*human* animal life has to be what is meant here, otherwise why mention it?), adding that “moral good can only be insofar as it is in conflict with evil” (the Fichtean legacy). Otherwise it literally “goes without saying”, e.g. in the “heaven” of thought. Rather, there is “another region, where we start from what is inward”. The true Good, that is, is not and cannot be something subjective, from “man’s finite life”. This is another way of denying significance to the Good as such, what Aquinas called “the honourable good”, which he, Aquinas, says is only called honourable as leading to God. Rather, “the human spirit comes to consider the finite, with its goods, as non-existent”.

So the Absolute Necessity of the *concept* of God can first appear in finite form from where it “does not yet involve being”, and this “is not truly God”. He does, however, distinguish Being as the final category, the beginning which is the end (of Logic), from the intermediate category of Existence, rather as did many later Platonists, while Aristotle himself seems consciously to refuse to distinguish between the thought of God and God who is thought (*nous*), of which Hegel treats in this section. *Nous* is cosmic organisation and order as such, as indeed is *soul*. Soul, even, is not some *thing* (this is another intermediate category) over against the organised body of which it is principle, which does *not* mean, however, that it has no activity in which organised body (in fact, after all, a representation for thought, which only *thinks* itself) does not participate. Body, says Aquinas, is not a metaphysical term. “It is a man who thinks” (Aquinas), and yet man too, as “featherless biped” (Aristotle’s immediate and hence self-dismissive definition), is a representation (we saw above). What he stands for, in Aquinas’s statement, say, is that thought is concrete, not abstract, otherwise it would not actually think itself. Man is that actualisation and therefore, as overcoming abstraction again, necessarily in one concrete instance, to

which, or to whom, in time, we may either look forward or back or touch and handle, as indeed is ever done in the “mystery of faith”, the Mass or Eucharist, a truth Hegel’s express Lutheran focus, stressing faith without destroying mystery, does not deny or obscure. Put differently, the theological definition termed “transubstantiation” does not entail canonisation of a particular philosophy of created or other substance. “Substance is subject” (Hegel). Indeed, we can and must distinguish ecclesial definitions from theology proper, which is philosophy (as, *mutatis mutandis*, in Aristotle). The former are meant for the enlightenment of all the faithful, not imposing upon them a developed Absolute idealism which would only serve to mystify a majority practising the Absolute religion in a still formally finite way. It can even mystify artists. Thus we have Hegel’s great contemporary’s assertion that “Music is a greater revelation than the whole of religion and philosophy”, which may indeed be true by Hegel’s own principles, i.e. they permit, even *elicit* the saying of it, as even that the same is the different and conversely, in transcendence of all finite analogy, whereby “God has spoken only one Word”. Philosophy must devour itself, as Hegel’s account of logical method devours method, so that, finally, *Zum Erstaunen bin ich da*. I exist to marvel, the posture, indeed, of Art. Thus narrative would in marvelling (or creating marvels) renounce finally the explanations of the Understanding, as we return to our habitual, reality-enjoined worship, in the song of silence.

So “God has existence (152) but He has only this pure finite existence in our idea of Him” (from which Anselm starts, after all). Talk of the “idea”, though, “has itself the taint of the finite”. Or, God is anyhow his own thought of himself, “fire in the head”. Thus it is the idea itself which should get rid of this defect, as is presupposed to all argument for God from our side, i.e. this idea is presupposed, that God “has to” exist.

We must, then, proceed from the idea to the content, to God as requiring being as nothing else, nothing finite, does. The Ontological Proof, *qua* proof, is in the form of the Understanding, i.e. it is put thus without being thus (as Hegel says of the other forms of the “leap”), Hence Aquinas says, dismissing it in that context at least, that it is not a proof or argument, giving his reasons. Recall Hegel’s critique of explanation generally. So yes, the Ontological Proof is a finite form (152). Anselm, profoundly, he says, first grasped this idea.

“We have the idea of God, but He is not merely an Idea, He is”, i.e. necessarily, unlike Gaunilo’s island. Or, we have the idea that He necessarily is. The factor of logical “scope” comes in here. But here too, as with the earlier proofs, Hegel distinguishes form from content. The content

is the elevation of Spirit to God (in a form too finite to bear it – thus these arguments explode themselves, i.e. they implode).

The ancients did not know of this transition; for in order to arrive at it, it is necessary that Spirit should go down into itself as deeply as possible. Spirit, when once it has arrived at its highest form of freedom, namely, subjectivity, first conceives this thought of God as subjectivity and reaches first this antithesis of subjectivity and objectivity ... The Notion, and still more the absolute Notion, the Notion in-and-for-itself, the Notion of God, is to be taken for itself, and this Notion contains Being, as a determinate characteristic. Being is a form of the determinateness of the Notion. (152, 154)

Blue, or any determinateness of the Understanding which happens to be in my mind, “ought not to be called a Notion”.

The Notion is essentially the Universal which determines itself, which particularises itself (cp. Hegel’s account of incarnation, above). ... It is what has the active power of differentiation, of particularising and determining itself, of positing a finitude and of negating this its own finitude, and of being through the negative of this finitude identical with itself (Trinity, “all in all”). ... This is the Notion in general ... just what the Notion of God, the absolute Notion, God, really is. God as Spirit or as love means that God particularises Himself, begets the Son, creates the world, or Other of Himself, and possesses Himself, is identical with Himself, in this Other, ... In the Notion in general, and still more in the Idea ... (T)he primary question is, what is Being? ... We have, however, already recognised the fact that the act whereby these higher thoughts are here reached is the act of Spirit, the act peculiarly belonging to the thinking Spirit, which Man will not renounce the right to exercise, and so, too, this proof is an act of the same sort. (Speirs, 154-157)

“Being is the immediate in general” (reference to self?) – this “accordingly exists for itself in the Notion in general and it is involved in the absolute Notion, in the Notion of God, that He is reference to self ... the whole of which Being is only one determination”. What of the “transcendental predicates, being, one, true, good? Being is different (from these others), he says, because “the Notion is totality”. But then, one might add, the Notion is being itself (i.e. not its idea merely: but then “idea”, as the notion, is not a finite concept anyhow, one might, again, want to add). But what Hegel says is: “the Notion absorbs and abolishes Being” (156), “the notion is the Soul”. Again, though, “the Sun is the Notion merely but *has not* the Notion – it is in *consciousness* and not in the sun that we find *the division that is called I*, the existing Notion ...” (155).

“The Ontological Proof is alone the true one”. If we look at Anselm’s own texts we find him saying not only that God is that than which nothing

greater can be thought, *id quo maius cogitari nequit*, but that he is in fact something greater than can be thought at all, *quiddam maius quam cogitari potest* (*Monologium*, c. 15). Thus we find Thomas Aquinas judging his proof to be no argument and hence no proof at all for the existence of God, since it remains in thought alone, mere mention of existence making no difference here since, as Hegel himself will later confirm, without explicit reference to this text, however, Existence is, for thought, a *finite* category like any other. Hence it is that Hegel's *Lectures on the Proofs of the Existence of God* is in itself departing from the notion of God, to which the mind finds itself driven, by thought's own nature, to "elevate" itself as he describes this. This process is inseparable from the dismissal of all else as "contingent" and hence false and even evil, in the sense he outlines. This is the false from which alone the true generates itself as "its own result". So we have not Manicheism but its contrary. The creation on its own is evil because it is nothing, mere "sham-being" as, we noted, Hegel characterises evil as being, being as not-being, that is to say. Thus evil, along with the contingent in general, is found in God alone and solely there. As the Other of Being it is precisely that with which Being, as infinite, unites, this being, so to say, love's secret, the secret of Self in Other and, eventually, of the Trinity, as it is, equally, of the Incarnation, whereby a divine person, in identity of act with the three persons together, as always, is "made sin for us" or even "a curse", in the apostolic phrasing, having its roots in the aboriginal representation of sacrifice of one thing, animal or person, even, for another. God, Hegel will also say, cutting across this kerygmatic use of "person" in Trinitarian thought, is himself "the absolute Person", since universality is "the principle of personality" just inasmuch as it coincides with absolute or divine freedom, not admitting slaves or slavery<sup>25</sup>, this being the specific Christian ideal, whether observed or not, as it was not that of pre-Christian or even Athenian philosophy. The universal there had still "to enter the consciousness of men", man not being known in true universality. Hence, the example, the questions as to whether slaves or women indifferently can be happy, Hegel turns even to the asking of this question about children, maintaining that they are happy, i.e. rational, in their obedience to parents, belonging thus to "the true reason-world", which is "the concrete unity of those propositions, which understanding only accepts in their separation and opposition", i.e. *all of them*. Thus and only thus is "man's ancient title of rational being" justified.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Enc.* 163, *Zus.*

<sup>26</sup> *Enc.* 82, *Zus.* On "the true reason-world", also of children and even "citizens", a thought recalling the doctrine, accepted by Aquinas, that man as such is born, i.e. naturally, to belong and hence as belonging to a state or *polis*.

He also says that “God exists through himself in the sense that to be belongs to his essence as to shine belongs to light” (*Monologium* 6). Clearly, however, the further qualification, “greater than can be thought at all”, refers to thought as we know it immediately in its finite *exercise*, limited by the finitude of human *life*. Nonetheless, for Aristotle or Hegel thought, *nous*, according to being rather than exercise, is divine. Only thus is it *capax Dei* (Aquinas), a capability upon which the whole deificatory nature of revelation depends as, in terms of Hegel’s thought, “realised end”, expressed in Scripture as an event, a becoming, coinciding with a disobedience or “fall”, where Adam, man, “is become like one of us”. The conclusion there, that he must hence not be allowed to live for ever, is read by philosophy or theology as a comment, rather, upon life itself, that it is relative, not absolute, a moment of finite thought, as will be known to “one become like one of us”.

The Christian position is that all these discoveries, the understanding or knowing of them, are the fruit of an original and originating *faith*, in God’s word, with whom all things are possible. *Credo ut intelligam* (Augustine). This looks like a historical claim but it must surely be more. To work out its meaning and truth philosophically would be a distinct, perhaps even more large-scale task than that upon which I am engaged here. I simply note the following, however: Hegel’s logic destroys the absoluteness of the cause-effect relation on which Cicero relies in affirming that whoever brings to birth has had intercourse, *qui peperit concubuit*, yet faith asserts Christ to have been born of a virgin and to have “risen from the dead”. These apparent impossibilities may or might thus be seen as the hidden generators of Hegel’s logic in its final form. This same logic, however, might allow for the questioning of the absoluteness of these doctrines in any of the universally finite forms of predication (“all judgments are false”) upon which we indeed find theologians and/or theology engaged, as it has ever been.

Hegel’s doctrine concerning the contingent means, anyhow, that the correct response to some contingent misfortune, like losing something or just any accident is not asking why has God let this happen to me but reminding oneself that it might just as well have happened or not happened, that it remains a possibility merely, the converse option being neither better nor worse or, if Leibniz is right, he surely is, always worse. This being correct makes what he has said, as we have reported it, true as equally this latter truth makes his approach correct. Thought rules, as the Idea. In religion, I count all things as dung, that I may win Christ. Or, “Give me the strength to conquer myself; nothing must bind me to life” (a *Tondichter*’s grasp of, absorption by, Absolute Spirit). For life too is contingent. This,

though, appears to distinguish the subject from his having been born, reportedly, while his having to die is only in function of that disposable supposition.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THOUGHT'S PRESENT SITUATION<sup>1</sup>

From Hegel's "Amplification of the Ontological Proof in *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* for the year 1831" (Speirs, p. 372) I cite: "the finite *is*, a proposition the falseness of which is directly evident" (Speirs, LPR, p. 301). We must be careful not to remove the comma after the first "is", "the finite *is*" being the proposition of which directly evident falsity is asserted, the finite being "ideal" in Hegel's negative sense. Hegel signals in passing the "impotence of the Understanding to conceive of the finite as a nullity", what he elsewhere calls Kant's tenderness towards the empirical. This leads him on to assert that "the contingent accordingly, as thus defined (we have seen), represents what is a contradiction in itself" (306), so what we may say about it may be at once correct and incorrect, in the sense Hegel has previously given to this term "correct" in contingent contents, the red rose, the wet streets. He adds:

"What contradicts itself is Nothing. However correct this may be, it is at the same time incorrect". (306)

*Das Nichts nichtet*, as a later thinker put it. Hegel affirms, rather, that nothing cannot even be nothing, while simultaneously denying this, meaning simply that the yardstick of correct or incorrect speech here loses applicability. He must find other words, other discourse, for addressing, as is required, this real situation, as he judges it, of the contingent. We *can* and must speak of it, if we but will. The contingent "represents definite Being, existence; it is the world, affirmation, Reality". It is just this *represented* definiteness which must be cancelled or which is in itself cancelled. Essential to it is the omnipresence, as warp and woof of the immediate scene, of abstract or separate individuals, these things of which essence or substance, he says, "must be the force". It is "the negative principle which makes its validity felt in them, and by means of which they represent what is perishing and transient, merely a phenomenal existence, something they

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<sup>1</sup> This, Hegel's title of 1831, is applicable to 2020 as the title also of what I am writing here in this final chapter of the present book.

can only do by giving the exact opposite impression (of being something definite, as we say truly of (each and all of) them. Early in the *Phenomenology of Mind* he has made clear that we cannot represent, except in the sense of misrepresent, what is thus perishing. Here already is “the refutation of time”, which it is useless to argue about from outraged “common sense”, this being just what falls under this dismissal.

But insofar as thought begins to place itself in opposition to the concrete, the process of thought then consists in carrying through the opposition until it reaches reconciliation. (149)

This, in short, is his entire programme. Thus “this realisation appears to be (or seems) at the same time its disappearance”, here of the spiritual community, which yet must have permanent existence, having had no origin in any temporal sense. The reconciliation has to be, then, “of God with himself ... and with Nature, Other Being, as divine”. Philosophy, that is, shows, must show, that it belongs to the very nature of finite Spirit to *rise* into the state of reconciliation, and that it partly reaches it in “world history” as centring around Christianity.

Such “religious knowledge thus reached through the Notion is not universal in its nature”, however, inasmuch as so-called absolute religion, i.e. so-called by Hegel, although a contradiction in terms by his system, is still religious and hence, not yet the third and final form of Absolute spirit, not yet philosophical. Hence “it is only knowledge *in* the Spiritual Communion”, or by faith “overcoming the world”, as it is said. And yet faith *is* knowledge, or the very way of knowing in regard to the ultimate End as, so to say, incalculable or “no sooner known than enjoyed” (Hobbes). Or, it is a knowing in and by “unknowing”, as transcending knowledge in this negation, or negating in thus transcending it towards faith as principle, overcoming, annihilating rather, “the world” of abstractly separate finite entities. Hegel refers here to three stages *in the Kingdom of God*, viz. immediate faith, naïve if you will, cultural reflection in Enlightenment and, thirdly, philosophy or, strictly, *sophia* possessed and no longer loved from afar only. He asks:

Ought we to speak of destruction when the Kingdom of God is founded eternally, when the Holy Spirit as such lives in its Spiritual community, and when the Gates of Hell are not to prevail against the Church?

His answer is a plain negative, yet he affirms that “this discordant note is actually present in reality”, i.e. ever, “reality” here corresponding to his account of the contingent or finite, which, he agrees with Plato, both is and



is not, as consisting of separable “things”, a term embracing all *individualities*, a term he finds, in its plural use, conceptually or notionally “ruined”. To be more precise, it is the individual in itself he accounts “ruined”, this being “the defect of life” (*Enc. 216 Zus.* as “only the Idea immediate”). So he asks, in reference to his own time (and place?), “when the salt has lost its savour and all the foundations have been tacitly removed” wherewith shall it be salted? Yet he has himself just affirmed that discord, as just then reaching a certain ultimate pitch, before some higher reconciliation perhaps, according to his logical system, as what must meanwhile be ever present in finite contexts at least. In the infinite, however, discord itself is elevated to its opposite, i.e. intrinsically.

Thus, now, “the people”, as he continues to develop what might be called, after Jeremiah, a lamentation, “for whose ever solid reason truth can exist only in a pictorial conception” (his version of Aristotelian realism) “no longer know how to assist their impulses and emotions” with pilgrimages, etc. They are near to “infinite sorrow ... deserted by their teachers” who have “found satisfaction in finitude”, in “subjectivity and its virtuosity” (self-enclosed art?), “empty and vain”. The anger is not to be missed, the key to it lying in his reference to the people’s “ever solid reason”, referred to throughout the *Science of Logic* in either version, to which, to the speculative, it is even the key.

But our aim, he continues, has been to “rediscover in revealed religion the truth and the Idea”, which he thus affirms to lie there, “to reconcile reason and religion”. This, however, is always “only a partial reconciliation without outward universality”. Harmonious philosophical knowledge remains “a sanctuary apart” while its “priests” (for it is *die höchste Gottesdienst*) work to “protect the possession of truth”. Implied is that philosophy is theology, they are one, as its object, he has said, is “religion and nothing but religion”. So, how the world is to find its way out of present disruption is not philosophy’s business, still less, as he does not need to add, the business of faith.

Meanwhile “unity of outer and inner no longer exists”, i.e. we do not have a consecrated world. Should we then? Did we ever, does he think, after all? The “rigidity of an objective command”, he here adds, “can effect nothing”. He is surely here considering and rejecting recourse to an ecclesial authority not explicitly identified. This nothing, however, could have also been seen as something, the work of the Church these two succeeding centuries after him almost, in the way outlined in his account of the contingent at least.

Summing up, anyhow, he states that philosophy, again, “sets itself merely above the form of faith ... the content is the same in both cases”, as we have

intimated above, while the “form of thought” is the perfect and indeed absolute form.

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Yet the essential question is the relation of religion to his (the philosopher's?) general theory of the universe, and it is with this that philosophical knowledge connects itself, and upon which it essentially works. (LPR I, p.18, parenthesis added)

Here we have the division arising “in opposition to the primary absolute tendency of the spirit towards religion”. Thus “the interests of the time” not only lie outside philosophy but strive against it. Yet “this opposition ... reaches that completed state where it involves philosophical knowledge in itself” or tries to, if, as he surely is, he is thinking of Kant. Thus this “division”, anyhow, means, and has ever meant, that “only on Sunday” is it that man, “released from absorption in finite occupations, lives to himself and to the higher nature which is in him, to his true essential being”. Many, however, especially the anyhow “unemployed”, I would add, find such Sundays wearisome in the extreme. Hence, especially with this “day of rest” as something imposed, from the worldly side “ruin and disunion creep over into religion” (as he has said more generally that *time* “creeps over” everything). This, in general (p.21) may be called “the maturing of the Understanding and of human aims” while, anyhow, “such professions” of general religion which survive “may be made either in earnest or not” (Speirs, p.24).

He cites the Understanding as “irreligious” while referring to Schleiermacher's proposed “religious feeling of dependence”. Division, anyhow, is implicit to piety since “its actual content is only a manifold, accidental one”, dependent at least in part on the varied imaginations of different and distinct individuals. So, therefore, both piety and the Understanding *undermine* this absolute relation (the primary and absolute tendency of spirit towards religion) by leaving it undetermined (Enlightenment deism, for example), as in the expression, religious rather than philosophical, “God has created all things”. Religion, as is expressed in Christian and other “mystical” or spiritual writing, must annihilate itself towards Absolute Idealism. What is thus *proposed* in Thomas Aquinas's writings is enacted in Hegel's texts, e.g. we should really write and think as assuming that God has “no real relation” to us or anything outside of himself, as Thomas states of God, understanding our freedom under God accordingly. This *movement* of self-annihilation is “religion itself” or

absolutely, viz. Christianity, open or concealed, in which all religions are perfected as being their form.

Thus (p.29) “the principle of selfness at once develops itself completely”, in or rather as absolute idealism. “I” am really relation. “The eye with which I see God is the eye with which God sees me” (Eckhart, appropriated by Hegel). Knowledge takes contingency away from the contingent, “encloses the world of finiteness within itself”. Yet the reasons for and within the finite “must themselves be finite” or, it follows, not finally true. Thus, in this finitude, “science forms a universe of knowledge to which God is not necessary”. Hegel explains this as a necessary moment, quite in accord with his “science of logic”. By or in it, though (31), religion “has become”, i.e. it appears as, “devoid of knowledge and shrivelled up”. A “necessity for adjustment comes in”, just therefore. We must see, take seriously, again, that “there are no separate realms”. Knowledge, that is, “must give up its finite form”, so as to become true or absolute knowledge, as was always implicit in its notion, as absolute idealism is implicit in “moderate realism”. Thus when Thomas says that the first “thing” or idea to fall into the mind is being he admits priority of the mind, of mind, but proceeds as it were only from *within* it, avoids the moment, quintessentially Aristotelian, of thought thinking only itself. This giving up of the finite form was expressed in the Christian religion by the representation of a or the “cloud of unknowing” (title of a fourteenth century text), through which “the infinite shall appear in the finite and the finite in the infinite”, with no longer each “a separate realm”. One may recall John of the Cross’s distinction (in *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*) between the silver of dogma (speech) and the gold of truth (silence). This simply “corresponds with the highest demands of knowledge”, whether or not “safe for teaching”, as the Roman Holy Office expressed it in rejecting, in 1860, the Hegelian movement of “ontologism” within Catholic thought. This office’s main target, however, was all forms of philosophical idealism, i.e. of philosophy, on Hegel’s view of it, a condemnation repeated in the 1880s against forty or so propositions from the works of the subsequently sainted Rosmini and easily applicable also to Newman’s doctrine of “the development of Christian doctrine” (book-title, 1845), prior at least to his elevation to the cardinalate or, later, the papal dubbing of the epochal Council of the 1960s as “Newman’s council” and, later, his canonisation as “saint” (three or four Popes were involved here). Hegel, and the *Zeitgeist*, had clearly prepared the way, though this mostly remains still to be acknowledged. Hans Küng’s book on Lutheran justification (by “faith alone”), demonstrating its compatibility with the decrees of the Council of Trent, is/was a straw in the wind, wind of the Spirit surely. So much for our time as against time past. But what of the time

coming after? *We* cannot say, looking only to an eternity neither future nor past, but ever present to thought, as here.

This doctrinal moment, as it were an old one newly discovered or uncovered merely, alone steers clear of bringing “the absolute content down into the region of finiteness”, preserving as it does the absolute idea which God is, before he is either being or its opposite or is, rather, being as transcending ex-istence, the finite category. Here “knowledge must give up its finite form”, as it does in (Hegel’s) philosophy. The need becomes especially acute from within the Christian religion, he says. This, after all, started “in the sense of suffering” so prominent in Judaism and virtually apotheosised in the *passion* of Christ on earth, as being Christ’s defining response in action to earth, to finite existence, and what it is or, rather, is not, wherein life, and hence finite knowledge, is to be “hated”. This is not a mere Semitic exaggeration, as the self-comforting phrase goes, but deadly serious, *paa blodigt allvar* as the Swedes, among whom I am writing this, say. It appears that or as if in God’s eyes our finite pain(s) is not as such evil. No other sense can be given to the defining injunction to each one to “take up his (her) Cross” and follow, - that “where I am, there shall my servant be”. This of course needs courage to even think of attempting and so Hegel declares that a life which has not thus put itself on the line is worthless. This elicited courage and the accompanying faith, I would affirm, is the underlying explanation for the ever more total “Westernisation” of the world as a whole, converting it more and more into *system*, a system remaining one of utmost paradox without this in Aristotle’s sense theological enlightenment.

With the sense of suffering, in permanent self-reproach, goes mistrust of man, of self, self-opposition in the separation of spirit from spirit, awareness of abstract individuality mirrored in the piecemeal perception of nature actually *dubbed* scientific. Against, or beginning from this, faith is and was the necessary remedy, “that overcomes the world” as it is said, as Christ says “Cheer up! I have overcome the world”, a statement only making sense in concert with *assumed* divinity, a term by Hegel’s philosophy speculatively purged of all mere ambiguity. For self-knowledge itself is assumption again, is a virtue, just in its intellectuality, as also is “science” and, supremely, wisdom and all accompanying prudence. That Hegel, not perhaps deeply conscious of Aquinas, so continues the latter’s enlightenment, both of them steeped in Aristotelian Platonism or philosophy, witnesses to the truth of this aboriginal or “perennial” system. For such witness a mere scholastic discipleship would not have served. Faith, in fact, personal every time, is the necessary reconciliation, Hegel says here. “I”, he declares, conscious of internal conflict here, “am not the

truth”, this being “put forward upon authority”, an authority that absolute idealism, therefore, by no means annuls.

Hence, and as regards Christianity, his theme, rational knowledge is essential “in this religion itself”. The intensive pronoun shows his awareness of the sense of paradox to be evoked, though in immediacy only. Here though “salvation” is individual or concrete, as he would rather call it. For this “selfness” (subjectivity) “is just the principle of rational knowledge itself” and not only of “religion”. The religion, rather, “gives development to its content”, since its ideas are thoughts, he says. Christianity “contains rational knowledge as an essential element”. This has enabled it, the knowledge (theology?), to oppose in development this content “as given truth”, as the fruits oppose the plant (?), children their (own) parents.

“Philosophy”, anyhow, “makes religion the subject of consideration.” Specifically philosophy does this, note. This only *appears* as objectification for “finite knowledge”. Yet the content, need and interest of philosophy “are in common with religion”, with “eternal truth, objectivity, God and nothing but God” and “the explication of God”. Philosophy is not “a wisdom of the world” but of the eternal. “In unfolding it itself unfolds religion”, some kind of activity, “immersion in the content”. They, religion and philosophy, “come to be one” in *Gottesdienst*, he says. Thus Patristic philosophical culture (p. 39) established the content of doctrine (p.39) and this union, of philosophy and religion, intensified in the so-called Middle Ages; he mentions Anselm and Abelard here, as it were discriminating two logicians specifically. This only “appears as objectification for finite knowledge” because finite knowledge is itself only appearance, specifically striving here, however, insofar as an appearance *can* strive, to transcend itself to the infinite. The incidental objectification, that is, though inevitable, is not the object. Speculative thought, he therefore reminds us, is “the unity of difference”. Reality, meanwhile, is “immediate particular consciousness”, on the side of God or the subject epistemically united with him.

As against the logical idea we have representation or picturing of “the aspect of the determinate *being* or *existence* of the absolute”, i.e. of just those aspects. The Idea is prior as self-revealing in essence, this being in Hegel’s conception something more truly absolute than either existence or, indeed, being, just as also Aquinas, in speaking of being as the first to “fall into the mind” put it second, i.e. after mind. It is along this line that God, specifically, “is the result of philosophy” as, indeed, as he says at the end of the Greater Logic, the true being which thus transcends the finite category of Existence.

As opposed to this philosophical wisdom the Bible, he declares, is “not systematic”. It represents Christianity, or indeed Judaism, “*as it appeared*”

in the beginning". Spirit, coming after, led into all truth, systematically trans-systematic, as we might say. "God is thus the result of philosophy".

So we have, he says, a "theology of reason", which is equally or essentially, rather, that of "I". It has come into existence as "put in opposition" to the "worlds" of nature and of finite spirit (ourselves as we severally conceive them), to all as conceived of as "finite appearance". This Philosophy of Religion, however (that is what it is), contemplates not merely "the implicitly existing logical idea", "in its determinate (explicit?) character as pure thought", i.e. its "finite determinations", its "finite modes of appearance". It contemplates *the Idea* "as it is in itself ... or implicitly in thought", thought being thus paired here with existence as finite, or "infinite manifestation as Spirit", since, he claims to have shown, God *is* appearance, revelation. This is why, precisely, all other appearance is false and/or finite. For "spirit which does not appear is not". Spirit, rather, produces these worlds, us, nature, "out of itself" and nothing else, uniquely, in "infinite manifestation(s)". Hence they are it as all manifestation is of self, of the one manifesting, here the only one.

Yet the Philosophy of Religion, beginning with God, is not itself "positive" religion, which has, with the Church, he says, a "fixed form". Here he begins to contrast interpretation with exegesis, thus giving his own account, as is needed, of development (of doctrine, as with Newman later, we might say). Spirit, that is, "takes counsel with reason". "A so-called theology of reason has come into existence", therefore, i.e. Enlightenment theology as put in opposition. Development (of doctrine) means though, he says, that "in appearance the sense is adhered to, but in reality further thoughts are developed." Unlike the anti-modernists he seems not to see subversion in this, but note that he speaks of development of further thoughts, as though by addition or expansion, not of abandonment of existing thoughts, even though this may be a legitimate element anyhow. Development means, that is, that the certainty is not "soulless" or "against the Spirit" (see the Preface to the third edition of the *Encyclopaedia*). Mere exegesis, again, "does not give the spiritual content", but only "the manner in which things were conceived of at the time of writing". In general the giving of the sense of the words *means* bringing the sense "into the region of ideas" (or consciousness).

The Enlightenment, however, makes God "hollow, empty and poor", *via* this superficial resemblance of empty ideality and Spirit. The finite stands against this empty ideality "in external fashion". This is how *morals* become constituted from as a special science or attitude, that of *moralism*, as counterweight to this deism. It is a diseased separation, this fancied "knowledge of that which was held to belong to the actual subject as regards

general actions and conduct”, with the relation to God kept as separate and independent. But rather than try to show, as McTaggart does, that religion, inclusive of his atheistic mysticism, does not weaken “morality” we should rather aim to show that the latter is a priggish fancy merely, having little or nothing to do with the passionate search for God. This is the meaning of the saying that only the sin against the Spirit shall not be forgiven, i.e. that all others will be and are (forgiven). We have rather trans-moral, genuinely existential counsels such as that “if thine eye offend thee pluck it out”, the better to “enter into life”. But “thinking reason grasps the truth as something concrete ... in which the finite is contained as a moment ... God is not emptiness, but Spirit.”

Spirit unfolds itself for rational thought “inasmuch as it apprehends God as essentially the triune God, making Himself an object to Himself ... in it God loves Himself ...” Trinity alone makes him Spirit and without it Spirit (54) “would be an empty word”. But, for Enlightenment,

Every content appears to this negative tendency to be a darkening of the mind, its only desire being to continue in that nocturnal darkness which it calls enlightenment, hence the rays of the light of knowledge must be necessarily regarded by it as hostile. (56)

Hence this moralism is a separation, of fact and value or of theory and practice. Thinking reason, faith in man’s dignity of spirit as Nietzsche would later call it, is “fullness of content, as Ideality, in which determinateness the finite is contained as a moment.” Hence “to thinking reason God is not emptiness but Spirit”. The nature of Spirit is thus apprehended inasmuch as “it apprehends God essentially as the Triune”, again. This conception of Spirit, mind, as Trinity, of God “as making himself an object to himself, thus loving himself, “includes the subjective side in itself or even develops itself so as to reach that side.” Thus the Philosophy of Religion, “the contemplation of religion by thought”, “binds together” its “determinate content ... in its entirety.” This development transcends exegesis (of Scripture) as reason transcends the Understanding. The relations of the Understanding, of reflection, must, therefore, be “subjected to criticism” (as in Hegel’s *The Science of Logic*, either version). Thus Philosophy of Religion “is opposed to” exegesis as “arbitrary argumentative process”. It is “the reason of the Universal which presses forward to unity” aided by all intellectual virtue.

So philosophy is not on “the common highway of this Theology of Reason” (exegesis). These tendencies combat the truth” rather, “seek to bring it under suspicion” as either “mysticism” or “not safe for teaching”. They “protest against philosophy ... only to reserve to themselves the

arbitrariness of their argumentative process”, exposed in his logical writings. They call it, philosophy, “special and particular, although it is nothing else than rational, ... truly universal thought.” This is “more convenient for them”, not to rock the boat, as one says. In effect, they depreciate the Bible by constantly appealing to it, these new “theologians” of Enlightenment, he means.

By comparison Philosophy of Religion, the subject matter of these lectures, “is infinitely nearer to positive doctrine ... of the Church” and the re-establishment of these doctrines”, reduced to a minimum by the Understanding, “is truly the work of philosophy”. Philosophy thus “arrives at a content of the nature of God, after all content seems to be done away with”. Since, again, Enlightenment desires only to continue in nocturnal darkness the rays of the light of knowledge must be regarded by it as hostile.” But “there cannot be a divine Spirit and a human” in separation. Human reason “is the divine in man”, rather. God exists as “Spirit in all spirits ... a living God, active and working”. Religion is “not a discovery of man”. This absolute opposition of religion and philosophy is “one of the shibboleths of the time”.

All those principles of the religious consciousness which have been developed at the present time, however widely distinguished ... from one another, yet agree in this, that they are at enmity with philosophy, and endeavour at all hazards to prevent it from occupying itself with religion. ... Or we may even see that the assertions of the opponents of philosophy (this includes Kant) contain nothing else than what philosophy itself contains as its principle. ... they represent the historical element out of which philosophical thought in its complete shape has been formed.

But, or just so, he means, they are themselves not philosophy. Kant, he says elsewhere, anticipating Maritain's judgment, never gets beyond a finite phenomenology, against which, of course, he sets his own, deliberately so named in paradox, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*.

\*

Hegel now says (p. 60, Section III):

Everyone who attempts to take to do with the knowledge of God, and by the aid of thought to comprehend His nature, must be prepared to find that either no attention will be paid to him, or that people will turn against him and combine to oppose him.



This, he diagnoses, is due to the increase in the “knowledge of finite things ... extension of the sciences”, which “makes a comprehensive view impossible”.

It no longer gives our age concern that it knows nothing of God: on the contrary, it is regarded as a mark of the highest intelligence to hold that such knowledge is not even possible ... ‘Ye shall know God’ is regarded as a piece of folly.

But our age “has made knowledge a futile phantom of finiteness ... the last stage of the degradation of man”. The distinction of faith and reason is here of no import, he says accordingly. He attacks theologians, who have “thrust dogmas into the background”. Hence:

1. *Philosophy and the Prevalent Indifference to Definite Dogmas*, p. 63: Indifference towards “ecclesiastical dogmas”. Instead, moralisation. Trinity, resurrection of “the body”, miracles, have “lost their importance”. Still, philosophy can “take up a more untrammelled attitude” when theologians even so discount these dogmas.
2. *The Historical Treatment of Dogmas*, p. 67: Treating of their accidental appearance, i.e. in history, is not to be occupied “with their essential substance”.
3. Philosophy and Immediate Knowledge (up to p. 77).

“We thus find (p. 77) the fundamental conception which belongs to philosophy already existing as a universal element in the cultured thought of the present day ... it is One Spirit which pervades both the actual world and philosophical thought”, which is thus “only the true self-comprehension of what is actual.” In other words, “it is one movement upon which both the age and its philosophy are born.”

He here *defends* “immediate knowledge” (the principle of) as having “carried Christian knowledge back to the primary elements”. Yet philosophy “carries” immediate knowledge “forward to its true expansion within itself” but as recognising it as “*representing* content”. We find in philosophy “absolute accordance where it was believed that there was the greatest opposition”.

\*

There are preliminary questions (p. 78), both “philosophical and popular” in relevance. We need to get “an intellectual grasp of religion.” Religion,

namely (p.79), “is supposed to be withdrawn from the sphere of human reason.” But “philosophical knowledge must of necessity come into relation with positive religion.”, holding doctrines “in honour” and “intellectually grasping” them. “These two are supposed to come into relation”, though. Yet it is “a false idea” that “faith and philosophy can exist quietly side by side”. Thus “despair is reconciliation carried out in a one-sided manner ... a man cannot win peace in this way.” One cannot “return to simple religious feeling”. This leads only to the “yearning hypocrisy” of “shallow spirits”. For “it is only the highest truth (the nature of God) which is said to be beyond ... knowledge”. For others, again, “the infinite is destroyed by thought” (Jacobi?). So *can* reason know God? If not, then God has no objectivity, he says, meaning that it is demanded, therefore, “to demonstrate God”, as he has therefore been attempting here, where he has set about meeting the Kantian objections which, though “clumsy”, are “general ... today” (p. 84).

It is commonly the case that when people have a notion which they consider to be a very clever one, it is in connection with it that they show themselves most foolish, and their satisfaction consists in their having found a splendid outlet for their folly and ignorance. Indeed they are inexhaustible in finding such outlets when it is a question of keeping a good conscience in the face of their indolence, and of getting quit of the whole affair.

Thus the Kantian demand “cancels itself”, while speculative philosophy (his own) investigates knowledge (examines reason) but not as if beforehand from outside. “It is of the essence of Spirit to be for Spirit”, he insists. This implies that “finite spirit has been posited”. Its relation to the divine “originates itself”, as it were constitutively, he means here, in what could be seen in a decisive if subtle *qualification* of Kant, whose demand, again, thereby “cancels itself”. Spirit, namely, made as object, gives itself the “form of Appearance or Manifestation”. Through this essentially “the finite spirit arrives at a positive religion”. God “appears” to someone, the old writings say. *Cor ad cor loquitur*, heart speaks to heart, as we say, the divine being thus, necessarily, as infinite, “closer than self” (Augustine, whom, however, Hegel does not need to cite in his support)

Spirit thus “becomes for itself actual ... in the form of the Idea ... the Other”. It thus originates religion, of thought and *feeling*, as “subjective”. This “belongs to me as is individual.” Here “God gives himself this ultimate individualisation of This One”, plus the determination that God *is* essential, as a determination that is essentially included in the consideration of religion, “the highest sphere ... the absolute result ... truth”. In this sphere

(87) “consciousness must have raised itself above all that is finite, above finite existence as well as above finite thoughts”. Hegel, and we, conclude:

Yet although even for the ordinary consciousness religion is the act of rising above the finite it usually happens when philosophy in general, and especially the philosophy that deals with God, with religion, is attacked, that in support of this polemical attitude finite thoughts, relations belonging to limitation, categories and forms of the finite, are brought forward to the disregard of this fundamental characteristic. Such forms of the finite are made points of departure from which to oppose philosophy, especially the highest philosophy, the Philosophy of Religion. ... Immediacy of knowledge, the fact of consciousness, is, for example, such a finite form, - such finite categories are the antitheses of finite and infinite, subject and object ... This logical knowledge, which comes first (of the finite categories necessarily employed, Hegel says here) must lie behind us when we have to deal with religion scientifically ... But the usual thing is to employ these as weapons against the Notion, the idea, against rational Knowledge ... just as if Kant's *Kritik* did not exist, which at least attacked these forms, and after its own fashion reached the result that it is only with phenomena which can be known by means of these categories. In religion it is not, however, with phenomena that we have to do, it is with an absolute content. ... In philosophy we are not in the so-called 'school' but are in the world of reality ... we do not find a yoke under which we are in bondage, but have ... free movement.

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